



North Carolina: A Controversial Law and Extremely Close Races

Likely Voters: September 12th - 16th, 2016

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Key Survey Insights

What is the Current State of the N.C. Governor's Race?

The N.C. governor's race is extremely close. Pat McCrory, the Republican incumbent, has a slight, but statistically insignificant lead of 2.7 percentage points over Roy Cooper, the Democratic challenger. The Libertarian candidate Lon Cecil is receiving 1.9 percent of the vote, while 3.2 percent of North Carolina voters remain undecided in this race.

McCrory's 2.7-point lead among likely voters suggests a notable surge for the Republican. An Elon Poll of registered voters in April 2016 measured McCrory down by 6 percentage points to Cooper. With both candidates running competitive and expensive campaigns, it is safe to speculate that the N.C. gubernatorial contest will remain one of the closest in the nation all the way into November.

Both McCrory and Cooper have strong support with their party. 92 percent of Republicans are backing McCrory over Cooper while 87 percent of Democrats favor Cooper over McCrory. McCrory is winning 60 percent of the crucial independent vote within the sample. The campaigns are also divided on race. Cooper is winning 93 percent of African-American likely voters. However, McCrory leads Cooper 63 percent to 37 percent among whites. A slight gender gap exists. McCrory is winning men by 10 points but losing women by 7 points.

With a gubernatorial race this tight, otherwise minor perturbations could be very consequential. The difference in McCrory or Cooper leading the state for the next four years could boil down to something as small as an unpredictable gaffe, a well-timed debate soundbite, a particularly effective advertisement, or an innovative voter mobilization strategy.

How Widely Supported is HB2?

HB2 is a perhaps the most salient campaign issue in the 2016 race for governor of North Carolina. Merely 4 percent of likely N.C. voters had not heard of HB2. Among those likely voters who had heard of HB2, a near majority (49.5 percent) oppose HB2. However, 39.5 percent of voters support the bill. Only 10.6 percent did not know or did not have an opinion either way.

A majority of several groups oppose HB2: 61 percent of African-Americans, 54 percent of women, 77 percent of Cooper voters, 55 percent of moderates and 78 percent of liberals. However, HB2 is supported by 66 percent of McCrory voters, 58 percent of Republicans, and 61 percent of conservatives.

Is HB2 Helping or Hurting McCrory?

Gov. McCrory's handling of HB2 has received a mixed response from N.C. voters. 36.2 percent said it makes them less likely to vote for him, while 26.9 percent indicated they are more likely to vote for him. 34.6 percent of those surveyed said the governor's handling of HB2 will make no difference in their decision to vote to re-elect him.

HB2 is a difficult issue for the McCrory coalition. A quarter of people planning to vote for McCrory are nonetheless opposed to HB2. The law is opposed by 31 percent of Republicans and 48 percent of independents. However, only 4 percent of McCrory voters explicitly said his handling of HB2 made them less likely to vote for him and 42 percent of his voters said it made no difference.

Though we find McCrory with a tiny lead over Cooper, it is easy to imagine a world in which the incumbent's lead could be higher if a more popular issue like Connect NC infrastructure funding was the central campaign narrative instead of a divisive issue like HB2.

What do North Carolina voters think HB2 is doing to the state's reputation?

Although N.C. voters are not in agreement concerning their own opinions about HB2, most believe the national reputation of the state has been harmed by the passage of the law. Only 11.4 percent of those surveyed believe the national reputation of North Carolina is better, 59.9 percent believe it is worse, while 23.1 percent believe it is about the same.

Even among supporters of HB2, a plurality, 36 percent, said the law had made North Carolina's national reputation worse. A similar plurality, 37 percent, of McCrory's own voters thought HB2 had worsened the state's reputation while just 21 percent of these otherwise sympathetic voters thought the law made North Carolina's reputation better.

One important caveat is that numbers about HB2's perceived impact may be unusually negative at the moment. The NCAA and ACC announced during the survey field dates that they would pull games from North Carolina because of the law.

What is the current state of the U.S. Senate race?

Richard Burr, the Republican incumbent, and Deborah Ross, the Democratic challenger, are neck-and-neck in the U.S. Senate race in North Carolina. With 44.4 percent, Deborah Ross has what amounts to a slight lead of 1.0 percentage point over Richard Burr's 43.4 percent, although this is within the poll's margin of error of +/- 3.86 percentage points. The Libertarian candidate, Sean Haugh, is receiving 4.4 percent of the vote, while 7.4 percent of North Carolina voters remain undecided in this race.

Burr has held a lead over Ross in many polls, including a 4-point lead in our last April poll of registered voters. That Burr has fallen in this poll while McCrory has risen is a surprise to us. Future polls are necessary to answer this paradox. We may have simply recorded a short-term blip, but we also might have found an emerging trend. Approval numbers from the Elon Poll over the last four years have indicated relatively low understanding of Burr by many North Carolina voters. This suggests negative ads by Ross have more room than normal to define the incumbent and move the needle. We suspect Burr's numbers have potential to shift in coming weeks given a campaign cycle with huge advertising budgets.

In the 2014 U.S. Senate election, Haugh received 3.7 percent of the total vote. At the time, many speculated that Haugh could "spoil" the election for one candidate or the other. Importantly in a race with this tight of margins, Haugh voters seem to be splitting evenly between Ross and Burr as their second choice candidate, suggesting the Libertarian's overall impact will be minimal. This observation should be taken with the caveat that our sample size for Haugh voters is too small to justify strong conclusions.

Topline Results

Vote Choice

Governor's Race

If the governor's election were being held today and the candidates were [Roy Cooper, the Democrat, Pat McCrory, the Republican, and Lon Cecil, the Libertarian], who would you vote for?

Pat McCrory	313.....	48.70%
Roy Cooper	296.....	46.00%
Lon Cecil.....	12.....	1.90%
Other Candidate (don't read).....	1.....	0.10%
Undecided/Don't Know (don't read)	20.....	3.20%
Refused (don't read)	1.....	0.20%
N=	644.....	100.00%

Governor's Race: Undecided Probe

If you had to choose, who do you lean more towards: [Pat McCrory, Roy Cooper, or Lon Cecil]?

Pat McCrory	2.....	12%
Roy Cooper	6.....	32%
Lon Cecil.....	1.....	6%
Undecided/Don't Know (don't read)	10.....	50%
N=	20.....	100%

Governor's Race: Cecil Voter Probe

If you had to choose, who do you lean more towards: [Pat McCrory or Roy Cooper]?

Pat McCrory	3.....	25%
Roy Cooper	8.....	68%
Other Candidate (don't read).....	1.....	7%
N=	12.....	100%

Senate Race

If the U.S. Senate election were being held today and the candidates were [Deborah Ross, the Democrat, Richard Burr, the Republican, and Sean Haugh, the Libertarian], who would you vote for?

Deborah Ross	286.....	44.40%
Richard Burr.....	280.....	43.40%
Sean Haugh	28.....	4.40%
Undecided/Don't Know (don't read)	47.....	7.40%
Refused (don't read)	3.....	0.40%
N=	644.....	100.00%

Senate Race: Undecided Voter Probe

If you had to choose, who do you lean more towards: [Deborah Ross, Richard Burr, or Sean Haugh]?

Deborah Ross	6.....	13%
Richard Burr.....	8.....	18%
Sean Haugh	1.....	2%
Undecided/Don't Know (don't read)	29.....	67%
N=	44.....	100%

Senate Race: Haugh Voter Probe

If you had to choose, who do you lean more towards: [Deborah Ross or Richard Burr]?

Deborah Ross	11	44%
Richard Burr.....	11	44%
Other Candidate (don't read).....	1	4%
Undecided/Don't Know (don't read)	2	8%
N=	25	100%

House Bill 2

House Bill 2 Intro

North Carolina recently enacted a law called House Bill 2. It is also known as the Bathroom Bill or HB2. Have you heard anything about HB2?

Yes	615.....	95.40%
No.....	26.....	4.00%
Don't Know	4.....	0.60%
N=	644.....	100.00%

Support for House Bill 2

[If yes to House Bill 2 Intro] Do you support or oppose HB2?

Support.....	243.....	39.50%
Oppose	304.....	49.50%
Neither/No opinion (don't read)	43.....	7.10%
Don't Know (don't read).....	21.....	3.50%
Refused (don't read)	2.....	0.40%
N=	614.....	100.00%

House Bill 2 and Support for McCrory

[If yes to House Bill 2 Intro] Has Governor Pat McCrory's handling of HB2 made you more or less likely to vote to re-elect him as governor?

More likely	165.....	26.90%
Less likely	222.....	36.20%
No difference	212.....	34.60%
Don't Know (don't read).....	13.....	2.10%
Refused (don't read)	1.....	0.20%
N=	614.....	100.00%

House Bill 2 and NC Reputation

[If yes to House Bill 2 Intro] Regardless of what you think about HB2 itself, do you think the national reputation of North Carolina is better, worse, or about the same since HB2 was passed?

Better.....	70.....	11.40%
Worse	368.....	59.90%
About the same	142.....	23.10%
Don't Know (don't read).....	31.....	5.10%
Refused (don't read)	3.....	0.50%
N=	614.....	100.00%

Demographics

Self-Reported Party Identification

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or something else?

Democrats	224.....	35.60%
Independents	241.....	38.30%
Republicans.....	164.....	26.00%
N=	629.....	100.00%

Registration Party ID: From Sample File

Democrats	266.....	41.20%
Independents	171.....	26.60%
Republicans.....	207.....	32.20%
N=	644.....	100.00%

Ideology

When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as liberal, moderate, conservative, or haven't you thought much about this?

Conservative	234.....	36.30%
Moderate	266.....	41.40%
Liberals	110.....	17.10%
Don't Know	28.....	4.30%
Refused	6.....	0.90%

N=644.....100.00%

Education

How much school have you completed?

Less than HS	10.....	1.60%
High School / GED	109.....	16.90%
Some College/ AA / Technical	196.....	30.40%
College Graduate	211.....	32.70%
Graduate School.....	115.....	17.90%
Don't Know	2.....	0.20%
Refused	2.....	0.20%
N=	644.....	100.00%

Age

Do you mind if I ask how old you are? [Continuous variable recoded for presentation]

18-30	16.....	2.60%
31-40	46.....	7.20%
41-50	92.....	14.50%
51-65	249.....	39.50%
65+	229.....	36.20%
N=	632.....	100.00%

Income

Is your annual household income more or less than \$50,000? (If = Under \$50,000) Is it more or less than \$25,000? (If = Over \$50,000) Is it more or less than \$75,000?

Less than \$25,000	55.....	8.60%
\$25,000 to \$50,000	113.....	17.60%
\$50,000 to \$75,000	123.....	19.10%
More than \$75,000	271.....	42.10%
Don't Know	28.....	4.40%
Refused	53.....	8.20%
N=	644.....	100.00%

Race

For statistical purposes only, could you please tell me your race or ethnic background?

White.....	475.....	73.70%
Black	120.....	18.60%
Other	29.....	4.50%
Don't Know	2.....	0.30%
Refused	18.....	2.90%
N=	644.....	100.00%

Landline/Cellphone

Do you have a land line phone? [asked to cell phones only]

Do you have a cell phone? [asked to land line phones only]

Landline only	35.....	5.50%
Dual Use.....	452.....	70.70%
Cell only.....	152.....	23.80%
N=	639.....	100.00%

Interviewer-Assessed Gender

Was the person male or female?

Male	290.....	45.10%
Female.....	354.....	54.90%
N=	644.....	100.00%

Interviewer-Assessed Southern Accent

Did the person have a Southern accent?

Strong Southern Accent	203	31.50%
Slight Southern Accent	277	43.00%
No Southern Accent.....	164	25.50%
N=	644	100.00%

Plan to Vote in 2016

Do you, yourself, plan to vote in the election this November, or not?

Yes	644.....	100.00%
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Vote Certainty

How certain are you that you will vote? Absolutely certain, fairly certain, or not certain.

Absolutely certain	644.....	100.00%
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Know Their Precinct

Do you happen to know where people who live in your neighborhood go to vote?

Yes	644.....	100.00%
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Cross Tabulations

Gubernatorial

If the governor's election were being held today and the candidates were [Roy Cooper, the Democrat, Pat McCrory, the Republican, and Lon Cecil, the Libertarian], who would you vote for?

McCrory vs. Cooper (as Share of Two Party Vote)

	Pat McCrory	Roy Cooper	Total
<u>Race</u>	%	%	%
White	63	37	100
Black	7	93	100
Other	56	44	100
<u>Education</u>	%	%	%
Less than High School	57	43	100
High School / GED	70	30	100
Some College/ AA / Technical	59	41	100
College Graduate	46	54	100
Graduate School	33	67	100
<u>Sex</u>	%	%	%
Male	55	45	100
Female	48	52	100
<u>Income</u>	%	%	%
Less than \$25,000	40	60	100
\$25,000 to \$50,000	40	60	100
\$50,000 to \$75,000	55	45	100
More than \$75,000	55	45	100
<u>Ideology</u>	%	%	%
Conservative	88	12	100
Moderate	41	59	100
Liberal	6	94	100
<u>Party Identification (self-reported)</u>	%	%	%
Democrats	13	87	100
Independents	60	40	100
Republicans	92	8	100

	Pat McCrory	Roy Cooper	Total
<u>Age</u>	%	%	%
18-40	45	55	100
41-65	51	49	100
66+	54	46	100
<u>Accent</u>	%	%	%
Strong Southern Accent	65	35	100
Slight Southern Accent	50	50	100
No Southern Accent	36	64	100
<u>2012 Vote</u>	%	%	%
Barack Obama	12	88	100
Mitt Romney	90	10	100
Didn't Vote	76	24	100
<u>Obama Approval</u>	%	%	%
Approve	11	89	100
Disapprove	89	11	100

U.S. Senate

If the U.S. Senate election were being held today and the candidates were [Deborah Ross, the Democrat, Richard Burr, the Republican, and Sean Haugh, the Libertarian], who would you vote for?

Burr vs. Ross (as Share of Two Party Vote)

	Richard Burr	Deborah Ross	Total
<u>Race</u>	%	%	%
White	63	37	100
Black	4	96	100
Other	36	64	100
<u>Education</u>	%	%	%
Less than High School	48	52	100
High School / GED	65	35	100
Some College/ AA / Technical	54	46	100

College Graduate	47	53	100
Graduate School	35	65	100
<u>Sex</u>	%	%	%
Male	55	45	100
Female	45	55	100
<u>Income</u>	%	%	%
Less than \$25,000	36	64	100
\$25,000 to \$50,000	38	62	100
\$50,000 to \$75,000	49	51	100
More than \$75,000	55	45	100
<u>Ideology</u>	%	%	%
Conservative	83	17	100
Moderate	41	59	100
Liberal	4	96	100
<u>Party Identification (self-reported)</u>	%	%	%
Democrats	9	91	100
Independents	58	42	100
Republicans	92	8	100
<u>Age</u>	%	%	%
18-40	34	66	100
41-65	50	50	100
66+	52	48	100
<u>Accent</u>	%	%	%
Strong Southern Accent	61	39	100
Slight Southern Accent	52	48	100
No Southern Accent	31	69	100
<u>2012 Vote</u>	%	%	%
Barack Obama	8	92	100
Mitt Romney	92	8	100
Didn't Vote	72	28	100
<u>Obama Approval</u>	%	%	%
Approve	8	92	100
Disapprove	91	9	100

Support for HB2

Do you support or oppose HB2?

Support for HB2

	Support	Oppose	Neither / Don't Know	Total
<u>Race</u>	%	%	%	%
White	43	48	9	100
Black	22	61	16	100
Other	46	47	6	100
<u>Education</u>	%	%	%	%
Less than HS	23	28	49	100
High School / GED	57	35	8	100
Some College/ AA / Technical	49	43	8	100
College Graduate	35	52	14	100
Graduate School	21	70	9	100
<u>Sex</u>	%	%	%	%
Male	44	45	11	100
Female	36	54	11	100
<u>Income</u>	%	%	%	%
Less than \$25,000	39	48	13	100
\$25,000 to \$50,000	39	53	8	100
\$50,000 to \$75,000	36	53	10	100
More than \$75,000	41	48	11	100
<u>Ideology</u>	%	%	%	%
Conservative	61	29	11	100
Moderate	32	55	13	100
Liberal	17	78	5	100
<u>Party Identification (self-reported)</u>	%	%	%	%
Democrats	23	67	11	100
Independents	42	48	10	100
Republicans	58	31	11	100

	Support	Oppose	Neither / Don't Know	Total
<u>Age</u>	%	%	%	%
18-40	28	56	16	100
41-65	40	50	10	100
66+	43	49	9	100
<u>Accent</u>	%	%	%	%
Strong Southern Accent	56	36	9	100
Slight Southern Accent	36	53	11	100
No Southern Accent	26	61	13	100
<u>Governor Vote Intention</u>	%	%	%	%
Pat McCrory	66	25	9	100
Roy Cooper	14	77	10	100
<u>President Vote Intention</u>	%	%	%	%
Hillary Clinton	16	74	10	100
Donald Trump	65	26	9	100
Gary Johnson	27	60	13	100

HB2 and McCrory Vote

Has Governor Pat McCrory's handling of HB2 made you more or less likely to vote to re-elect him as governor?

HB2 and McCrory Vote Likelihood

	More likely	Less likely	No difference	Don't Know	Total
<u>Support for HB2</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Support	54	8	36	1	100
Oppose	9	62	28	1	100
Neither / Don't Know	11	19	61	9	100
<u>HB2 & NC Reputation</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Better	77	3	20	0	100
Worse	13	55	32	1	100
About the same	35	13	50	3	100
Don't Know (don't read)	46	7	33	14	100

	More likely	Less likely	No difference	Don't Know	Total
<u>Race</u>	%	%	%	%	%
White	31	33	35	2	100
Black	9	53	34	4	100
Other	44	30	26	0	100
<u>Education</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Less than HS	55	15	0	30	100
High School / GED	46	15	35	4	100
Some College/ AA / Technical	31	29	39	1	100
College Graduate	21	42	35	2	100
Graduate School	14	57	27	2	100
<u>Sex</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Male	26	37	36	1	100
Female	28	36	34	3	100
<u>Income</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Less than \$25,000	18	36	39	7	100
\$25,000 to \$50,000	25	38	34	3	100
\$50,000 to \$75,000	27	33	39	0	100
More than \$75,000	26	39	34	1	100
<u>Ideology</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	51	9	38	2	100
Moderate	15	43	39	2	100
Liberal	5	73	20	2	100
<u>Party ID (Self-Reported)</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Democrats	11	57	28	4	100
Independents	29	34	36	0	100
Republicans	44	14	40	2	100
<u>Age</u>	%	%	%	%	%
18-40	23	39	39	0	100
41-65	27	36	36	2	100
66+	30	38	30	3	100
<u>Governor Vote Intention</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Pat McCrory	52	4	42	2	100
Roy Cooper	2	71	24	2	100

HB2 and NC Reputation

Regardless of what you think about HB2 itself, do you think the national reputation of North Carolina is better, worse, or about the same since HB2 was passed?

HB2 and NC Reputation

	Better	Worse	About the same	Don't Know	Total
<u>Support for HB2</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Support	23	36	34	7	100
Oppose	3	80	13	3	100
Neither / Don't Know	5	56	29	10	100
<u>HB2 & McCrory Vote Effect</u>	%	%	%	%	%
More likely	33	28	30	9	100
Less likely	1	90	8	1	100
No difference	6	54	33	5	100
<u>Race</u>	%	%	%	%	%
White	13	59	22	5	100
Black	4	69	26	1	100
Other	11	45	33	11	100
<u>Education</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Less than HS	13	63	15	10	100
High School / GED	17	44	28	12	100
Some College/ AA / Technical	18	56	23	4	100
College Graduate	7	61	27	5	100
Graduate School	5	79	14	2	100
<u>Sex</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Male	15	58	23	4	100
Female	8	62	23	6	100
<u>Income</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Less than \$25,000	8	59	28	5	100
\$25,000 to \$50,000	11	57	26	6	100
\$50,000 to \$75,000	14	67	18	2	100
More than \$75,000	10	59	25	6	100

	Better	Worse	About the same	Don't Know	Total
<u>Ideology</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	24	37	33	7	100
Moderate	6	69	21	4	100
Liberal	0	86	8	6	100
<u>Party ID (Self-Reported)</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Democrats	5	75	18	3	100
Independents	13	62	20	5	100
Republicans	17	41	34	8	100
<u>Age</u>	%	%	%	%	%
18-40	11	65	22	3	100
41-65	11	60	25	5	100
66+	13	60	22	6	100
<u>Accent</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Strong Southern Accent	17	48	27	8	100
Slight Southern Accent	10	66	21	3	100
No Southern Accent	8	66	22	5	100
<u>Governor Vote Intention</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Pat McCrory	21	37	34	9	100
Roy Cooper	2	84	13	1	100

Question Ordering

- Introduction
 - Introductory screen
- Vote Choice
 - Presidential Race: Clinton v. Trump v. Johnson
 - Undecided Probe
 - Johnson Probe
 - Governor's Race: McCrory v. Cooper v. Cecil
 - Undecided Probe
 - Cecil Probe
 - Senate Race: Burr v. Ross v. Haugh
 - Undecided Probe
 - Haugh Probe
- Presidential Election Issues
 - Great Again: Was there a better time in U.S.?
 - Great Again: Which decade?
 - Great Again: Why?
 - Trump or Clinton Better for Group
 - Poor people
 - Middle class people
 - Rich people
 - African Americans
 - Whites
 - Hispanics or Latinos
 - Men
 - Women
 - Better or Worse Candidate Than Usual
 - Clinton
 - Trump
 - First Female President
 - Obama or Putin: Who's a better leader?
- House Bill 2
 - Heard about HB2
 - Support for HB2
 - HB2 and Support for McCrory
 - HB2 affects NC's national reputation
- Split Ticket Voting
 - Split President and Governor Votes: One Reason Why
 - Split President and Senator Votes: One Reason Why
- Physically Health Enough: Clinton and Trump (randomized order)
- Disclosed Enough Health Information: Clinton and Trump (randomized order)
- Vote Likelihood
 - Voted for Romney or Obama in 2012

- Plan to Vote in 2016
- Vote Certainty
- Know Their Precinct
- Party and Ideology
 - Obama Approval
 - Self-Reported Party Identification
 - Ideology
- Demographics
 - Education
 - Age
 - Income
 - Race
 - Own landline [cell #s only]
 - Own cell [landline #s only]
- Post-Interview Questions
 - Interviewer-Assessed Gender
 - Interviewer-Assessed Southern Accent

Methodological Information

Mode:Live Interviewer, Cell Phone and Landline
PopulationLikely Voters, North Carolina
Sample:Voter Registration List, North Carolina
Dates in the field:September 12-16, 2016
Sample Size:.....644
Margin of Error:+/- 3.86
Confidence Level:95%
Weighting Variables:Age, Race, and Sex, Registered Party Identification

Procedure

The Elon University Poll uses a random sample of North Carolina voters with telephones and wireless (cell) telephone numbers.

For the administration of surveys, the Elon University Poll uses CATI system software (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing). We attempt to reach each working telephone number in the sample up to three times. We only interview residents of North Carolina who are over 18. In compliance with FCC rules, each phone number was dialed manually by a human interviewer.

The Elon University Poll conducted the survey in English. Live interviewers called from 4:30 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday to Thursday (9/12-9/15) and 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Friday 9/16.

Please direct questions about the Elon University Poll’s methodology to the Director of the Elon University Poll, Dr. Jason Husser at 336-278-5239 or jhusser@elon.edu.

Weighting

Weights were generated using a technique known as iterative proportional fitting, also known as raking. We typically weight results from the Elon University Poll on multiple demographic characteristics. In the case of this survey, our target population was registered voters in North Carolina. We weighted results to reflect official statistics about registered voters provided by the North Carolina State Board of Elections.

The weight variables were race, gender, and registered party identification. Note that registered party differs significantly from self-identified party identification, which is more of a psychological attachment than a stable demographic. Age was weighted so that respondents over 65 composed no more than 35% of our sample.

Because the sample was from the voter registration list rather than a random digit dial, we did not weight on phone usage (as is our practice with RDD surveys), largely because CDC parameters of phone

usage are reflective of the general population rather than registered voters alone. However, phone usage (reported in the topline) is roughly approximate CDC estimates for all North Carolina Residents.

The table below presents key sample parameter before and after weighting.

	NC SOBE Parameter	Unweighted Sample (Registered Voters)	Weighted Sample (Registered Voters)
Sex : Male	45.7%	39%	45.7%
Sex: Female	54.3%	61%	54.3%
Registered Party: Democrat	40.1%	41.4%	40.1%
Registered Party: Republican	30.4%	35.6%	30.4%
Registered Party: Unaffiliated	29.5%	23.0%	29.5%
Race: White	68.4%	80.1%	70.7%
Race: Black	21.8%	17.7%	22.5%
Race: Not Black or White	9.8%	2.2%	6.8%

Final results in the topline above deviate from these parameters because the sample was later restricted to likely voters from the larger sample of registered voters.

Design Effects

The standard error of an estimate for a simple random sample is different from the standard error of an estimate based on a weighted sample. This is referred to as a design effect. For example the overall design effect for the final weights for the sample of *Likely Voters in North Carolina* was 1.089. So an adjusted margin of error for that sample that takes into account the design effect of a survey would be +/- 4.2 instead of +/- 3.86.

Likely Voter Screen

We completed 799 interviews of registered voters in North Carolina. This report is limited to the 644 likely voters we identified from those initial interviews. In order for a respondent to qualify as a likely voter, they had to say they planned to vote in November, that they were absolutely certain they planned to vote and that they knew the precinct where they would vote.

Completion Criteria

An interview is complete only if a respondent progresses through the entire survey. Respondents who hang up before completing the last question or who refuse to more than 10 % of the questions are incompletes.

Support for Transparency

The Elon University Poll supports transparency in survey research and is a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative, which is a program promoting openness and transparency about survey research methods and operations among survey research professionals and the industry. All information about the Elon University Poll that we released to the public conforms to reporting conventions recommended by the American Association for Public Opinion Research and the National Council on Public Polls.

Question Construction and Question Order

In releasing survey results, the Elon University Poll provides the questions as worded and the order in which respondents receive these questions. In some cases question ordering rotates to avoid biases. In an effort to provide neutral, non-biased questions, we attempt to observe conventional question wording and question order protocols in all of our polls. In order to avoid recency or primacy effects, we randomize candidate names and directional response options (e.g. support / oppose) within the text of each question. We pretest every questionnaire multiple times before entering the field.

Branching Questions

For many questions with multiple response options, we program our surveys to branch into a secondary probing question.

“Don’t Know” & “Refused” Response Options

All questions include an option for respondents to volunteer “Don’t Know” or to refuse. Unless otherwise noted, interviewers do not prompt “don’t know” responses.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who pays for the Elon University Poll?

Elon University fully funds the Elon University Poll. The poll operates under the auspices of the College of Arts and Sciences at Elon University, led by Dean Gabie Smith. The Elon University administration, led by Dr. Leo Lambert, president of the university, fully supports the Elon University Poll as part of its service commitment to state, regional, and national constituents. Because of this generous support, the Elon University poll does not engage in any contract work. This permits the Elon University Poll to operate as a neutral, non-biased, non-partisan resource.

2. Does the Elon University Poll favor a certain party?

The Elon University Poll is an academic, non-partisan survey. We do not engage or work with any political candidates or parties. We employ best practices to ensure the results are not biased.

3. Where do you get your numbers?

We obtain a random sample of the North Carolina registered voter list from Survey Sample International (SSI). SSI enhances this list to provide up-to-date phone numbers for voters.

4. How many times do you call a number before giving up?

We will attempt to call each working number up to three times before removing it from the sample.

5. Do you call both cell phones and land lines?

Yes. We use a mixed sample of both cell phones and landlines.

6. Do you report non-response rates?

Yes. We report non-response rates based on AAPOR guidelines. The response rate for the September 12-16, 2016 poll was 9%. The response rate is calculated using the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) formula RR4.

7. Do you weight the data?

Yes. We apply weights to the data. An iterative proportional fitting algorithm generates weights based on Census and CDC population parameters of residents in North Carolina. Registered voter screens sometimes cause final weighted variables to not match those parameters exactly, which is intended.

8. Do you randomize response options?

Yes. We rotate the order of candidate names in all applicable questions. We also rotate order of text for other questions, such as those that include response options such as “more” and “less.” Furthermore, we rotate the order of some questions themselves if we suspect the order of a question could bias results.

9. How are students involved in the Elon University Poll?

Elon University students are involved with the survey as part of the University’s commitment to civic engagement and experiential learning where “students learn through doing.” Student interviewers receive training prior to engaging in interviewing. A team of student polling associates assists the director with data collection.

The Elon University Poll Team



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For more information on the Elon University Poll visit elon.edu/elonpoll or contact:

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