

WISH-TV / BALL STATE UNIVERSITY



HOOSIER SURVEY



BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY

November 2015 BOWEN CENTER
FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University is pleased to partner again this year with WISH-TV, Channel 8, in Indianapolis, in presenting the eighth annual Hoosier Survey. The Hoosier Survey is designed to provide Indiana citizens and policymakers with a measure of public opinion on current issues facing our state in the coming year. The results of this non-partisan survey are delivered to every member of the Indiana General Assembly and top state government administration officials before the start of the calendar year so that lawmakers can gauge public views about issues they are likely to face in the upcoming legislative session.

The survey was conducted for WISH TV/Ball State University by Princeton Survey Research International during the period October 8-13, 2015. Results are based on 602 completed interviews with 362 landline respondents and 240 cell phone (including 137 adults with no landline) respondents. The margin of error is $\pm 5.2\%$. Complete findings and methodology are available at www.bowencenterforpublicaffairs.org.

Major findings in the 2015 Hoosier Survey include:

- **Top Priorities:** Job creation, improving schools, and reducing crime continue to be the top priorities this year as they were last year for Hoosiers who believe these issues should top the legislative agenda in 2016. Issues rising in importance included improving highways and roads (up 11 percentage points from last year) and protecting the environment (up 5 percentage points from last year). Reducing illegal immigration and improving public transportation followed in importance.
- **Right Track/Wrong Track:** Overall, 51.4% of Hoosiers believe that Indiana is headed in the right direction. Thirty-six percent say the state is on the wrong track. There is wide variation by party affiliation but little difference by region.
- **Jobs:** A majority of Hoosiers (57%) express satisfaction with the record of Indiana in attracting jobs to the state. However, only 26% say they are financially better-off today than they were four years ago. A plurality (45%) believes their financial condition has not much changed over the last four years. Expressing discontent regarding wages, a majority (64%) supports an increase in the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. Support is greatest among Independents and Democrats but nearly 46% of Republicans also support the measure.
- **LGBT Rights:** A majority of Hoosiers (57%) support amending the state's civil rights laws to include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity. Support comes from all regions of the state. While large majorities of Independents and Democrats support such legislation, only 38% of self-identified Republicans do so. A majority of Hoosiers (52%) also believes that businesses providing wedding services to same sex couples should be required to provide these services regardless of religious reservations. Support for this position holds across all regions of the state and among all partisan identifiers. A clear majority (64%) believes that the media were to blame for adverse public reaction to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) controversy earlier this year rather than the Governor or the General Assembly.

- **Roads and Infrastructure:** The condition of the state's highways and roads rose as a top priority for Hoosiers this year. When asked about the preferred source of increased road funding, a near majority (45%) said funds should come from the general fund. Only 14% supported an increase in the gasoline tax and only 7% wanted the funds to come from a mileage tax.
- **Drugs and Needle Exchange:** Responding to concern over drug and health issues in southern Indiana, Hoosiers strongly support (72%) expanding a needle exchange program to all Indiana counties in order to prevent the spread of disease. With regard to drug policy, Hoosiers support treatment (63%) over prosecution (26%) for people who use illegal drugs such as heroin and cocaine. This finding holds across both political parties and in all regions of the state although support for prosecution over treatment is somewhat stronger in rural areas of the state than in urban and suburban centers.
- **Schools:** Hoosiers continue to express high levels of satisfaction with public schools, with two-thirds (67.5%) saying they are very or somewhat satisfied with public education. However, Hoosiers by and large (50%) believe there is too much emphasis on standardized testing and testing comes in dead last among a number of measures Hoosiers believe are necessary to improve public education. Support for the use of vouchers for private and charter schools stands at 39%, a 12 percentage point increase over 2012. However, a clear majority (58%) continues to prefer that tax dollars go directly to public schools. This finding holds for Democrats and Independents. There is more support for charter funding among Republicans.
- **Guns:** There is strong support for three out of four gun control measures being advanced nationally in the wake of a series of mass shootings. Hoosiers support measures to prevent the mentally-ill from purchasing guns (83%), making private gun sales at gun shows subject to background checks (83%), and creating a federal database to track all gun sales (70%). Support holds across political parties, regions of the state, and community type. Support is somewhat lower for a ban on assault weapon sales (51%) and there is greater variation on this measure across parties and regions.
- **Approval Ratings:** Approval for the job Mike Pence is doing as governor stands at 47%, a 15 percentage point drop from last year. His approval rating is down among all partisan identifiers including Republicans where his approval slipped by 17 percentage points since last year. Support for the job the General Assembly is doing is also down by 12 percentage points from last year.

In addition to providing results for the state as a whole, some findings also are broken down by the three major regions of the state: Northern, Central, and Southern. The maps below illustrate the counties in each region.



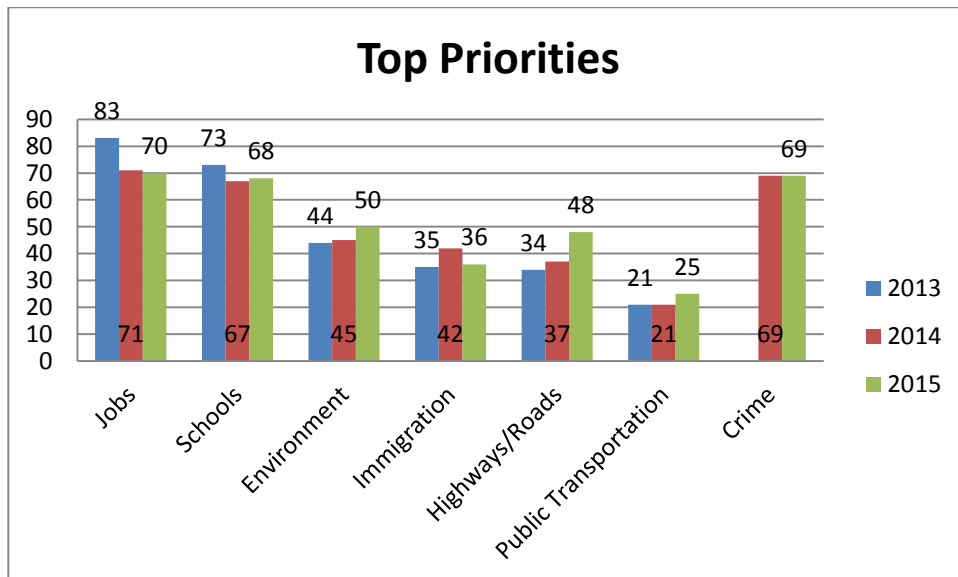
Full results, including our methodology report, are available at www.bowencenterforpublicaffairs.org.

For further information about the Bowen Center for Public Affairs and the Hoosier Survey, contact:

Dr. Joseph Losco, Director, 765-285-8785. jlosco@bsu.edu.

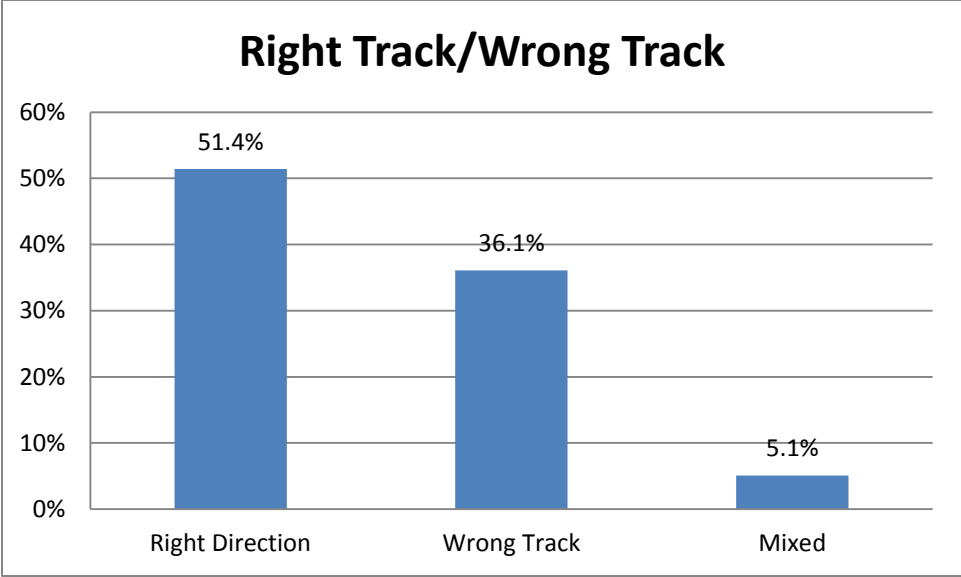
TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Job creation continues as the number one priority for Hoosiers with 70% placing job creation at the top of the legislative agenda for lawmakers. However, in a sign of an improving economy, this number was somewhat smaller than last year's and 13 percentage points lower than it was two years ago. Reducing crime continued as the second highest priority at 69% with improving local schools coming in third at 68% and showing little change from last year. There were two noteworthy increases. The percentage citing improving highways and roads as a top priority rose by 11 percentage points over last year, a sign that Hoosiers may be noticing such matters as the bridge closing for repairs along I-65 North earlier this year. Increasing by 5 percentage points was the number of Hoosiers citing environmental protection as a top priority. Reducing immigration and funding for public transportation continued to trail the other priorities



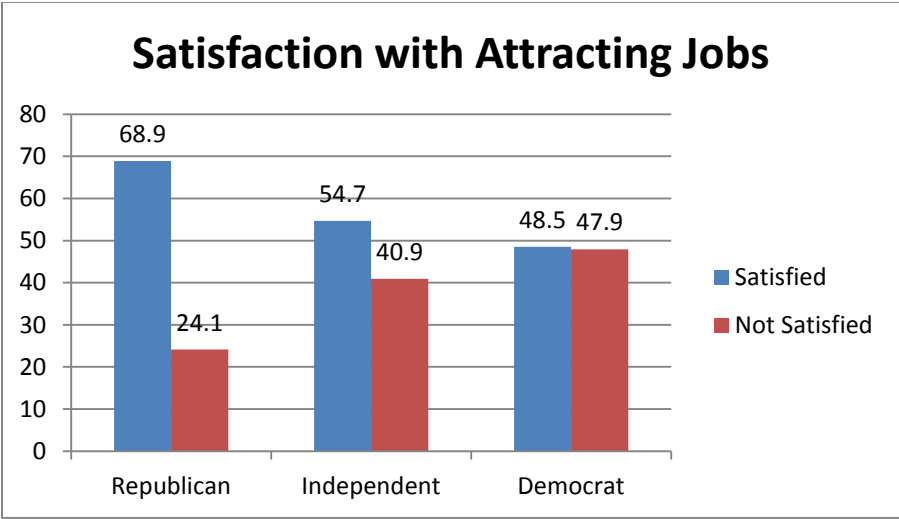
RIGHT TRACK/WRONG TRACK

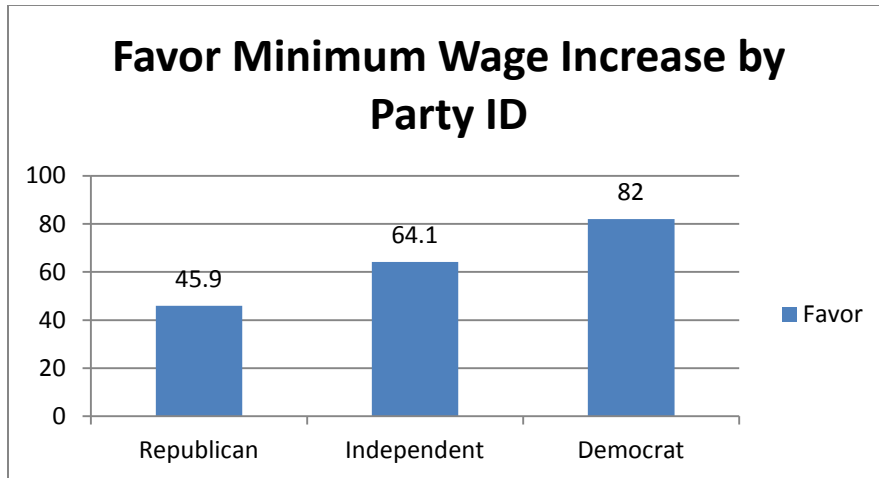
This year, for the first time, we asked Hoosiers if they thought things in Indiana are generally headed in the right direction or whether they believed the state was off on the wrong track. A bare majority (51.4%) said Indiana is on the right track with 36.7% disagreeing. Republicans were more positive about the state's direction (68.9%) than either Independents (50.7%) or Democrats (36.5%). There were no significant regional differences.



JOBS, WELL-BEING, AND MINIMUM WAGE

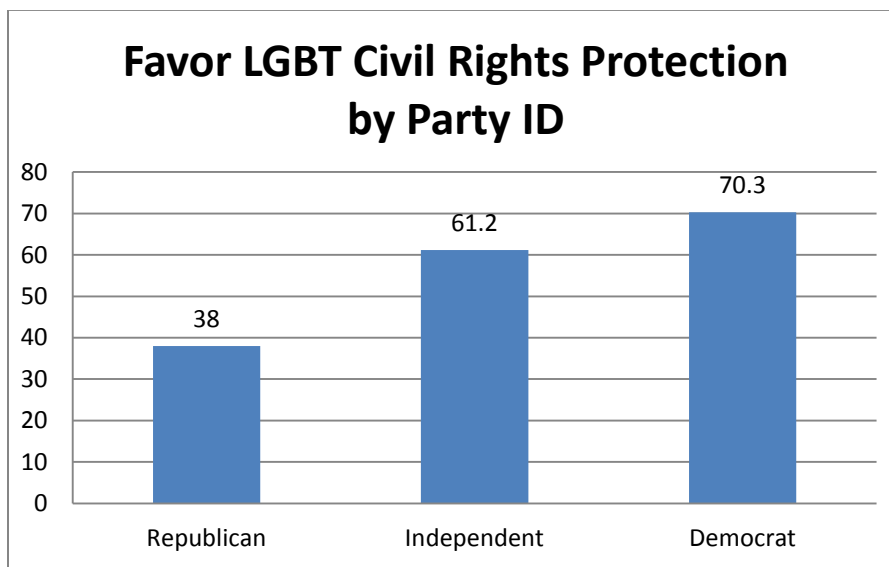
Reflecting an improved economy, a majority of Hoosiers (57%) express satisfaction (very or somewhat satisfied) with the record of Indiana in attracting jobs to the state. This holds for Republicans (69%) and Independents (55%). Democrats are evenly divided (49% satisfied, 48% not satisfied) regarding job creation. Central county residents expressed the highest level of satisfaction (65%) compared to Northern (54%) and Southern Counties (59%). Nevertheless, only 26% say they are financially better-off today than they were four years ago. A plurality (45%) believes their financial condition has not much changed over the last four year. Income insecurity can be seen in another measure: support for increasing the minimum wage. Expressing concern over wage-stagnation, a majority (64%) supports an increase in the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. Support is greatest among Independents and Democrats but nearly 46% of Republicans also support the measure.



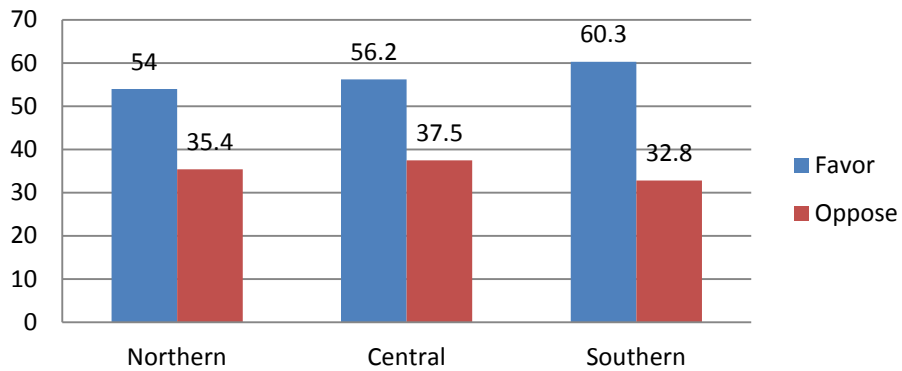


RFRA AND LGBT RIGHTS

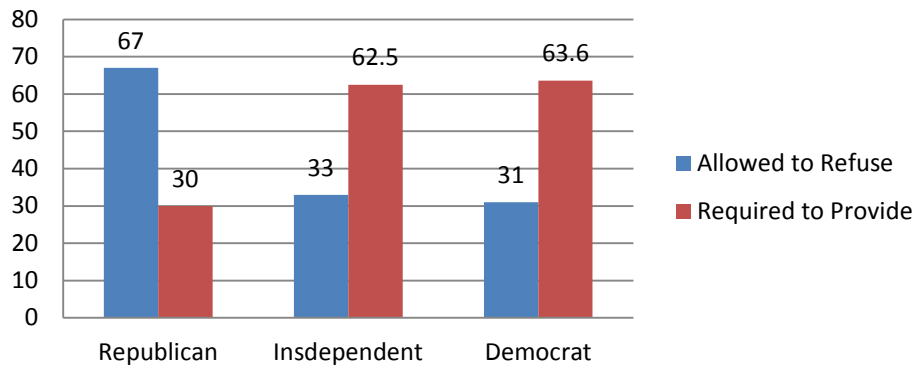
A majority of Hoosiers (57%) supports amending the state’s civil rights laws to include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity. Support comes from all regions of the state. While large majorities of Independents and Democrats support such legislation, only 38% of self-identified Republicans do so. A majority of Hoosiers (52%) also believes that businesses providing wedding services to same sex couples should be required to provide these services regardless of religious reservations. Support for this position holds across all regions of the state and among Democrats and Independents. Sixty-seven percent of Republicans believe business with religious objections should be allowed to refuse services. A clear majority of all Hoosiers (64%) believes that the media were principally to blame for adverse public reaction to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) controversy earlier this year as opposed to the Governor or the General Assembly.



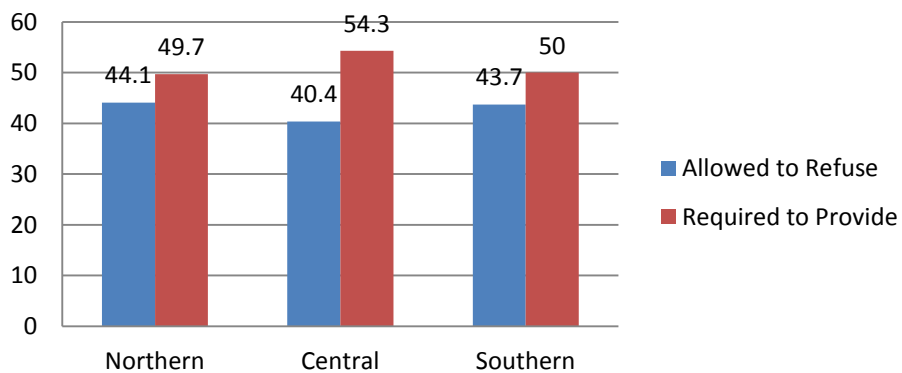
Favor LGBT Civil Right Protection by Region

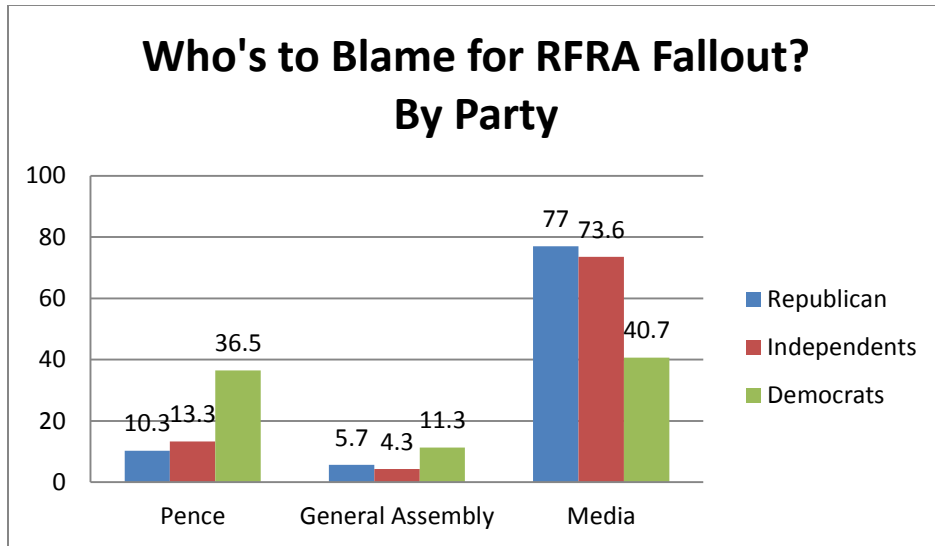


Should a business providing wedding services be allowed to refuse services for same-sex couples for religious reasons or be required to provide?



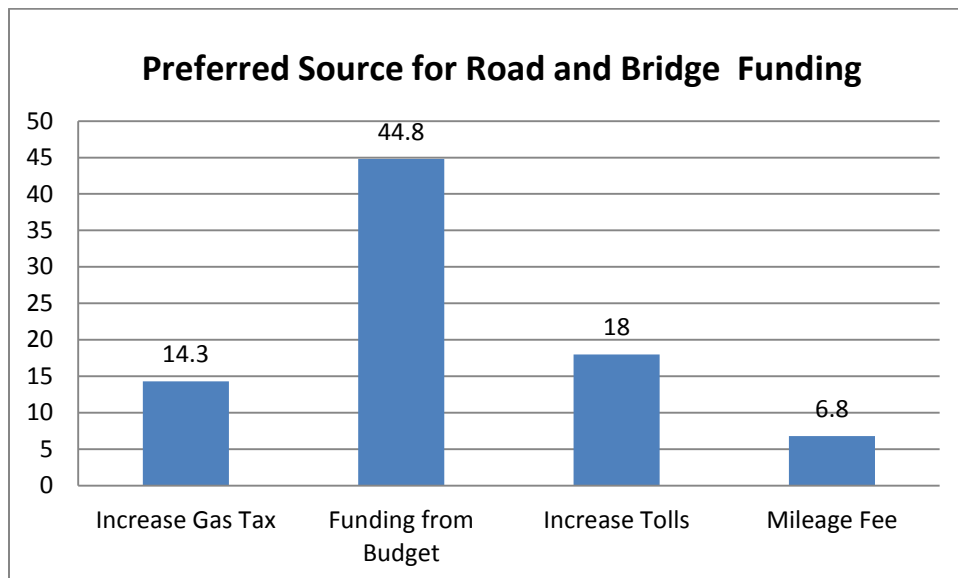
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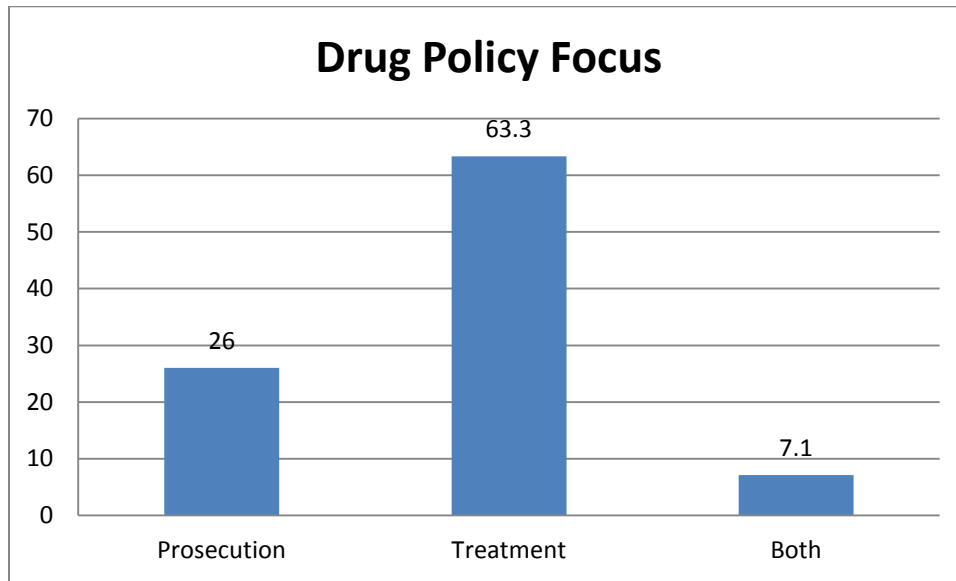
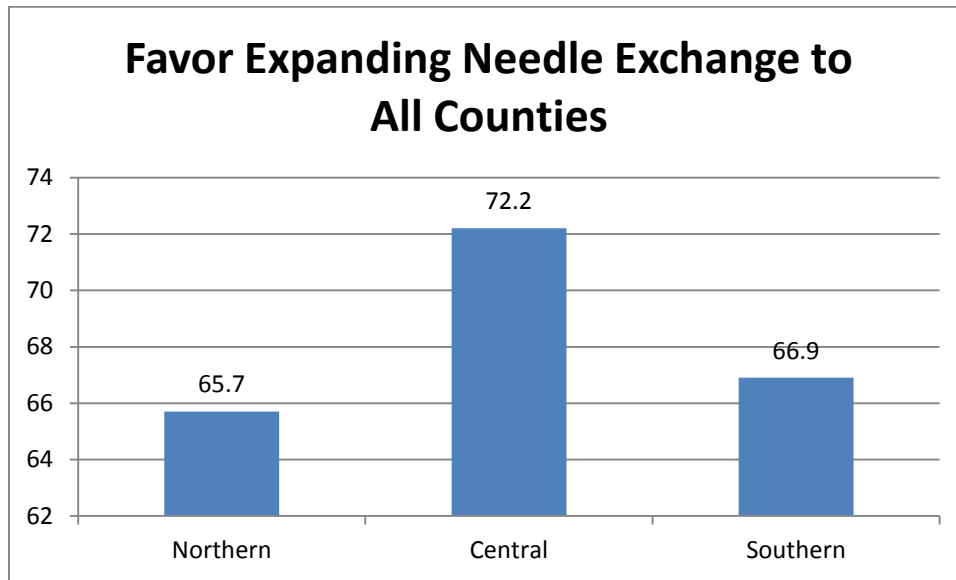
ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

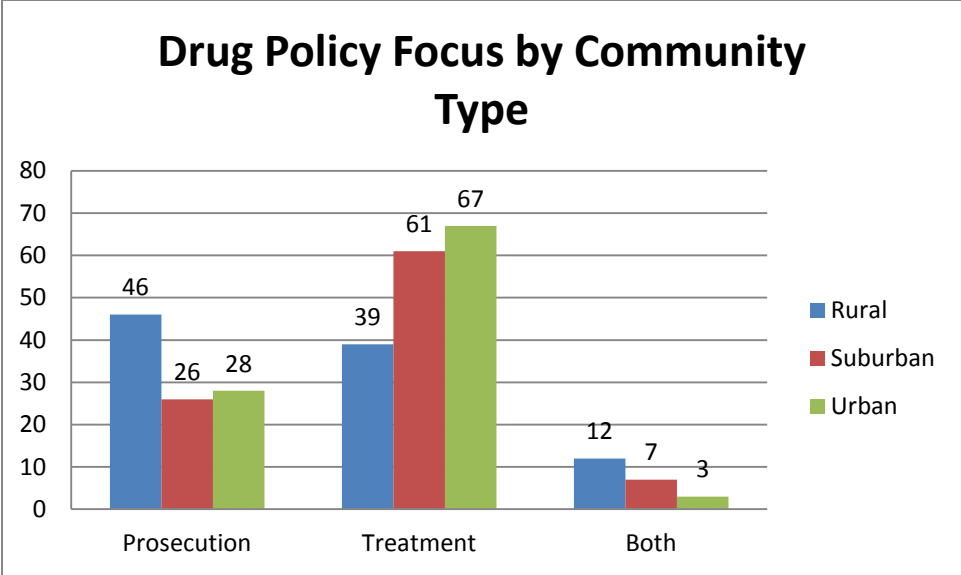
Perhaps as a result of recent stories like the partial closure of I-65 North due to safety concerns about the Wildcat Creek Bridge, Hoosiers are expressing greater concern for highway and road safety this year. The Governor and the General Assembly have acknowledged this concern and offered a variety of funding solutions. When asked the preferred source of increased funding to address the issue, a near majority (45%) said money should come from the general fund. Only 14% supported an increase in the gasoline tax and only 7% wanted the funds to come from a mileage tax as has been proposed by some lawmakers.



DRUGS AND NEEDLE EXCHANGE

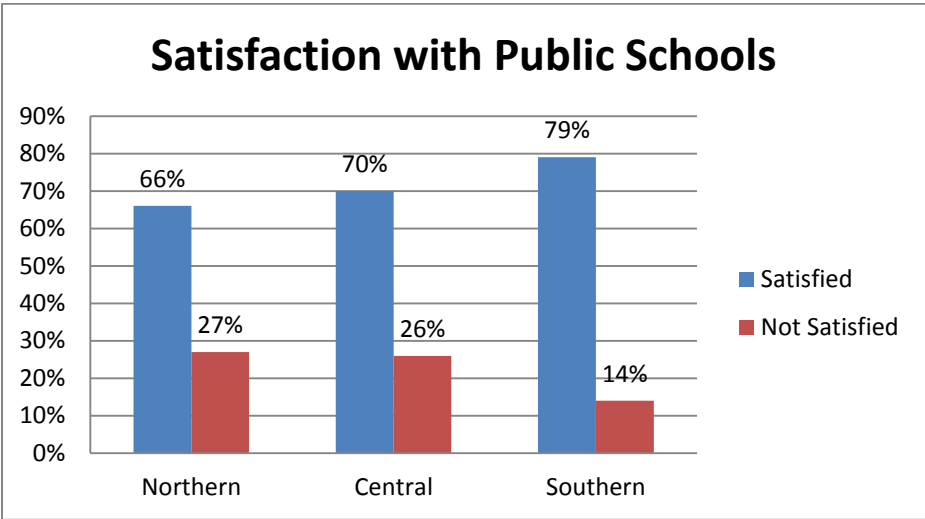
Responding to concern over drug and health issues in southern Indiana, Hoosiers strongly support (72%) expanding a needle exchange program to all Indiana counties in order to prevent the spread of disease. This finding holds across Northern (66% support), Central (72% support) and Southern (67% support) counties. With regard to drug policy, Hoosiers support treatment (63%) over prosecution (26%) for people who use illegal drugs such as heroin and cocaine. This finding holds for Independents (68%) and Democrats (77%) while Republicans favor treatment over prosecution by 10% (48% to 38%). Majorities in all regions support treatment over prosecution. Support for prosecution over treatment is somewhat stronger in rural areas of the state than in urban and suburban centers.

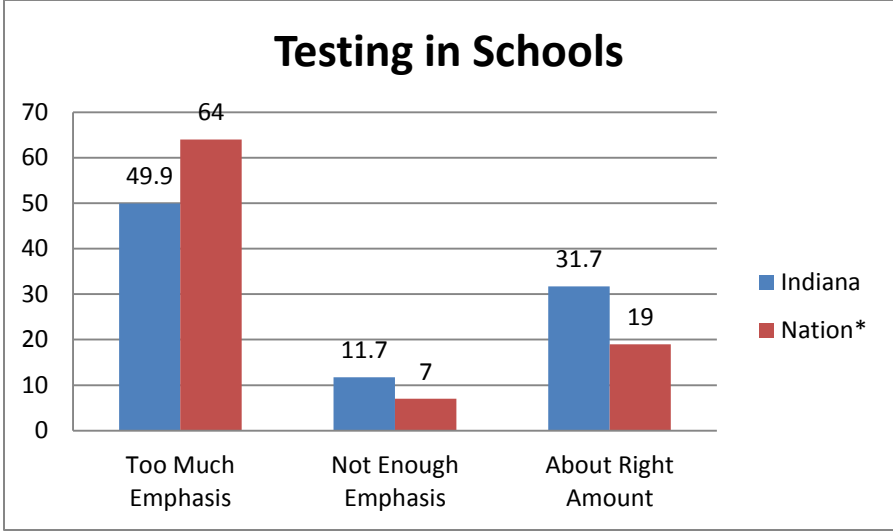




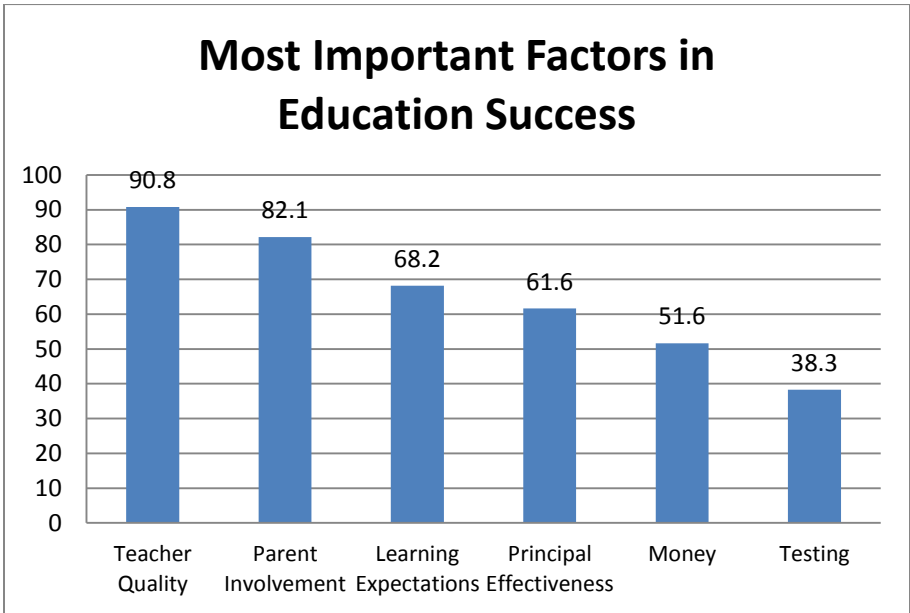
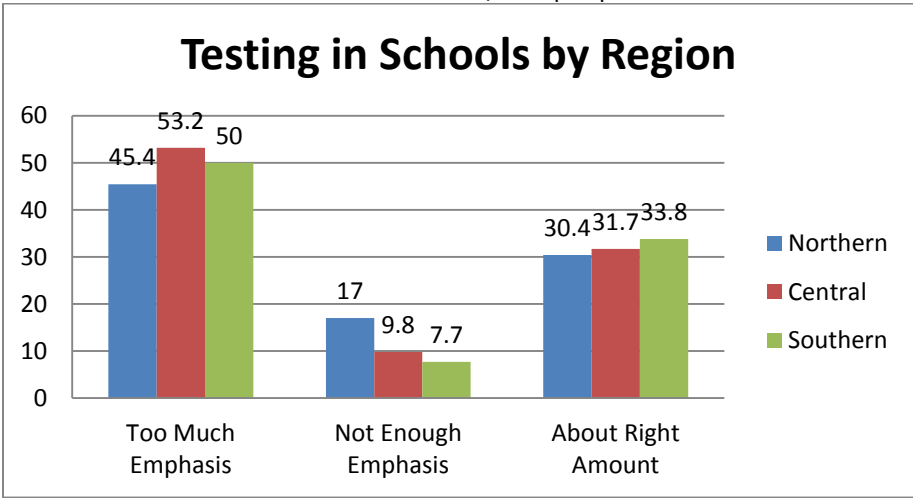
SCHOOLS

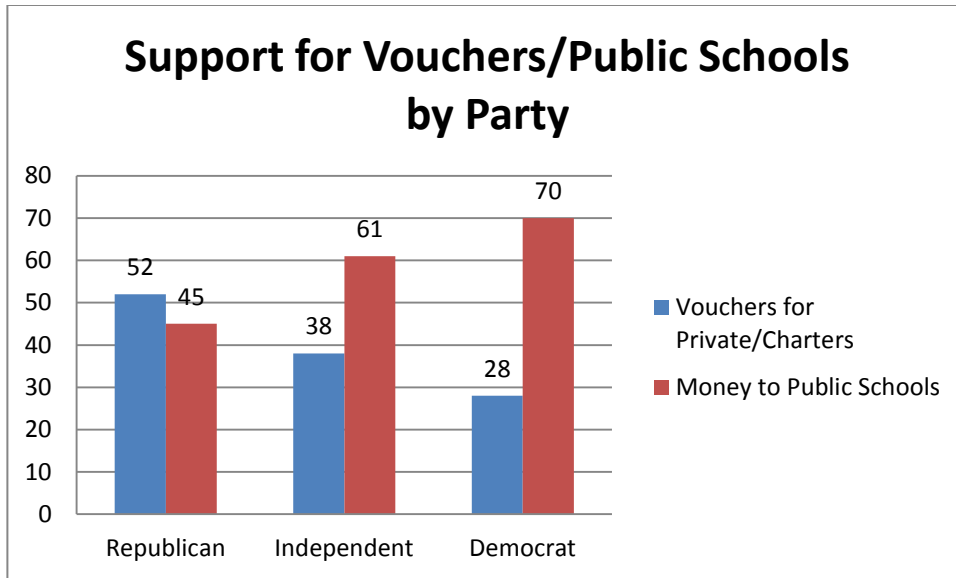
Hoosiers continue to express high levels of satisfaction with public schools, with two-thirds (67.5%) saying they are very or somewhat satisfied with public education. However, Hoosiers by and large (50%) believe there is too much emphasis on standardized testing (somewhat fewer than the national figures supplied below) and testing comes in dead last among a number of measures Hoosiers believe are necessary to improve public education. Support for the use of vouchers for private and charter schools stands at 39%, a 12 percentage point increase over 2012. However, a clear majority of all Hoosiers (58%) continues to prefer that tax dollars go directly to public schools. This finding holds for Democrats and Independents. There is more support for charter funding among Republicans.





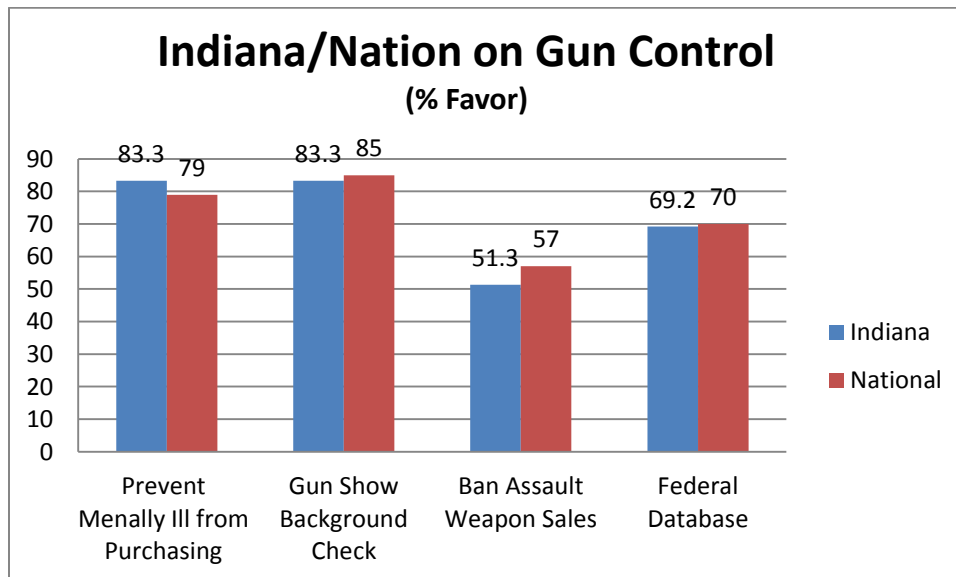
*National Data from PDK/Gallup September 2015





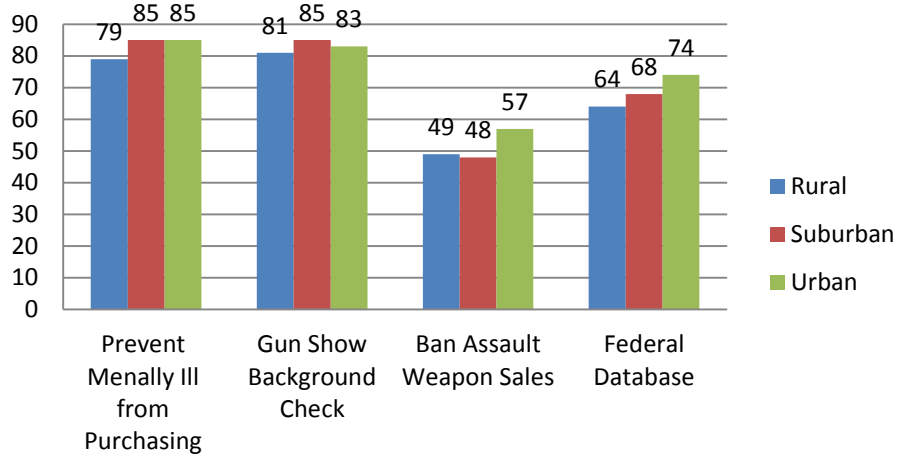
GUNS

There is strong support for three out of four gun control measures being advanced nationally in the wake of a series of mass shootings. Hoosiers support measures to prevent the mentally-ill from purchasing guns (83%), making private gun sales at gun shows subject to background checks (83%), and creating a federal database to track all gun sales (70%). Overall support for these measures matches the national averages as measured by the [Pew Research Center](#), July 14-20, 2015. Support holds across political parties, regions of the state, and community type. Support is somewhat lower for a ban on assault weapon sales (51%) and there is greater variation across parties and regions.

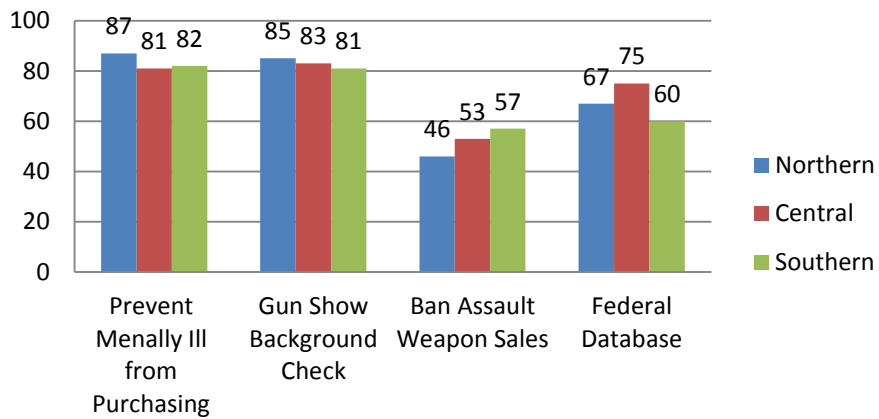


National Figures: Pew Research Center, July 14-20, 2015

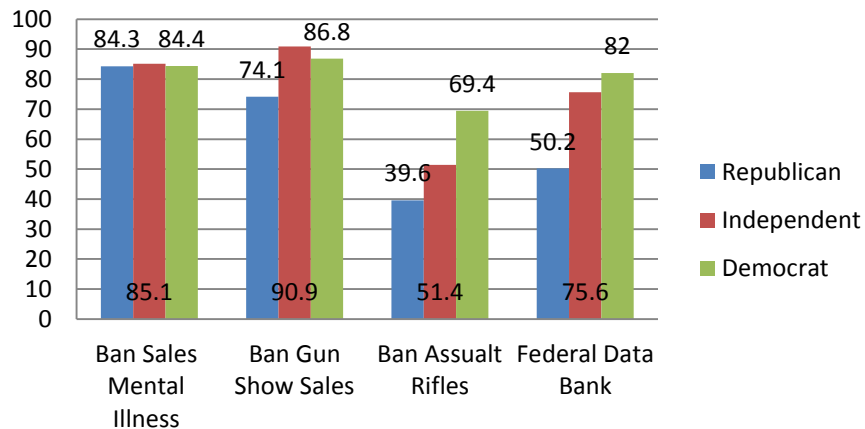
Gun Control by Community Type



Gun Control by Region



Gun Control By Party ID



APPROVAL RATINGS

Approval for the job Mike Pence is doing as governor stands at 47%, a 15 percentage point drop from last year. His approval rating is down among all partisan identifiers including Republicans where his approval slipped by 17 percentage points since last year. Support for the job the General Assembly is doing is also down by 12 percentage points from last year.

