14th Annual Idaho Public Policy Survey

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Social Science Research Center

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Annually, the SSRC conducts a survey of Idahoans to identify public policy opinions and concerns. The study is provided to public officials and interested citizens. 530 adults in Idaho households representing six geographic regions were surveyed via telephone in November & December 2002. The survey standard error is +/- 4.2% at a 95% confidence-level for the total population.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE STATE OF THE STATE

- Over half of Idahoans believe that the state is headed in the right direction.
- Education and the economy are Idahoans' top concerns.
- K – 12 public education and higher education were identified as the programs most needing increased levels of funding.
- Over a third of Idahoans trust local government the most, up slightly from last year.
- Almost half of Idahoans believe that local government is most responsive to their needs, an increase from last year.
- Local government is again seen as the most prudent steward of tax dollar spending.
- The property tax remains the least fair tax according to Idahoans.

ISSUES CONCERNING IDAHO

- If the state experienced a major revenue shortfall, 49.7% of Idahoans would be in favor of a 1-cent sales tax increase, but 47.4% would oppose an increase, an even split considering the margin of error.
- A 1-cent sales tax increase would be favorable only if the additional money was to go to K-12 public education according to 40% of respondents.
- Currently, a 2/3 majority is required for passage in school bond elections. 67% said the approval level should not be reduced.
- 42% of Idaho residents said we should have wolves in the wilderness and roadless areas in the central part of the state while 39% disagreed.
- Idaho has the most Republican legislature in the country. When asked how concerned residents are about the dominance of Idaho politics by one party, 51% of Idahoans were concerned, 32% were not at all concerned.
- Following controversy over the legislature's repeal of term limits, the survey asked, "Under what circumstances should the legislature be allowed to repeal or change an initiative passed by Idaho citizens?" 31% said the legislature should never be allowed to change an initiative, 40% were open to the legislature making technical changes, and 24% said the legislature should be able to make any changes deemed necessary.
- 76% of the people of Idaho believe that party caucuses in the state legislature should be open.
- 80% believe that the death penalty is an appropriate punishment for first-degree murder, while agreement on the need for a moratorium was about evenly split.
- Diverting non-violent offenders from prison was affirmed by 72% of the population. 49% of respondents agreed that penalties for property crimes should not be reduced.

SUMMARY PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Age: respondents ranged from 18 to 88 years; the median age is 43.

Years in Idaho: responses ranged from less than 1 to 88 years; the median number of years in Idaho is 25.

Number of Adults in Household: 58.4% of households had two adults, 15.8% had three, and 11.5% were single adult households.

Race/Ethnicity: 91.1% of respondents identified themselves as 'White'; all other races and ethnicities polled accounted for 3% or less of respondents.

Gender: 49.3% male and 50.7% female

Educational Level: 7% hold less than a high school diploma; 22% have at least a 4 - year degree; 7% hold a master's degree or better, and 64% have a high school diploma, GED, vocational certificate, associate degree or some college.

Household Income: 11% of those polled reported household income of less than $20,000 annually; 22% reported $70,000 and over, and 60% reported incomes between $20,000 and $70,000 per year.

Political Orientation: 44% of respondents said they were conservative; 20% liberal; and the balance of 36% claimed to be 'middle-of-the-road' in political orientation.

Political Affiliation: 38% reported affiliating with the Republican party; 23% Democratic party; and 34% said they were Independent.

For more detail, see the Demographic Summaries in Appendix I.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATION

The survey is designed to identify differences across six geographic regions, which are comprised of counties in Idaho. See **Figure 1** below. A stratified sample across the regions allows for statistical comparison. The standard error for the sample of each region is identified in **Table 1**.

Figure 1
County Map of Idaho with Regional Boundaries & List of Counties within Region

1—Panhandle	Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah, Shoshone
2—North Central	Latah, Clearwater, Nez Perce, Lewis, Idaho
3—Southwest	Adams, Valley, Washington, Payette, Gem, Boise, Canyon, Ada, Elmore, Owyhee
4—South Central	Camas, Blaine, Gooding, Lincoln, Minidoka, Jerome, Twin Falls, Cassia
5—Southeast	Bingham, Power, Bannock, Oneida, Franklin, Bear Lake, Caribou
6—East Central	Lemhi, Custer, Butte, Clark, Fremont, Jefferson, Madison, Teton, Bonneville

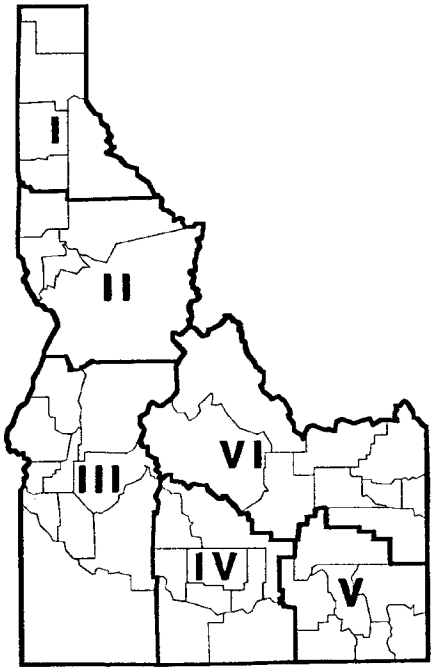


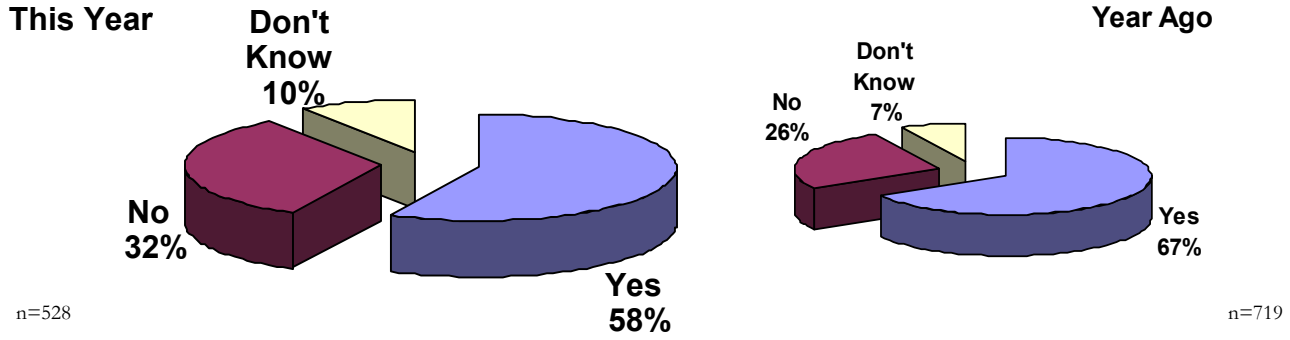
Table 1
Regional Response Statistics

	N	Pct.	Std. Error 95% Conf. Interval
1—Panhandle	91	14.4	+/-10.3%
2—North Central	83	8.5	+/-10.8%
3—Southwest	89	41.4	+/-10.4%
4—South Central	83	12.2	+/-10.6%
5—Southeast	86	11.4	+/-10.6%
6—East Central	90	12.3	+/-10.3%
Total	522	100.0	+/-4.2%

For summaries of regional responses by question, see Appendix II.

PUBLIC POLICY SURVEY QUESTIONS

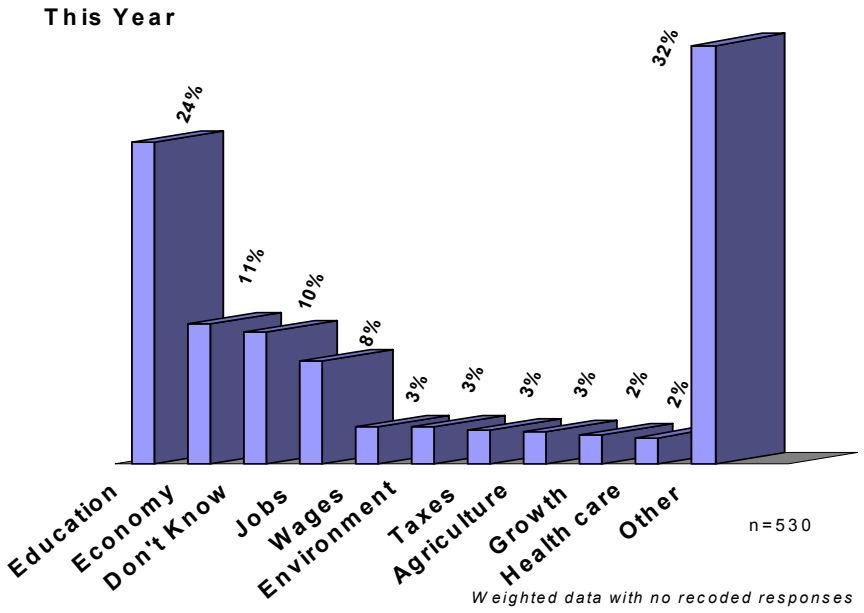
In general terms, do you think the state is headed in the right direction?



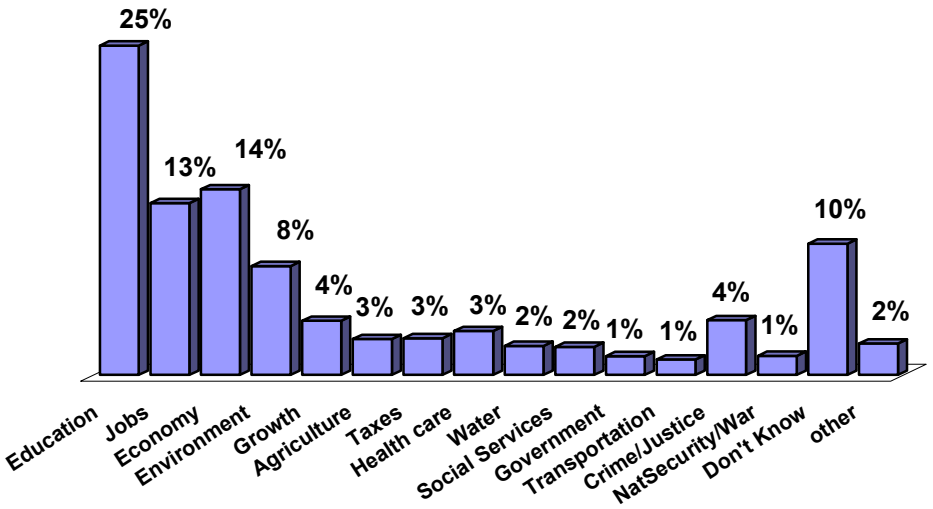
Over half of Idahoans (58%) believe that the state is headed in the right direction. However, this positive response has been declining over time. Last year 67% agreed, and in 1999, 79% agreed.

- 32% say the state is not headed in the right direction.
- Regionally, only residents in the North Central region reported a higher percent of 'Yes' responses versus last year. 'No' responses increased in the Panhandle, Southwest and East Central regions.

In your opinion what is the single MOST important problem facing Idaho today?

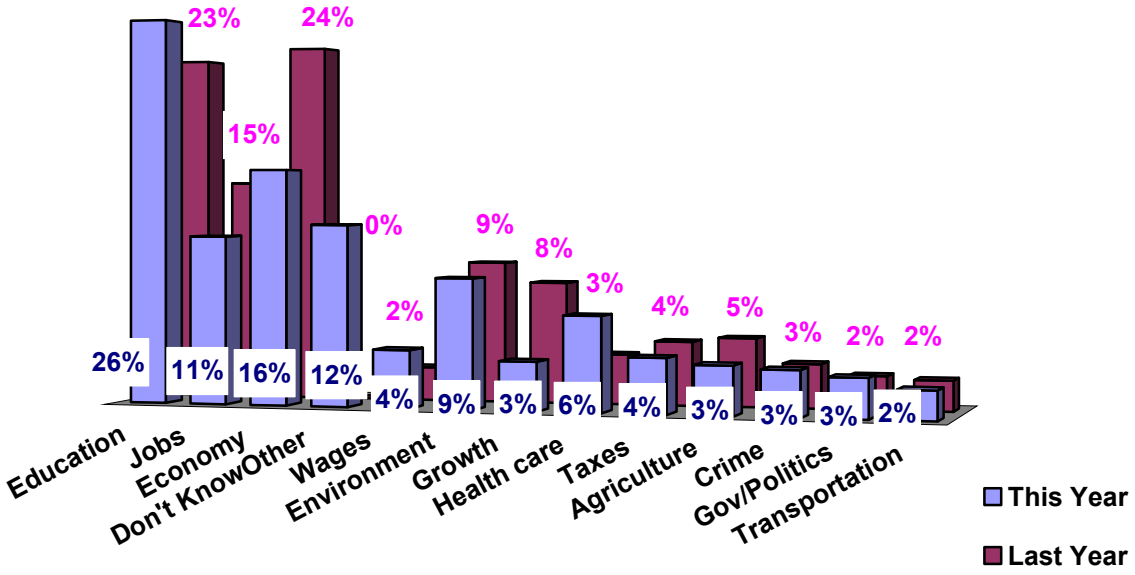


Education and the economy were Idahoans' top concerns this year. Last year, the economy was mentioned by 24% of respondents, and 23% mentioned education as the most important issue. **For trend data, see Appendix III**.



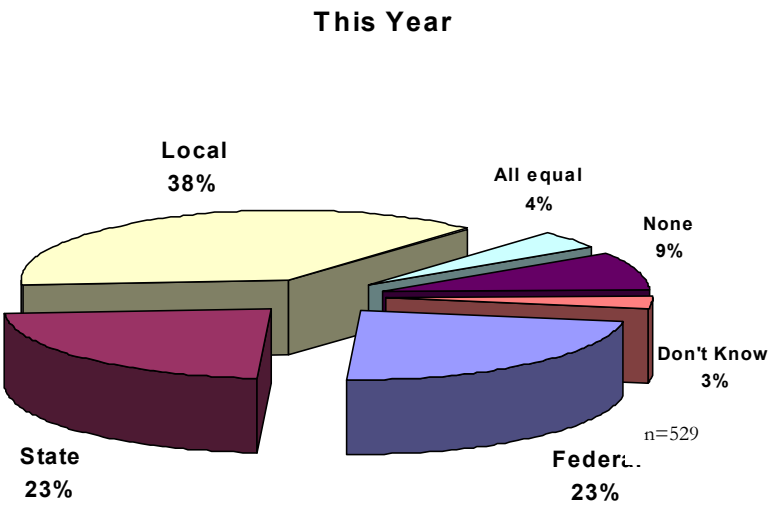
When 'open-ended' responses (the 32% indicating 'Other') are included in the answer set, the overall concern for education and the economy remain most important, although other issues emerge.

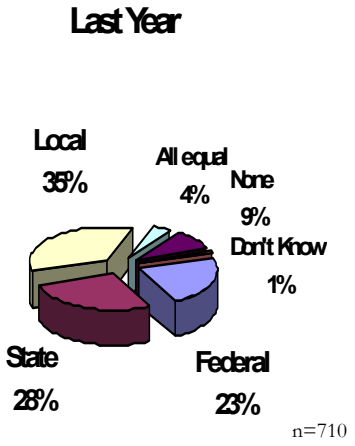
This question has been asked every year and is a key question in the policy survey. In 1990, the first year of the Public Policy Survey, education and the economy were identified as the most important issues facing Idaho. Trend data is shown in **Appendix III**



The next series of questions ask about citizen's perceptions of trust, responsiveness, and tax fairness from various levels of government.

In general, do you have the most trust in federal, state or local government?

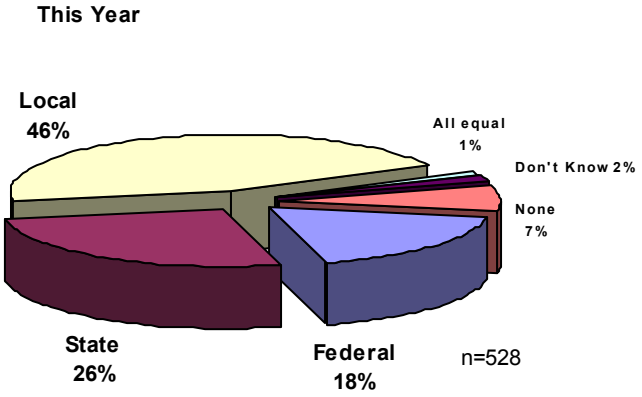


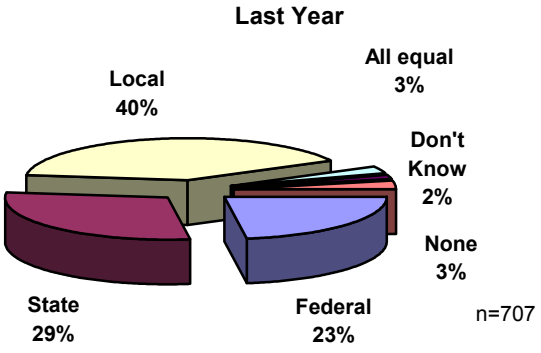


Over a third of Idahoans trust local government the most, up slightly from last year.

- Trust in state government declined 4.7 percentage points versus last year, while trust in the federal government remained at 23%.
- Regionally, the federal government is most negatively perceived in the North Central part of the state. The North and East Central regions trust local government more than other regions.

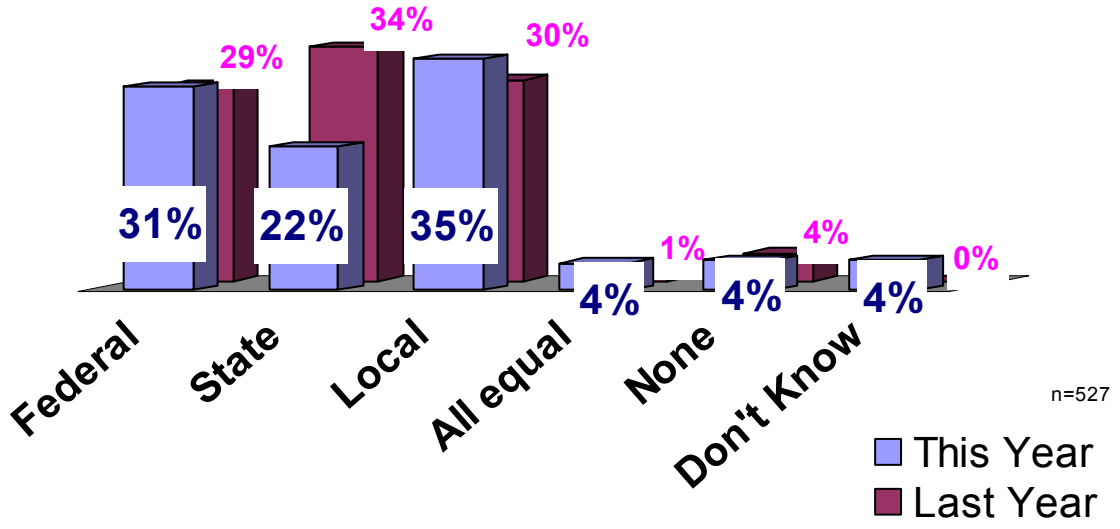
Which level of government do you think best responds to your needs?





Almost half of Idahoans believe that local government is most responsive to their needs, an increase from last year.

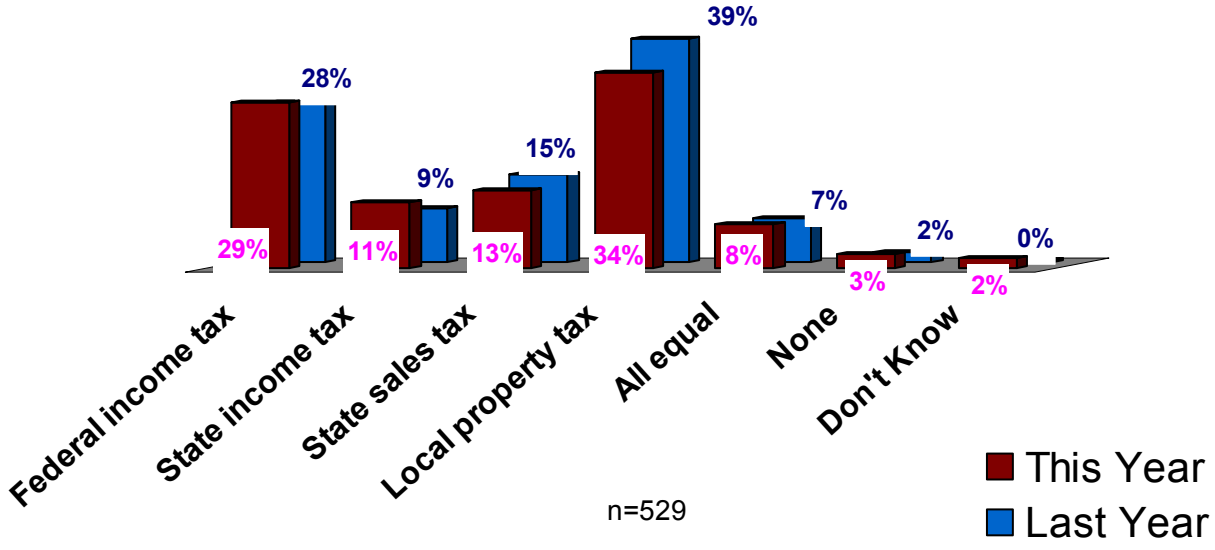
From which level of government do you think you get the most for your tax money?



Local government is perceived as the most prudent steward of tax dollar spending.

- Dissatisfaction with spending by the state is evidenced by a decline of 12 percentage points from last year.

Which tax do you think is the least fair?



The property tax remains the least fair tax according to Idahoans.

For trend data on perceptions of government, see **Appendix III**.

LEVEL OF FUNDING FOR STATE PROGRAM AND SERVICE AREAS

As in previous years, respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on the appropriateness of funding-levels for program and service areas in Idaho.

What is the appropriate funding level for each program? Should funding be increased, stay the same, or decreased?

Program	Increased		Stay Same		Decrease		Don't Know*
%	This Year	Last Year*	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year
K-12 Public Education	72.7	75.3	23.7	19.4	3.4	5.0	0.1
Higher Education	60.0	59.2	33.3	36.0	5.9	4.8	0.8
Healthcare	54.5	55.2	36.4	36.2	7.2	8.5	1.7
Poverty	46.9	50.1	40.2	40.1	8.1	9.8	4.5
Seniors	53.9	55.2	41.2	40.8	2.3	4.8	2.6
Youth	57.1	64.4	37.4	31.7	4.5	3.8	0.9

*Last Year's numbers adjusted by removing Don't Know/No Response data.

K – 12 public education and higher education were identified as the programs most needing increased levels of funding.

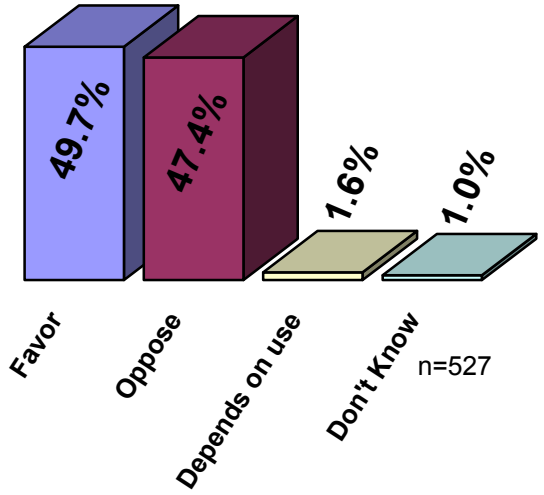
- Spending increases for healthcare and increased funding for programs for youth, senior citizens and people in poverty were also indicated.

See **Appendix III** for a complete list of responses to funding level questions.

QUESTIONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

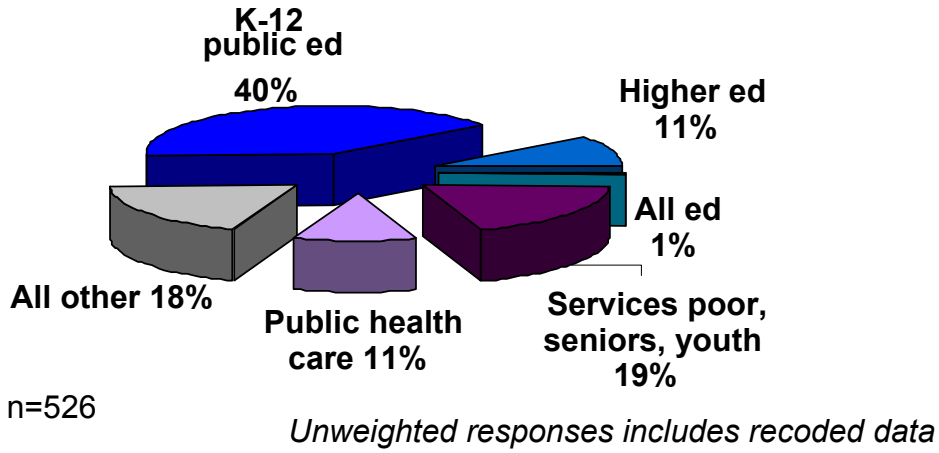
The following questions reflect a variety of issues that were asked in addition to the core survey questions.

If the state experienced a major revenue shortfall next fiscal year, would you be in favor of or opposed to a 1-cent sales tax increase?



If the state experienced a major revenue shortfall, 49.7% of Idahoans would be in favor of a 1-cent sales tax increase, but 47.4% would oppose an increase, an even split considering the margin of error.

- Last year, respondents were asked the acceptability of using the state sales tax to raise revenues for programs and services. 61% of Idahoans said this was 'Moderately' to 'Very' acceptable. 38% said 'Not Very' or 'Not at All' acceptable.

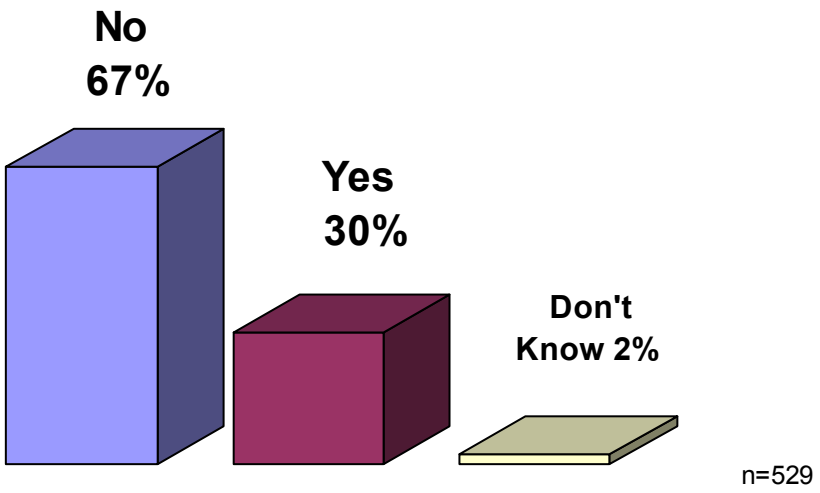


According to 40% of respondents, a 1-cent sales tax increase would be favorable only if the additional money was to go to K-12 public education needs. If the funds were to go to any educational program, 51% of Idahoans would support a sales tax increase (up to 52% with recoded responses.)

- Only 13% of respondents indicated that the proceeds should go to the general fund for use as the governor and legislature see fit.

- 26% would designate the funds from a sales tax increase to programs for youth, the poor, disabled people, or seniors (17%), and public healthcare (9%). (With recoded answers included, the total for these programs and services increases to 29%.)

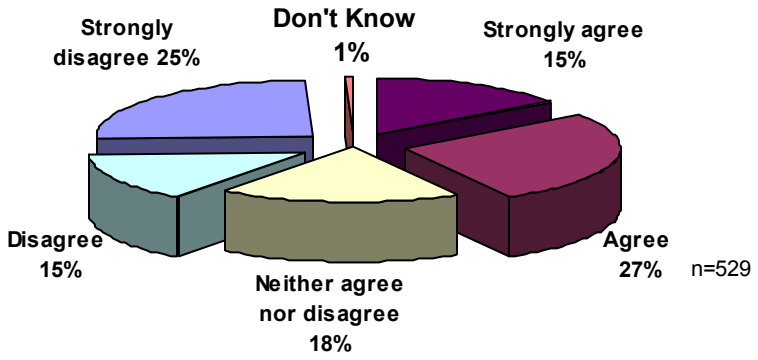
Currently, a 2/3 majority is required for passage in school bond elections. Should this approval level be reduced?



Slightly over 67% said the approval level should not be reduced, while only 30% of respondents said the approval level should be reduced.

- In 1999, Idahoans were less emphatic about a potential change in the two-thirds majority; 42% answered 'Yes' to this question, and 53% said 'No'.

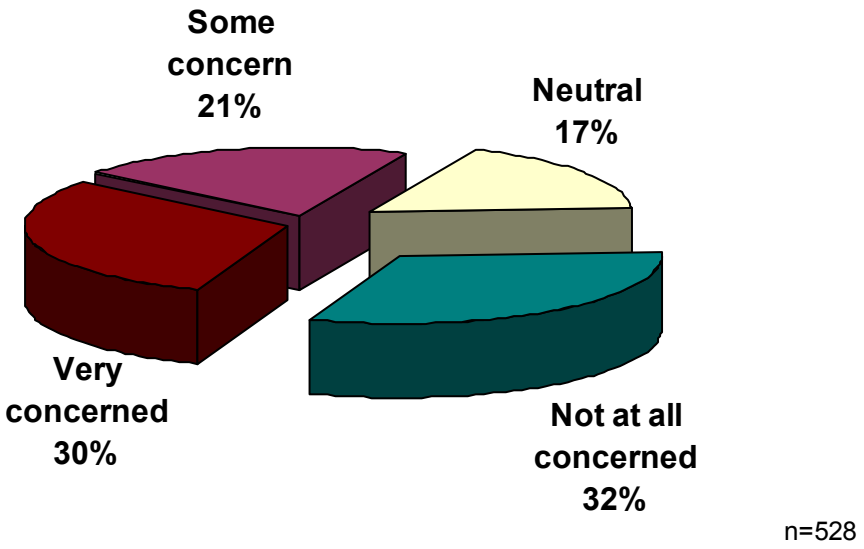
Idaho should have wolves in the wilderness and roadless areas in the central part of the state. Agree or disagree?



This question was asked again since the state's wolf plan was debated last legislative session. 42% of Idaho residents said we should have wolves in the wilderness and roadless areas in the central part of the state, while 39% disagreed. 18% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- When this question was asked in 1995, 47% of Idahoan's agreed with the statement, 38% disagreed, and only 15% of respondents could neither agree nor disagree.

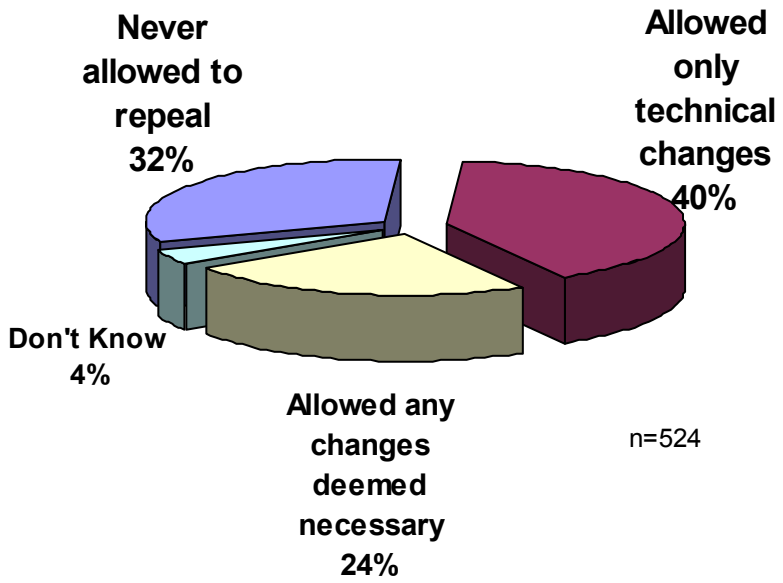
Idaho has the most Republican legislature in the country. How concerned are you about the dominance of Idaho politics by one party?



Slightly over half of Idaho residents were concerned about the dominance of Idaho politics by one party, almost a third were not at all concerned, while 17% were neutral on the issue.

- In 1999, 36% of respondents were not concerned about single-party dominance in the state. Those indicating some level of concern was 54%, compared with 51% this year.

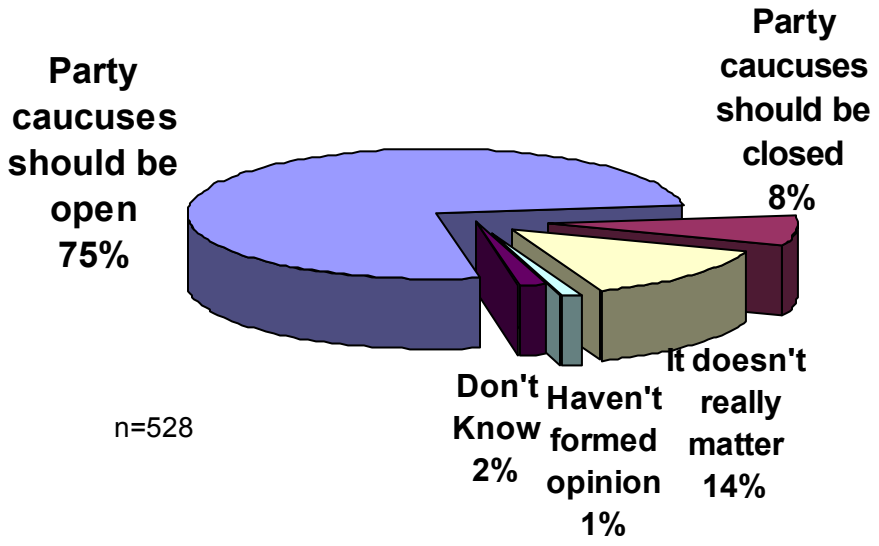
Under what circumstances should the legislature be allowed to repeal or change an initiative passed by Idaho citizens? The legislature should:



This question followed controversy over the legislature's repeal of a citizen term limit law passed by initiative. The survey sought to determine the circumstances where the legislature should be allowed to repeal or change a citizen initiative.

- 31% said the legislature should never be allowed to change an initiative.
- 40% were open to the legislature making technical changes, and 24% said the legislature should be able to make any change deemed necessary.
- In 1992, a question specifically asked if term limits should be imposed for elected officials. 76% said that term limits for the congressional delegation should be imposed, and 74% agreed with term limits for state elected officials.

Regarding the closed party caucuses in the state legislature, which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about this issue?

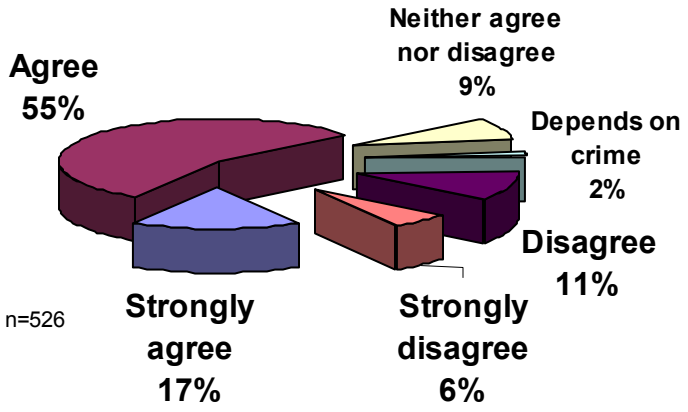


This question sought to measure the public's perception of the practice of closed party caucuses in the legislature. Three-quarters of Idaho citizens believe that party caucuses should be open to the public. Overwhelmingly, Idaho citizens believe in open party caucuses during the legislative session.

- The full text of the question is as follows: *"Lately there has been some discussion about closed party caucuses in the state legislature. Some people argue that the caucuses should be closed to the public and media so that legislators can have frank discussions about party positions and issues before they return to the floor for public debate and vote. Other people argue that important policy decisions are often made in these caucuses, and they should therefore be open to public scrutiny. Which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about this issue?"* The answer set was: *"Which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about this issue? 1. Caucuses should be open to the public, 2. Caucuses should be kept closed, or 3. It really doesn't make much difference. And, 4. I haven't thought enough about the issue to form and opinion."*

The following questions measured citizen's level of agreement on several statements regarding criminal justice issues.

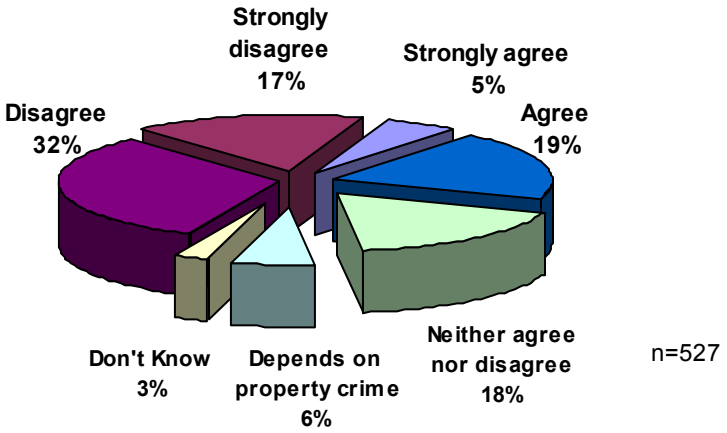
In some instances, non-violent offenders could be removed from prison after a short period of incarceration, and then supervised in the community.



Most respondents, 72%, agree that non-violent offenders could be removed from prison after a short stay.

- This question was also asked in 1998. At that time, 62% of those surveyed agreed and 35% disagreed.

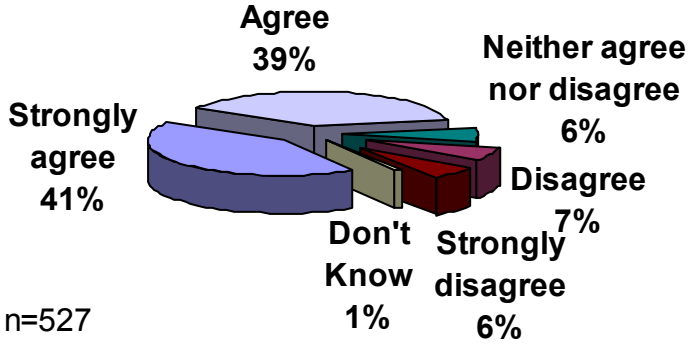
The legislature should reduce the penalties for certain property crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, so that the convicted would not have to go to prison.



25% of those polled believed that the legislature should take this action while, while a greater number could not agree or disagree, or felt it would depend on the crime. 49% of the respondents disagreed.

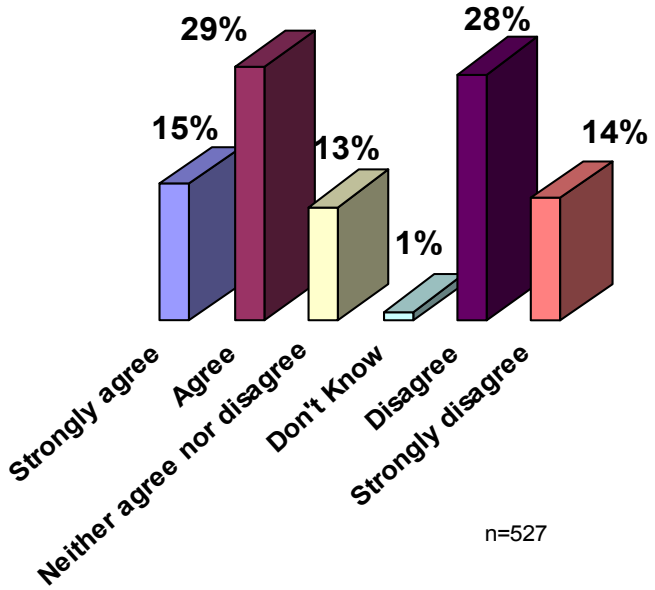
- 47% of respondents to the 1998 survey supported reducing penalties for property crimes. However, 42% disagreed with the effort.

Capital punishment, the death penalty, is appropriate for people convicted of first-degree murder.



Over 80% of Idahoans affirmed that the death penalty is an appropriate punishment for capital murder.

Idaho should impose a moratorium on the use of the death penalty until it can be better determined if the death penalty is being administered accurately and fairly in the state.



This question was asked due to a recent Supreme Court decision. Some states implemented a moratorium on the death penalty until state laws could be brought into conformity with the ruling.

- Equal numbers of Idaho citizens felt that a moratorium should (44%) or should not be (42%) imposed.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Annually, the College of Social Science and Public Affairs, Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at Boise State University conducts a statewide survey of Idahoans to identify public policy opinions and concerns. The results of the survey are provided to policy makers and any interested citizen. This document is the full and final report of the survey findings. An executive summary was provided in January 2003 to legislators, state agencies, the press and public. No interpretation of the findings is included, although the results are reported in percentages for comparability with prior years.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was administered to 530 Idaho adults (+18 years old) by telephone following the November 2002 mid-term election and before December 15, 2002. The overall statewide population is represented by the survey sample at a standard error estimated to be +/- 4.2% at the 95% confidence level.

Since its inception in 1990, the survey has included a set of "core questions" which have been asked each year. These core questions relate to the problems facing Idaho, trust and confidence in government, opinions on taxes, and satisfaction with funding for program and service areas. Additional questions are asked that attempt to identify or clarify issues that are of interest and concern to Idaho citizens.

Additionally, a stratified sample also allows for general comparisons across six geographic regions. (Statistically speaking, the survey results are representative of the population of each region.) **Figure I** on Page 5 maps the regions in the state, and **Table I** identifies the standard error of the sample for each region.

The survey instrument, technical requirements, reporting and analysis for the survey were prepared by the SSRC. The Institutional Review Board at BSU approved the research protocol and questionnaire for use with human subjects. Respondents to the survey are guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, and they are allowed to refuse to answer the survey or any question within the survey.

Clearwater Research, Inc. of Boise, ID (208-658-0001 www.clearwater-research.com) utilized their Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system to collect the survey data and deliver a weighted sample to the SSRC for analysis.

CONTACT INFORMATION

View the current survey online at http://sspa.boisestate.edu/ssrc

Several past surveys are also available for download in .pdf format.

To obtain a copy of the data set, please call 1-208-426-1835.

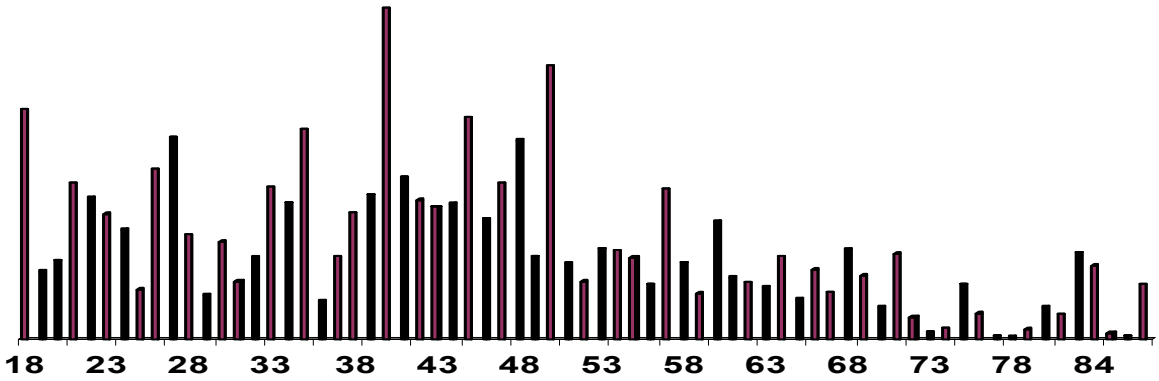
Copies are also available to Idahoans upon request; and archive copies are available at the Albertsons Library at Boise State University, and at the State Reference Library in Boise, Idaho.

Appendix I

Summary Tables—Demographic Variables

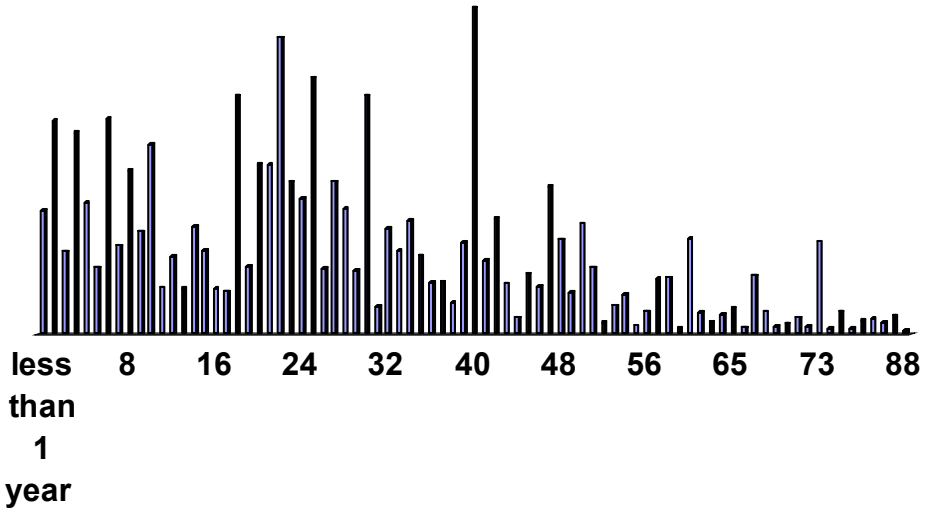
Age

Range: 18 – 88 **Median:** 43 **Mean:** 44 **Mode:** 40 **STD:** 16.8 **N:** 530



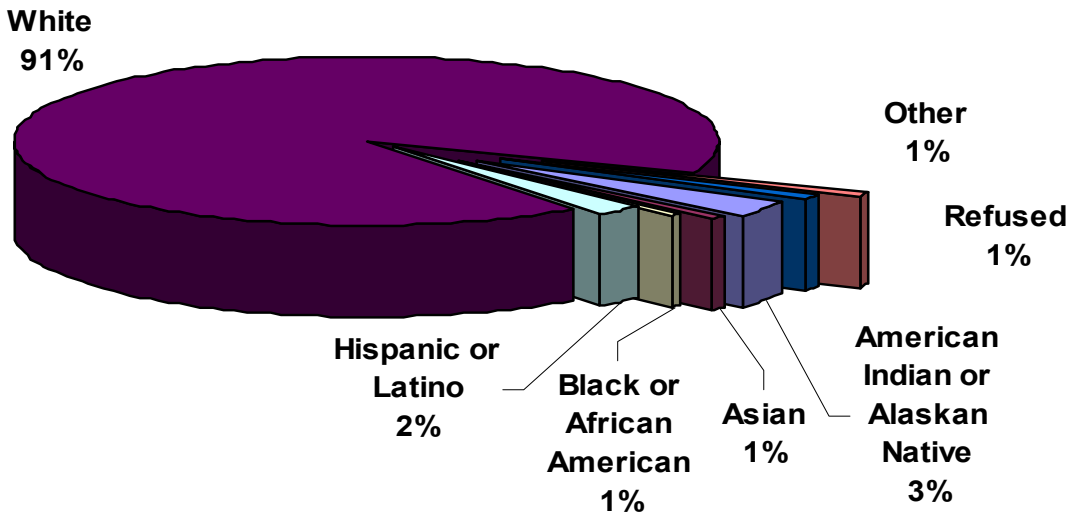
Years in Idaho

Range: <1 – 88 **Median:** 25 **Mean:** 28 **Mode:** 40 **STD:** 19.0 **N:**530



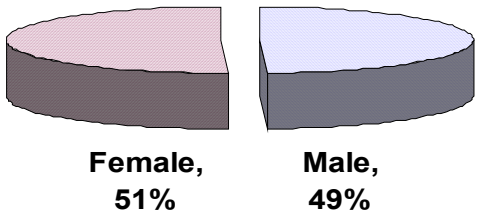
Racial and Ethnic Background

	This Year		Last Year	
	N	Pct.	N.	Pct.
American Indian or Alaskan Native	14	3%	14	2%
Asian	3	1%	3	1%
Black or African American	2	1%	2	1%
Hispanic or Latino	10	2%	20	3%
White	488	91%	660	92%
Other	8	1%	12	1%
Refused	5	1%	8	0%
Total	530	100%	719	100%



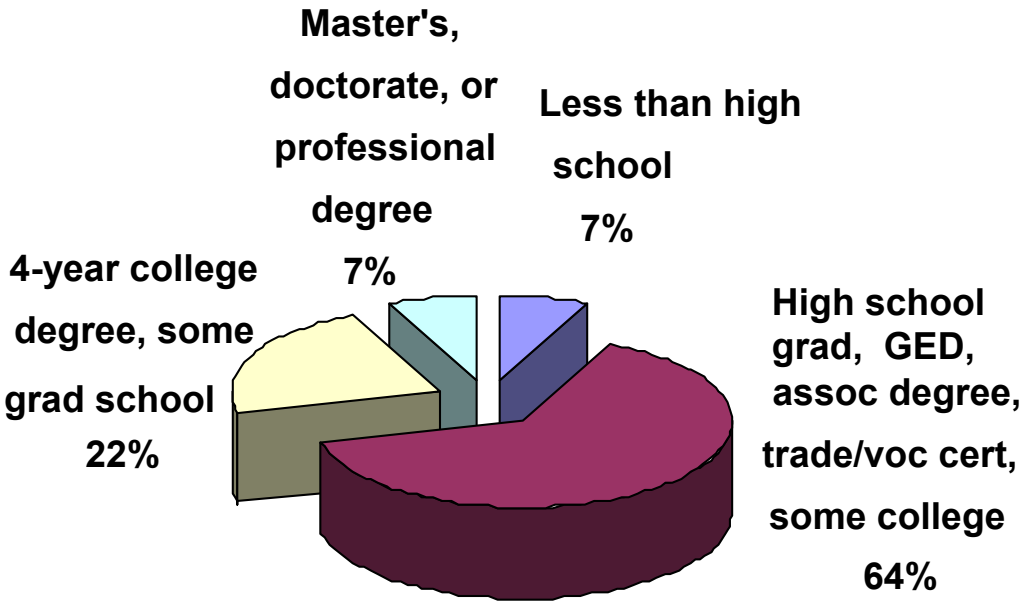
Gender

	N	Pct.
Male	236	49.3
Female	294	50.7
Total	530	100.0

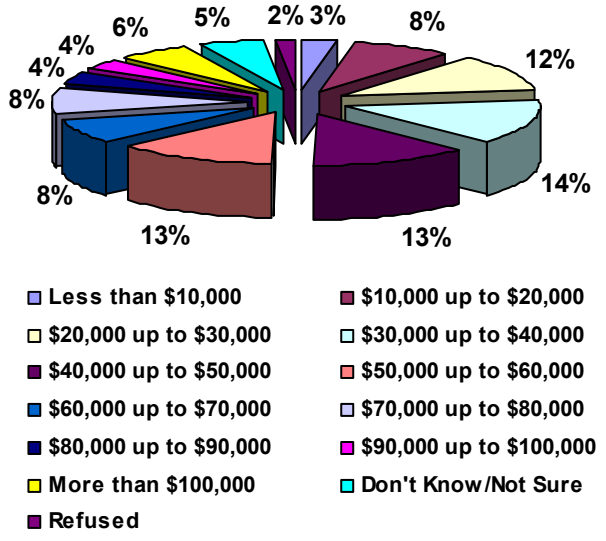


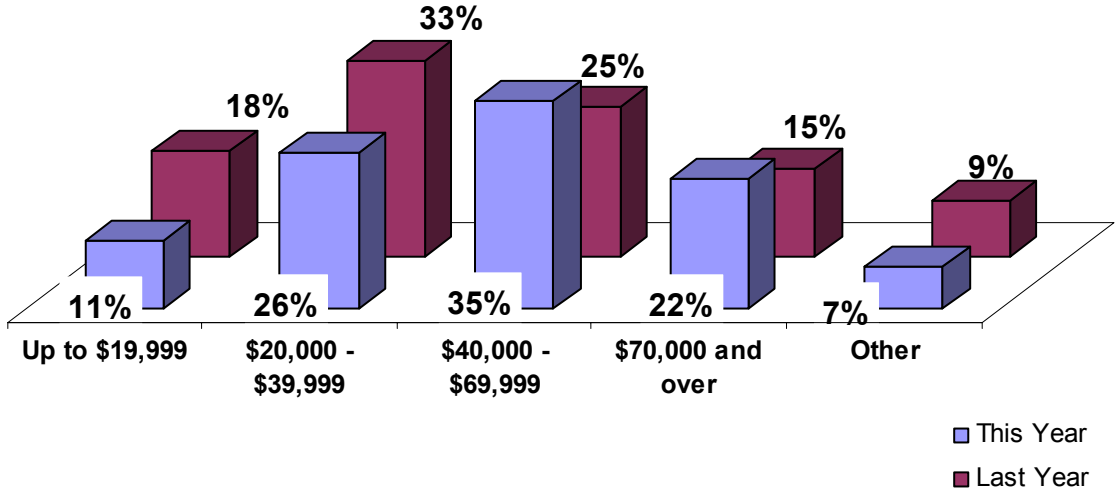
Education

	This Year			Last Year	
	N	Pct.		N	Pct.
Less than high school	32	7.0		47	6.7
High school graduate or (GED)	149	26.2		177	25.1
2 year or associate degree	34	5.2		32	4.5
Some college but less than 4 years	134	28.3		191	27.1
Trade or Vocational certificate	22	4.1		57	8.1
4 year college graduate	110	20.3		119	16.3
Some graduate school	12	1.7		21	3.0
Master's degree	27	5.8		41	5.8
Doctorate or professional degree	7	1.1		20	2.8
Something else	2	.2		5	.07
Don't Know	1	.1			



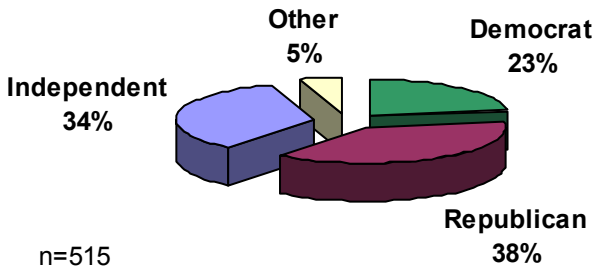
Household Income (Self-Reported)

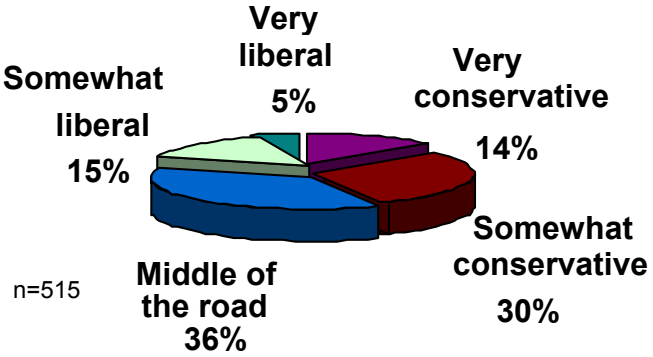




Political Affiliation

	This Year			Last Year			1999
	N	Pct.		N	Pct.		Pct
Democrat	124	22%		157	22%		22%
Republican	194	37%		286	41%		41%
Independent	161	33%		197	28%		25%
Other	36	5%		41	6%		10.0%
Refused/Don't Know	15	3%		25	4%		2%
Total	530	100%		706	100%		100%





Political Ideology

	This Year			Last Year			1999
	N	Pct.		N	Pct.		Pct.
Very conservative	82	14%		115	16%		8%
Somewhat conservative	170	30%		242	34%		43%
Middle-of-the-road	182	37%		214	30%		34%
Somewhat liberal	71	15%		104	14%		12%
Very Liberal	22	5%		36	5%		2%
Refused/Don't Know	3	0%		9	1%		2%
Total	530	100%		719	100%		100%

Appendix II

PUBLIC POLICY SURVEY QUESTIONS
Statewide Summary Tables

Regional Responses

1—Panhandle	Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah, Shoshone
2—North Central	Latah, Clearwater, Nez Perce, Lewis, Idaho
3—Southwest	Adams, Valley, Washington, Payette, Gem, Boise, Canyon, Ada, Elmore, Owyhee
4—South Central	Camas, Blaine, Gooding, Lincoln, Minidoka, Jerome, Twin Falls, Cassia
5—Southeast	Bingham, Power, Bannock, Oneida, Franklin, Bear Lake, Caribou
6—East Central	Lemhi, Custer, Butte, Clark, Fremont, Jefferson, Madison, Teton, Bonneville

See Figure I for Region/County Map.

Most Important Issue -- Regional Responses*

%	1—Panhandle		2—North Central		3—Southwest		4—South Central		5—Southeast		6—East Central		Statewide	
	This Year	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year
Education	**14.8**	11.8	**24.3**	14.8	**25.1**	19.3	**12.0**	13.2	**35.1**	18.1	**34.8**	25.0	**24.3**	17.5
Jobs	**9.0**	21.6	**8.0**	16.4	**5.6**	9.2	**11.3**	6.6	**14.8**	14.5	**15.3**	5.7	**8.0**	11.3
Economy	**7.7**	9.8	**9.8**	23.0	**12.8**	16.6	**10.2**	18.7	**10.1**	25.3	**10.4**	22.7	**10.9**	18.2
Environment	**5.3**	9.8	**3.8**	8.2	**3.7**	4.1	**1.2**	6.6	**0.9**	8.4	**0.0**	12.5	**2.9**	7.3
Growth	**0.0**	3.9	**1.7**	3.3	**2.9**	10.5	**5.5**	5.5	**0.0**	1.2	**2.2**	1.1	**2.3**	6.0
Agriculture	**0.0**	2.9	**1.2**	3.3	**0.8**	2.0	**11.2**	6.6	**2.3**	3.6	**2.3**	5.7	**2.3**	3.5
Taxes	**0.0**	2.0	**1.8**	1.6	**2.3**	4.4	**1.7**	3.3	**6.4**	2.4	**4.6**	2.3	**2.6**	3.3
Healthcare	**3.8**	2.0	**1.5**	1.6	**0.7**	4.1	**2.1**	1.1	**1.3**	1.2	**5.8**	1.1	**2.1**	2.6
Wages	**7.8**	2.0	**1.2**	0.0	**2.3**	2.0	**2.6**	2.2	**0.9**	1.2	**2.3**	1.1	**2.9**	1.7
Other	**46.6**	21.6	**34.3**	16.3	**34.4**	23.0[a]	**24.1**	28.6[b]	**17.4**	16.9[c]	**24.6**	11.3	**31.7**	15.4
Don't Know	**5.2**	12.7	**12.6**	11.5	**9.4**	4.4	**18.2**	7.7	**10.9**	7.2	**7.6**	11.4	**10.1**	7.7

*Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Weighted data; no recoded data.
a: includes Crime 3.7%; Transportation 2.7%; and Politics 2.4%.
b: includes Politics 2.2%.
c: includes Crime 2.4%.

Is the State Headed in Right Direction? -- Regional Responses

%	1—Panhandle		2—North Central		3—Southwest		4—South Central		5—Southeast		6—East Central		Statewide	
	This Year	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year	**This Year**	Last Year
Yes	**52.9**	65.0	**62.2**	60.7	**54.1**	67.5	**64.6**	67.4	**66.5**	66.2	**55.9**	68.8	**57.5**	66.6
No	**36.3**	27.9	**25.0**	32.2	**35.4**	23.9	**26.4**	27.7	**29.4**	27.6	**35.1**	25.4	**32.5**	26.3
Don't Know	**10.9**	7.1	**12.7**	7.1	**10.0**	8.6	**8.3**	4.9	**4.2**	6.2	**9.1**	5.7	**9.7**	7.1

*Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Perceptions of Government -- Regional Responses

Level of Government – Trust Most*														
%	1—Panhandle		2—North Central		3—Southwest		4—South Central		5—Southeast		6—East Central		Statewide	
	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year
Federal	26.9	23.1	16.8	23.7	23.2	26.3	29.0	15.7	19.6	22.6	18.4	16.1	22.9	22.6
State	21.6	27.9	23.0	30.5	21.6	27.3	27.8	29.2	28.0	26.2	15.6	28.7	22.5	27.9
Local	33.8	31.7	43.6	35.6	42.8	33.8	20.5	38.2	35.1	42.9	46.1	34.5	38.4	35.3
All Equal	3.6	3.8	5.9	3.4	2.0	1.4	5.5	7.9	3.2	2.4	10.0	9.2	4.1	3.8
None	11.9	13.5	5.6	5.1	7.5	10.2	12.2	6.7	10.3	3.6	8.2	10.3	9.0	9.1
Don't Know	2.4	0.0	4.3	1.7	2.9	1.0	5.0	2.2	3.7	2.4	1.8	1.1	3.2	1.3
Level of Government – Most Responsive*														
Federal	23.8	24.3	19.3	25.0	19.9	28.6	14.6	12.2	11.9	17.9	15.2	14.8	18.3	22.7
State	23.6	31.1	28.4	33.3	25.4	22.1	29.7	43.3	30.7	34.5	18.2	27.3	25.6	29.1
Local	40.4	37.9	37.5	31.7	45.5	42.5	41.6	36.7	48.7	39.3	59.3	46.6	45.7	40.3
All Equal	1.9	3.9	1.7	3.3	0.5	2.4	.09	1.1	0.0	1.2	1.9	6.8	1.0	2.9
None	10.4	2.9	5.5	6.7	8.7	3.1	3.6	5.6	6.8	2.4	3.6	1.1	7.2	3.3
Don't Know	0.0	0.0	6.4	0.0	0.0	1.4	9.5	1.1	0.4	4.8	1.8	3.4	2.0	1.7
Level of Government – Get Most for Tax Dollar*														
Federal	26.9	24.3	28.7	28.3	30.4	34.4	30.6	29.2	32.9	25.6	36.1	17.2	30.8	28.7
State	31.7	35.0	31.0	38.3	15.3	28.6	27.9	36.0	21.4	40.2	15.5	43.7	21.3	34.4
Local	27.1	28.2	27.6	21.7	39.7	30.6	26.9	28.1	36.2	30.5	37.2	33.3	34.6	29.5
All Equal	3.3	1.9	3.7	3.3	5.1	0.0	4.2	0.0	1.8	1.2	3.7	0.0	4.1	0.7
None	2.5	7.8	3.4	5.0	5.2	4.1	8.0	4.5	3.4	0.0	3.3	3.4	4.6	4.2
Don't Know	6.9	2.9	4.4	3.3	4.3	2.4	2.4	2.2	4.3	2.4	4.2	2.3	4.4	2.5
Level of Government – *Least* Fair Tax*														
Federal Income	32.1	26.2	24.0	23.0	26.4	28.1	31.0	28.6	30.4	19.0	29.0	31.8	28.3	26.9
State Income	13.3	19.4	17.4	4.9	13.5	7.8	5.5	9.9	4.0	6.0	12.0	6.8	11.6	9.1
State Sales	16.0	10.7	10.0	13.1	13.5	18.6	11.9	12.1	12.9	14.3	16.0	11.4	13.6	14.8
Local Property	24.4	33.0	41.5	47.5	31.3	33.9	36.5	39.6	45.6	45.2	33.3	38.6	33.7	37.5
All Equal	8.7	5.8	5.5	6.6	9.5	9.8	7.7	4.4	5.9	8.3	5.8	2.3	7.9	7.2
None	3.0	1.9	1.0	3.3	3.9	.03	4.1	2.2	0.0	4.8	1.2	2.3	2.8	1.8
Don't Know	1.8	2.9	0.6	1.6	2.0	1.4	3.3	3.3	1.2	2.4	2.8	6.8	2.0	2.6

***May not add to 100% due to rounding and omission of 'Refused' data**

Appendix III

Trend data for various core questions

The Five Most Important Issues Facing Idaho, 1990 to the Present

	Education	Economy	Environment	Drugs	Taxes	Growth	Crime	Politics	Agriculture	Healthcare	Social Services
1990	1	2	3	4	5	·	·	·	·	·	·
1991	1	3	2	·	4	·	·	·	·	·	·
1992	3	2	1	·	4	·	·	·	·	·	·
1993	2	1	3	·	5	4	·	·	·	·	·
1994	3	2	4	·	5	1	·	·	·	·	·
1995	2	3	5	·	4	1	·	·	·	·	·
1996	2	3	·	·	5	1	4	·	·	·	·
1997	2	4	5	·	3	1	·	·	·	·	·
1998	2	·	3	·	4	1	5	·	·	·	·
1999	1	4	5	·	·	3	·	2	·	·	·
2000	1	·	3	·	·	2	5	·	4	·	·
2001	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·
2002	**2**	**1***	**3**	·	·	·	·	·	·	**4**	**5**

*Includes 'Jobs' & 'Wages'

For twelve years, "education" has been identified as one of the top three issues of importance to Idahoans. Issues such as "the economy" and "the environment" have varied in level of importance. Two issues emerged in the 14th Annual survey, "Healthcare" and a variety of social service concerns for youth, seniors, the disabled, and those in poverty.

Is the State Headed in the Right Direction?

	1999		2000		2001		2002	
	N	**Pct.**	**N**	**Pct.**	**N**	**Pct**	**N**	**Pct.**
Yes	569	79.0	484	68.6	479	66.6	320	57.5
No	108	15.0	125	17.7	189	26.3	155	32.5
Don't Know/Missing Data	43	6.0	97	13.7	51	7.1	55	10.0
Total	720	100.0	706	100.0	719	100.0	530	100.0

Perceptions of Trust, Responsiveness of Government, Opinions on Taxation, 1999-2002

	%	Federal	State*	Local	All	None	Total**
Level of government in which you have the most trust and confidence	1999	13.1	32.2	47.8	6.9	0.0	100%
	2000	13.4	32.4	35.5	6.4	12.2	100%
	2001	22.7	27.8	35.3	3.7	9.2	100%
	2002	22.9	23.1	37.9	4.0	8.8	100%
Level of government which best responds to your needs	1999	11.5	30.2	47.3	7.6	3.4	100%
	2000	14.3	32.1	43.9	3.3	6.4	100%
	2001	22.8	29.1	40.3	2.9	3.4	100%
	2002	18.0	26.2	45.3	0.9	7.3	100%
Level of government that you get the most for your tax money	1999	19.5	37.2	34.4	5.7	3.2	100%
	2000	21.7	37.8	30.3	3.0	7.1	100%
	2001	28.7	34.2	29.4	0.7	4.3	100%
	2002	30.5	21.5	34.8	4.0	4.5	100%
Level of government with *least* fair taxes	1999	59.7	22.1	7.4	7.0	3.8	100%
	2000	33.4	18.8	38.7	7.0	2.1	100%
	2001	27.6	24.5	38.5	7.4	1.8	100%
	2002	28.6	24.8	34.0	7.8	2.7	100%

* State income tax and state sales tax are combined for presentation purposes.
**Will not total 100%; Don't Know/No Response removed for year-to-year comparison.

Desired Level of Funding for State Program and Service Areas

Program	Increased		Stay Same		Decrease		Don't Know*
%	This Year	Last Year*	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year
K-12 Public Education	72.7	75.3	23.7	19.4	3.4	5.0	0.1
Higher Education	60.0	59.2	33.3	36.0	5.9	4.8	0.8
Prof/Tech Education	44.2	41.9	48.1	51.5	5.6	6.6	2.1
Healthcare	54.5	55.2	36.4	36.2	7.2	8.5	1.7
Poverty	46.9	50.1	40.2	40.1	8.1	9.8	4.5
Seniors	53.9	55.2	41.2	40.8	2.3	4.8	2.6
Youth	57.1	64.4	37.4	31.7	4.5	3.8	0.9
Environmental Protection	28.5	29.0	45.1	46.5	24.4	24.5	2.0
Economic Development	45.5	42.5	40.4	47.3	11.4	10.3	2.6
Highways/Roads/ Bridges	39.2	48.3	53.3	47.1	7.0	3.9	0.5
Jails/Prisons	20.9	27.2	53.6	54.6	22.6	18.3	2.8
Law Enforcement	41.8	46.2	49.9	47.1	7.8	6.7	0.5

14th Annual Idaho Public Policy Survey

Questionnaire

Core questions:

- In general terms, do you think the state is headed in the right direction?
- In general, do you have the most trust in federal, state, or local government?
- Which level of government do you think best responds to your needs; federal, state, or local government?
- From which level of government do you think you get the most for your tax money; federal, state, or local government?
- Which tax do you think is the least fair?
- In your opinion what is the single MOST important issue facing Idaho today?
- Should the current level of public funding be increased, stay at the current level, or be decreased for the following program and services?

K THRU 12 PUBLIC EDUCATION
HIGHER EDUCATION
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR PERSONS IN POVERTY
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR YOUTH
LAW ENFORCEMENT
PUBLIC HEALTH CARE
HIGHWAYS, ROADS, AND BRIDGES

Issues facing the state:

- If the state experienced a major revenue shortfall next fiscal year, would you favor or oppose a 1-cent sales tax increase?

- If the state did impose a sales tax increase, which area should receive the revenue from the tax increase?

- Currently, a two-thirds majority is required for passage in school bond elections. Do you think this approval level should be reduced?

- Thinking about wildlife in Idaho, please tell me how much you agree or disagree that Idaho should have wolves in wilderness and roadless areas in the central part of the state.

- Idaho has the most Republican legislature in the country. How concerned are you about the dominance of Idaho politics by one party?

- Under what circumstances should the Idaho state legislature be allowed to repeal an initiative passed by Idaho citizens? Should the legislature never be allowed to repeal an initiative, be allowed to make only technical changes to an initiative, or be allowed to make ANY changes deemed necessary after hearing all the facts and testimony on the issue, including repeal.

- Lately there has been some discussion about closed party caucuses in the state legislature. Some people argue that the caucuses should be closed to the public and media so that legislators can have frank discussions about party positions and issues before they return to the floor for public debate and vote. Other people argue that important policy decisions are often made in these caucuses, and they should therefore be open to public scrutiny.

  Which statement comes closest to how you feel about this issue? Caucuses should be open to the public, caucuses should be kept closed, it really doesn't make much difference, or I haven't thought enough about the issue to form an opinion.

Criminal justice system questions:

- In some instances, non-violent offenders could be removed from prison after a short period of incarceration, and then supervised in the community. Do you agree or disagree?

- The legislature should reduce the penalties for certain property crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, so that the convicted would not have to go to prison. Do you agree or disagree?

- Capital punishment, the death penalty, is appropriate for people convicted of first-degree murder. Do you agree or disagree?

- Idaho should impose a moratorium on the use of the death penalty until it can be better determined if the death penalty is being administered accurately and fairly in the state. Do you agree or disagree?

Background/demographic questions:

- Please tell me which racial or ethnic group best describes you?

- Are you male or female?

- What is your age?

- How many members of your household, including yourself, are 18 years of age or older?

- What is the highest level of school or college that you have completed?

- What is your annual household income from all sources?

- In general, would you describe yourself as very conservative, somewhat conservative, middle-of-the-road, somewhat liberal, or very liberal?

- Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or other party affiliation?

- How many years have you lived in Idaho?