Hoosier Survey

Old National Bank / Ball State University

2019
Major Findings

The Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University is pleased to partner again this year with Old National Bank in presenting the twelfth annual Hoosier Survey. The Old National Bank/Ball State University 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 nonpartisan 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. It is our hope that the survey will inform citizens and policymakers and help to stimulate a public discussion about important issues facing the state.

Major findings in this year's survey include:

Community Quality: Overall, 29% of Hoosiers rate their local community as an Excellent place to live; another 51% say their community is a Good place to live. In urban areas, only 14% of Hoosiers rated their community as Excellent, compared to rural and suburban communities where 35% of respondents rated their communities Excellent.

Community Priorities: We asked Hoosiers to rate priorities for their local communities. Improving local public schools, improving public safety and reducing crime, and improving local streets and roads were Hoosiers top three community priorities.

Quality of Public Services: Overall, 37% of Hoosiers said that road maintenance had improved, compared to only 18% that indicated it had worsened. For the second year in a row, more Hoosiers reported that the quality of their local schools had improved than reported it had worsened, by a margin of 21% to 16%. Public parks and recreation services and police and fire services continue to receive high marks with many more Hoosiers reporting improvement in service quality than decline.

Approval Ratings: Governor Eric Holcomb continues to have a high net approval rating with 50% approving and only 17% disapproving of his job performance.

The Indiana General Assembly’s job approval rating is at 45%. The General Assembly’s disapproval rating, at 19%, is at its lowest point in the history of the Hoosier Survey.

For the first time, we asked about job approval for a down-ballot statewide elected official, in this case, Attorney General Curtis Hill. About 47% of Hoosiers either have not heard of the Attorney General or have no opinion on his job performance. Among those with an opinion, 38% approve, while 15% disapprove.
**Job Attraction Efforts:** Hoosiers continue to be satisfied with the state’s job attraction efforts; 70% of Hoosiers are “very” or “somewhat” satisfied. Hoosiers with only a high school diploma or less were more likely to express satisfaction with job attraction efforts (24% “very” satisfied) than college graduates (15%) or those with some college (17%).

**Local Job Opportunities:** For the first time we asked Hoosiers about job opportunities in their communities. Nearly two-thirds of Hoosiers (64%) reported that there are plenty of jobs available in their community, compared to only 25% who reported that jobs are difficult to find. Hoosiers in the highest income category and those with at least some college education were more likely to perceive plentiful job opportunities than those with only a high school education or lower income.

We also presented survey respondents with a list of factors that can affect workers and asked them whether they thought each of the factors had helped or hurt workers in their community. The two factors most identified as being helpful were the sales of US products overseas by 65% of Hoosiers and the growing number of immigrant workers in the US by 41%. These were the only two factors identified as helpful by more Hoosiers than as harmful. The two factors most frequently identified as harmful were outsourcing of jobs to other countries by 79% of Hoosiers and the sale of foreign products in the US by 65%.

**Property Tax Caps:** We asked Hoosiers whether the impact of the property tax caps that were implemented about ten years ago had been mostly positive or negative for their community and their family. A 41% plurality of respondents said the tax caps had not had much of an effect on their community. About a quarter said the tax caps had been mostly positive; only 15% said they had been mostly negative. When asked about the impact of the tax caps on their families, overall responses were similar to the responses for community impact. A slight 52% majority of respondents said the tax caps had not had much of an effect on their family. About a quarter said the tax caps had been mostly positive; only 15% said they had been mostly negative. Middle income Hoosiers were less likely to report a positive effect on their family than low- or high-income Hoosiers.

**Abortion:** We asked Hoosier about their views on the legality of abortion. Hoosiers are evenly split in their opinions on this issue, with 19% of Hoosiers expressing support for legal abortion in all cases compared to 17% who think it should be illegal in all cases. Another 29% of Hoosiers said abortion should be legal in most cases, compared to 28% who said it should be illegal in most cases.

**Gun Policy:** We asked Hoosiers whether they favored or opposed a number of commonly discussed policies intended to reduce gun violence: Laws to prevent people with mental illness from purchasing guns, making private sales and sales at gun shows subject to background checks, a ban on assault-style weapons, and creating a federal government database to track all gun sales. The two policies favored by the largest number of Hoosiers are background checks for private and gun show sales (83%) and preventing people with mental illness from purchasing guns (80%).
Federal Role in Health Insurance: We asked Hoosiers about the federal government role in providing health insurance. About 41% of Hoosiers said that providing health coverage is a responsibility of the federal government, with 17% favoring a single-payer system and 24% favoring a continued mix of private insurance and government programs. About 50% of Hoosiers said that providing this insurance is not a responsibility of the federal government, including 42% who expressed support for continuing Medicare and Medicaid and 6% who said the federal government should not be involved at all.

Discrimination by Private Schools Accepting Vouchers: We asked Hoosiers whether schools receiving state-funded school choice vouchers, including private religious schools, should be prohibited from discriminating against teachers and staff members based on sexual orientation. Opinion was split fairly evenly on this issue. With 46% saying the schools should be prohibited from discriminating in this way and 43% saying they should not be prohibited.
When asked to rate the quality of their local community as a place to live, 29% of Hoosiers rated their community as Excellent; another 51% gave their community a Good rating. These results represent a small, but insignificant drop from the ratings of 2017, when we last asked this question. In 2017 34% of Hoosiers rated their community as Excellent and 44% as Good. The 2019 results are very similar to the results of 2012, when 29% of Hoosiers gave their community an Excellent rating, with another 47% rating their community as Good.

When we examine the 2019 results we find that Hoosiers living in suburban and rural communities tend to rate their local communities more highly than urban respondents. In urban areas, only 14% of Hoosiers rated their community as Excellent, compared to rural and suburban communities where 35% of respondents rated their communities Excellent.

How would you rate your local community as a place to live?

Community Priorities

We asked Hoosiers to rate several priorities for their local community. We asked them to prioritize improving local schools, parks and trails, streets and roads, public art facilities, and public safety. We also asked them about the priority for reducing taxes and the number of abandoned properties. The two top priorities for local communities are and improving public schools, which is a Top Priority of 65% of Hoosiers, and improving public safety and reducing crime, which is a Top Priority by 62% of Hoosiers. The third highest priority, improving local streets and roads, is rated a top priority of 52% of Hoosiers. The other issues: reducing local taxes, reducing abandoned properties, improving parks, and improving public arts, were all rated a top priority by 35% of Hoosiers or less.
Urban respondents place an even higher priority on public safety and reducing abandoned properties than do suburban or rural Hoosiers. More than 70% of urban Hoosiers rated public safety as a top priority, compared to only 58% and 54% of those in suburban and rural communities. When prioritizing reducing abandoned properties, 35% of urban Hoosiers rated this issue as a top priority, compared to only 21% and 18% of those in suburban and rural areas.
Quality of Public Services

Nearly every year since the first Hoosier Survey conducted in 2008, we have asked Hoosiers to consider their experience with four key local government services: road maintenance, public schools, parks and recreation, and fire and police protection and tell us whether these services have gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same. During most years, a majority – or at least a large plurality – of Hoosiers report that service quality stayed about the same over the past year. In the discussion below, we examine changes in the percentage of Hoosiers who report changes in service quality – for better or worse.

Road Maintenance

Hoosier perceptions of the quality of road maintenance generally declined from 2008 through 2011, with a decrease in the percentage reporting improvement and an increase in the percentage reporting that service had gotten worse. Still, more Hoosiers reported improvements in service quality than the opposite. From 2011 through 2014 the gap between those reporting road maintenance had gotten better and those reporting it had gotten worse averaged 5 percentage points. In 2016, this gap widened to 8 percentage points as the proportion of Hoosiers reporting that road maintenance had improved increased to 30%. In 2017, perhaps because of passage of a road funding measure by the General Assembly, 38% reported that road maintenance had improved. In the 2018 survey, the percentage reporting road improvement further increased to 40%. In this year’s survey the percentage reporting improvement dropped to 37%, but there was a corresponding drop in the percentage reporting that roads had worsened to 18%, maintaining a gap of almost 20 percentage points.

Has road maintenance in your local community gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same?
Public Schools
In 2008, the percentage of Hoosiers reporting improvements in their public schools exceeded the percentage reporting declines by 10 percentage points, 26% vs. 16%. In 2009, the improvement gap narrowed to 6 percentage points. Beginning in 2010, and in every year through 2017 in which we have asked this question, more Hoosiers reported that their local schools got worse than reported that they improved. In 2017, the gap stood at 5 percentage points, with 23% reporting worsening school quality compared to only 18% who report improvement. In the 2018 survey, for the first time since 2009, more Hoosiers reported school improvement than decline by a margin of 23% to 19%. Again in 2019, more Hoosiers reported improving school quality (21%) than declining (16%).

Has the quality of public schools in your local community gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same?

26% 24% 24% 23% 23%
16% 19% 19% 19% 17%
13% 17% 19% 19% 17%
14%

Public Parks and Recreation
Over the past ten years, Hoosiers have consistently been more likely to say that their local parks and recreation services have gotten better than to say they have gotten worse. In 2019, the gap is the largest to date, with 35% reporting local parks have improved and only 7% reporting they have gotten worse.
Similar to parks and recreation, Hoosiers have consistently been more likely to say that their local fire and police protection services have gotten better than to say they have gotten worse. This trend continues in 2019, with 25% of Hoosiers reporting improvement in fire and police protection, compared to only 6% reporting worsening services.

Fire and Police Protection
Gubernatorial Approval

At 50%, Gov. Eric Holcomb’s approval rating is very similar to his approval ratings in the two previous years. Only 17% of Hoosiers expressed disapproval of the governor. Approximately 33% of Hoosiers expressed no opinion about his job performance or said they had never heard of him.

Similar to the results of previous surveys, Gov. Holcomb enjoys greater approval among Republicans than among Democrats. He also enjoys strong approval from Hoosiers age 55 and older. Other than among Democrats, his weakest approval is among Hoosiers age 18-34 and those from households with less than $30,000 annual income.
Legislative Approval

The Indiana General Assembly’s job approval rating is at 45%. At 19%, disapproval is at the lowest point measured in the history of this survey.
As expected, Republicans were more likely to express approval; Democrats more likely to express disapproval. Respondents in high-income households expressed greater approval than those in middle- or low-income households, but they also expressed greater disapproval.

Indiana Attorney General

For the first time, we asked about job approval for a down-ballot statewide elected official, in this case, Attorney General Curtis Hill. Large percentages of Hoosiers either have not heard of Curtis Hill (11%) or didn’t express an opinion (36%). Only 38% of respondents approved of the attorney general’s job performance; 15% expressed disapproval.

As might be expected, Democrats were most likely to express disapproval. Republicans were more likely than Democrats or Independents to express approval, but even among Hill’s fellow party members, fewer than half (48%) expressed approval.

General Assembly Approval by Category

All

Party Affiliation

Dem

Ind

Rep

Household Income

< $30k

30-75k

75k+

Attorney General approval by part affiliation

All

Party Affiliation

Dem

Ind

Rep
Jobs and the Economy

State Job Attraction Efforts

As we have nearly every year since 2008, we asked Hoosiers about their satisfaction with the record of state government in attracting good jobs into the state. The results of this year’s survey indicate that in 2019 Hoosiers continue to be satisfied with the state’s job attraction efforts; 19% indicated they were “very satisfied” and another 51% indicated they were “somewhat satisfied,” results nearly identical to the past two years’ results.

How satisfied are you with the record of state government in attracting new jobs into the state?

Hoosiers with only a high school diploma or less were more likely to express satisfaction with job attraction efforts than college graduates or those with some college. Among Hoosiers with no college, 24% indicated they were “very satisfied” with another 54% indicating they were “somewhat satisfied.” Among those with some college and college grads, the percentages of Hoosiers who were “very satisfied” was much lower at 15% and 17% respectively.
Local Job Opportunities

In the 2019 survey, we asked Hoosiers about job opportunities in their community: Are plenty of jobs available? Or are jobs difficult to find? Nearly two-thirds of Hoosiers (64%) reported that there are plenty of jobs available in their community, compared to only 25% who reported that jobs are difficult to find. When we examined responses by Hoosiers of different education and income levels we found that those in the highest income category and those with college education perceived more job opportunities than those with no college or in the middle and lower household income categories.
In 2019, we also presented survey respondents with a list of factors that can affect workers and asked them whether they thought each of the factors had helped or hurt workers in their community. The factors we asked about were: the growing number of immigrants working in the US, outsourcing of jobs to other countries, automation of jobs through new technology, the sale of foreign-made products in the US, the sale of US-made products in other countries, the decline in union membership, and the increased use of contract or temporary workers.

The sale of US products overseas was the factor most likely to be identified by Hoosiers as beneficial in their community, with 65% of respondents indicating these sales help workers. More immigrants working in the US came in at a distant second place, with 41% of Hoosiers indicating they helped workers in their community. These two factors were the only two which more Hoosiers identified as helpful, rather than harmful.

Hoosier opinion about the impact of immigrants on workers exhibited cleavages along lines of income and education. College graduates and those in the highest household income bracket were more likely to view immigrant workers as helpful.
Property Tax Caps

About ten years ago, the General Assembly enacted legislation capping property taxes. Hoosiers, subsequently approved a constitutional amendment confirming the caps. In 2019, we asked Hoosiers whether they thought the impact of the tax caps on their communities and families had been mostly positive, mostly negative, or had not had much of an effect. A plurality of respondents (41%) said the tax caps had not had much of an effect on their community. About a quarter (26%) said the tax caps had been mostly positive; only 15% said they had been mostly negative. The only significant difference in opinion was expressed along party lines. Republicans were more likely to say the tax caps were positive (33%) than negative (9%). Democrats on the other hand were fairly evenly split between positive (21%) and negative (26%).
When asked about the impact of the tax caps on their families, overall responses were similar to the responses for community impact. A slight majority of respondents (52%) said the tax caps had not had much of an effect on their family. About a quarter (27%) said the tax caps had been mostly positive; only 15% said they had been mostly negative. Examining the responses across income categories revealed an interesting pattern. Hoosiers in the highest and lowest household income categories were about twice as likely to say the tax caps had a positive impact than a negative impact. In these two categories about a third of respondents indicated the impact had been positive and only 14% indicating a negative impact. Among middle-income Hoosiers opinion was more closely divided with 19% expressing a positive impact and 17% a negative impact.

![Impact of tax caps on family by income](chart.png)

Impact of tax caps on family by income

- **All**: 27% Mostly positive, 15% Mostly negative
- **$75k**: 33% Mostly positive, 14% Mostly negative
- **$30-$75k**: 18% Mostly positive, 17% Mostly negative
- **< $30k**: 32% Mostly positive, 14% Mostly negative
In the 2019 survey we asked Hoosiers about their views on a number of other public policy issues: abortion, gun policy, health care, and discrimination by schools accepting vouchers.

Abortion

We asked Hoosiers about their views on the legality of abortion. Should it be legal in all cases, legal in most cases, illegal in most cases, or illegal in all cases. Hoosiers are evenly split in their opinions on this issue, with 19% of Hoosiers expressing support for legal abortion in all cases compared to 17% who thought it should be illegal in all cases. Another 29% of Hoosiers said abortion should be legal in most cases compared to 28% who said it should be illegal in most cases. These results are very similar to those from the 2012 survey when we last asked this question.

As might be expected, Democrats were more supportive of legal abortion and Republicans most opposed. Among Democrats 55% thought it should be legal in all or most cases compared to 63% of Republicans who said it should be illegal in all or most cases.

Younger Hoosiers, age 18 to 34, expressed the greatest support for legal abortion, with 59% saying abortion should be legal in all or most cases. Among Hoosiers in the two older age categories only 43% to 45% of Hoosiers expressed views in favor of legal abortion.
Gun Policy

We asked Hoosiers whether they favored or opposed a number of commonly discussed policies intended to reduce gun violence: Laws to prevent people with mental illness from purchasing guns, making private sales and sales at gun shows subject to background checks, a ban on assault-style weapons, and creating a federal government database to track all gun sales. We found that each of these policies commands at least majority support from Hoosiers. The two policies favored by the largest number of Hoosiers are background checks for private and gun show sales (83%) and preventing people with mental illness from purchasing guns (80%). A federal gun sales database was third with 63% favoring. An assault-style weapon ban had the least support with 52% favoring. Democrats were more likely to favor each of these policies than Republicans, but the background check and mental illness policies were favored by three-quarters of Republicans.

Support for selected gun policies by party affiliation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Favor</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased background checks</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal gun sale database</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assault-style weapon ban</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased background checks</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal gun sale database</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault-style weapon ban</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased background checks</td>
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<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>91%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal gun sale database</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault-style weapon ban</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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Federal Role in Health Insurance

We asked Hoosiers a two-part question about the federal government role in providing health insurance. First we asked if they thought that it was the responsibility of the federal government to make sure that all Americans have health coverage. For those who said that providing health coverage is a federal responsibility, we followed up by asking if health insurance should be provided by a single government run health insurance system or if it should continue to be provided by a mix of private insurance and government programs. For those who said that providing health coverage is not a federal responsibility, we followed up by asking if it should continue to provide programs like Medicare and Medicaid for seniors and the very poor or if it should not be involved in providing health insurance at all.

About 46% of Hoosiers said that providing health coverage is a responsibility of the federal government, with 17% favoring a single-payer system and 24% favoring a continued mix of private insurance and government programs. About 50% of Hoosiers said that providing this insurance is not a responsibility of the federal government, with about 42% expressing support for continuing Medicare and Medicaid and 6% who said the federal government should not be involved at all.

Democrats were much more likely to express that providing health coverage is a federal responsibility (70%) than Republicans (19%). But even among Republicans 63% expressed support for continuing Medicare and Medicaid.

Health insurance opinion by party affiliation

Discrimination in Private Schools Accepting Vouchers

We asked Hoosiers whether schools receiving state-funded school choice vouchers, including private religious schools, should be prohibited from discriminating against teachers and staff members based on sexual orientation. Opinion was split fairly evenly on this issue. With 46% saying the schools should be prohibited from discriminating in this way and 43% saying they should not be prohibited. Democrats were most likely (59%) to say that such discrimination should be prohibited; Republicans were most likely (46%) to say it should not.

Should schools receiving vouchers be prohibited from discriminating against teachers and staff based on sexual orientation?
Methodology

The Old National Bank / Ball State University 2019 Hoosier Survey obtained telephone interviews with a representative sample of 600 adults living in Indiana. Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (315) and cell phone (285, including 200 with adults with no landline phone). The survey was conducted by Issues & Answers Network, Inc. (I&A). Interviews were done in English from October 8-28, 2019. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ±5.2 percentage points.

Complete results and detailed methodology are available at www.bowencenterforpublicaffairs.org

Credits

Data Analysis and Commentary:  Sean Hildebrand, Chad Kinsella, and Charles Taylor

Graphic Design:  Ashley Cummings

Office Operations:  Susan Gerard
About Old National Bank

Old National Bancorp (NASDAQ: ONB) is the holding company of Old National Bank. Headquartered in Evansville with $20.4 billion in assets, it is a top 100 U.S. bank, the largest Indiana-based bank and has been recognized as a World’s Most Ethical Company by the Ethisphere Institute for eight consecutive years. For 185 years, Old National has been a community bank committed to building long-term, highly valued relationships with clients. With locations in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin, Old National provides retail and commercial banking services along with comprehensive wealth management, investment and capital markets services. For information and financial data, please visit Investor Relations at oldnational.com.

About the Bowen Center for Public Affairs

Founded in 2007, the Bowen Center for Public Affairs honors the legacy of Dr. Otis R. Bowen, the 44th governor of Indiana and secretary of Health and Human Services under President Ronald Reagan. The mission of the Bowen Center is to advance the ideals of civic literacy, community involvement and public service embodied by Dr. Bowen’s career.