



Most Louisiana residents confident in elections in the state, but parties disagree over restrictions on voting

Trust in local news organizations on the decline

The fourth in a series of six reports from the 2022 Louisiana Survey, a project of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs

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Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs

The Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs is partnership-driven, action-oriented, and dedicated to exploring contemporary issues at the intersection of mass communication and public life. Its interdisciplinary approach draws together experts from diverse fields to advance research and dialogue. The intent is to inspire our communities to think deeply, develop solutions, take action and broaden knowledge. The Center's role, within the state's flagship university, is to respond quickly to the needs of state governance in addressing challenges facing Louisiana, particularly in times of crisis such as during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the 2016 historic floods. Underlying the Center's endeavors is to strengthen and advance the Manship School's national and state leadership in media and politics.

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About the 2022 Louisiana Survey

The *2022 Louisiana Survey* is the twentieth in an annual series of statewide surveys beginning in 2003 and sponsored by the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs at Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication.

Reflecting the continuing evolution of survey research, we used two approaches for this year's survey. First, we used our traditional probability-sampling approach to draw landline and cell phone numbers for a live-interview telephone survey while allowing participants with cellphones to choose to reply online, rather than over the phones, through a link sent via text message. Second, in partnership with the research firm *YouGov*, we administered an online survey to a nonprobability sample of Louisiana residents who participate in the *YouGov* panel. The body of this report focuses on results from the traditional probability sample. However, interested readers can find the topline results from both samples at the end of this document. More information about our methods, including *YouGov*'s strategy for generating representative samples, is available in the survey methodology section of this report.

The mission of the *Louisiana Survey* is to establish benchmarks as well as to capture change in residents' assessments of state government services. The survey is further dedicated to tracking public opinion on contemporary policy issues. Each iteration of the *Louisiana Survey* contains core items designed to serve as barometers of public sentiment, including assessments of whether the state is heading in the right direction or wrong direction and perceptions about the most important problems facing the state.

In the *2022 Louisiana Survey*, this core is supplemented with items about the Covid-19 pandemic, access to high-speed internet, coastal issues, flooding and other natural disasters, integrity of elections, media use, the death penalty, and abortion.

As part of an effort to ensure that the *Louisiana Survey* fulfills its public service mission, the research team solicited input about topics for the survey from members of the government and policy community across the political spectrum. Additionally, the research team drew upon expertise in public policy and polling from Louisiana State University faculty. These advisors provided invaluable insight into the design of the questionnaire and in identifying the contemporary policy questions that could most benefit from an understanding of the public's views. While we are indebted to them for their time and contributions, they bear no responsibility for final decisions on the questionnaire, analysis, and interpretation presented in this report or any mistakes therein.

We especially thank the Reilly Family Foundation for their generous support and vision in helping to create the *Louisiana Survey*.

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Summary

This is the fourth of six reports from the *2022 Louisiana Survey*, a project of the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs at Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication. This report includes results from questions asking Louisiana residents about elections in the state as well as about news media. These results include:

- A large majority (88%) of respondents said they are very or somewhat confident that legally qualified individuals who wish to vote are able to do so in Louisiana elections. It is a sentiment that Democrats (91%), Republicans (89%), and independents (86%) share. A smaller majority (61%) expressed confidence that ineligible voters are not casting ballots in these elections, but there is a significant partisan divide. Three fourths (76%) of Democrats and 64% of independents are confident that individuals not legally qualified to vote are prevented from doing so, but just 47% of Republicans are.
- Fifty-three percent (53%) said voting is a fundamental right for every adult U.S. citizen and should not be restricted in any way, and 46% said it is a privilege subject to limitations. Most Democrats (81%) said voting is a fundamental right, as did 60% of independents. However, most Republicans (76%) said voting is a privilege that can be limited if adult citizens fail to meet some requirements.
- More than two-thirds of respondents (69%) said that most elected officials in Louisiana do not care what people like them think. On the other hand, more than half of respondents (55%) said that ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Louisiana if they are willing to make the effort.
- Just half (51%) of respondents said they trust the information they get from local news organizations. This marks a 27-percentage point drop from four years ago. Republicans' trust in local news fell by 31 percentage points from 76% to 45%, and Democrats' trust fell 23 percentage points from 89% to 66%.

Confidence in Elections and Media

Most are confident about ballot access and election security in Louisiana

A large majority (88%) of respondents to the *2022 Louisiana Survey* said they are very or somewhat confident that legally qualified individuals who wish to vote are able to do so in Louisiana elections. It is a sentiment that Democrats (91%), Republicans (89%), and independents (86%) share – although Republicans are significantly more likely than Democrats to say they are very confident

(68% versus 43%). In short, relatively few Louisiana residents think qualified, interested voters are kept from the polls.

A smaller majority (61%) of respondents also expressed confidence that ineligible voters are not casting ballots in Louisiana elections. There is a significant partisan divide. Three fourths (76%) of Democrats and 64% of independents are confident that individuals not legally qualified to vote are prevented from doing so in Louisiana elections, but just 47% of Republican are.

Table 1: Views on voting rights and election security in Louisiana

View	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Confident that people who are legally qualified and want to vote are able to cast a ballot	88%	91%	89%	86%
Confident that people who are NOT legally qualified to vote are prevented from casting a ballot.	61%	76%	47%	64%
Voting is a fundamental right for every adult U.S. citizen and should not be restricted in any way.	53%	81%	22%	60%
Voting is a privilege that comes with responsibilities and can be limited if adult U.S. citizens don't meet some requirements.	46%	18%	76%	40%
If election rules were changed to make it easier to register and vote, that would also make elections less secure.	41%	24%	57%	37%
It would not make elections any less secure if election rules were changed to make it easier to register and vote.	53%	71%	38%	56%

Republicans support limitations on the right to vote, Democrats and independents oppose

There are similar divisions in beliefs about whether voting is a fundamental right that should not be restricted or a privilege that can be limited. Overall, respondents divided closely on this question – 53% said voting is a fundamental right of every adult U.S. citizen that should not be restricted in any way, and 46% said it is a privilege subject to limitations. Most Democrats (81%) said

voting is a fundamental right, as did 60% of independents. However, most Republicans (76%) said voting is a privilege that can be limited if adult citizens fail to meet some requirements.

A majority (57%) of Republicans also said that changing election rules to make it easier for people to register and vote would ultimately make elections less secure. In contrast, most Democrats (71%) and independents (56%) said that easing rules would not make elections any less secure.

Public has mixed view of its political efficacy

More than two-thirds of respondents (69%) said that most elected officials in Louisiana do not care what people like them think. This view is common across Democrats (71%), Republicans (61%), and independents (76%).

On the other hand, more than half of respondents (55%) said that ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Louisiana if they are willing to make the effort. Similar numbers of Democrats (61%) and Republicans (56%) share this view. Independents, however, divide more evenly between those who think ordinary citizens can have influence (51%) and those who think there is not much ordinary citizens can do to influence state government (47%).

Declining trust in news organizations both nationally and locally

Just half (51%) of respondents said they trust the information they get from local news organizations. This marks a 27-percentage point drop from four years ago, when the question last appeared on the *Louisiana Survey*. This trend is like the declining trust in national news. In 2018, most Louisiana residents (57%) trusted information from national news organizations – albeit, fewer than trusted information from local news organizations (78%). This year, barely more than a third (33%) of respondents said they trust information from national news organizations “a lot” or “some,” a drop of 21 percentage points.

Although fewer Republicans than Democrats trust local or national news, the declines in trust over recent years are hardly confined to a single political party. Republicans’ trust in local news fell by 31 percentage points from 76% to 45%, but Democrats’ trust fell 23 percentage points from 89% to 66%. Again,

the trends are very close to those for trust in national news. Republicans’ trust in national news organizations fell 29 percentage points from 47% to just 18%, but Democrats’ trust also fell 18 percentage points from 78% to 60%.

Similarly, fewer state residents say that local news organizations deal fairly with all aides when presenting news about political and social issues compared to 2018 – 26% now versus 36% four years ago. Indeed, this pattern of decline is widespread, applying to both Republicans and Democrats, to their judgments about both national and local news organizations, and to their perceptions of fairness and accuracy in the news.

In fact, the only exception has to do with perceptions of accuracy in local reporting. In this instance, Democrats have a more positive view of news organizations than in 2018 with an eight percentage point increase in the share who said these organizations generally get the facts straight (from 64% to 72%) even as the share of Republicans who agree fell dramatically from 59% to 33%.

Table 2: Trends in attitudes about local news organizations

View	All	Democrats	Republicans
2018: Trust information “a lot” or “some”	78%	89%	76%
2022: Trust information “a lot” or “some”	51%	66%	45%
Change	-27	-23	-31
2018: Deal fairly with all sides	36%	48%	31%
2022: Deal fairly with all sides	26%	43%	18%
Change	-10	-5	-13
2018: Get the facts straight	56%	64%	59%
2022: Get the facts straight	41%	72%	33%
Change	-15	+8	-26

Table 3: Trends in attitudes about national news organizations

View	All	Democrats	Republicans
2018: Trust information “a lot” or “some”	57%	78%	47%
2022: Trust information “a lot” or “some”	36%	60%	18%
Change	-21	-18	-29
2018: Deal fairly with all sides	17%	35%	5%
2022: Deal fairly with all sides	12%	30%	0%
Change	-5	-5	-5
2018: Get the facts straight	32%	62%	14%
2022: Get the facts straight	25%	50%	8%
Change	-7	-12	-6

Survey Methodology

The 2022 Louisiana Survey includes two distinct efforts to sample residents of the state and conduct interviews.

Survey 1: Probability sample of landline and cellphone numbers

The results discussed in this report come from interviews of a probability sample of adult Louisiana residents contacted via telephone (landline or cell phone), administered by the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs' Public Policy Research Lab (PPRL) at Louisiana State University. This sample was stratified across Louisiana parishes proportionally to their adult population ensuring geographic representation. The design of the landline portion of this sample ensures representation of both listed and unlisted landline numbers by use of random digit dialing. Similarly, the cellphone portion of this sample is randomly drawn from known, available phone number banks dedicated to wireless service in the state. Both portions, landline and cell phone, were provided by Marketing Systems Group. For landline numbers, interviewers called landline numbers to conduct interviews. For cellphone numbers, the PPRL first sent a text to these numbers inviting recipients to complete the questionnaire online and, if the recipient did not use the online option, interviewers followed up with a call to conduct interviews over the telephone. Of the 508 respondents in this sample, 105 were interviewed via a landline telephone, 290 were interviewed over a cellphone, and another 113 cellphone owners elected to complete the questionnaire online. Interviews for this survey were conducted from February 21 to March 14, 2022.

The combined landline and cellphone sample (including cellphone owners who completed the questionnaire online via the link sent to them by text) is weighted using an iterative procedure that matches race, education, household income, gender, and age to known profiles for the adult population of Louisiana found in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2020 five-year estimates. Weighting cannot eliminate every source of nonresponse bias. However, proper administration of probability sampling combined with accepted weighting techniques has a strong record of yielding unbiased results.

The sample has an overall margin of error of +/- 5.8 percentage points. The margin of error includes adjustment due to the weighting procedure. The design effect due to weighting is 1.4 percentage points; that is, the margin of error is 1.4 percentage points larger than it would be for a simple random sample of this size without weighting.

In addition to sampling error, as accounted for through the margin of error, readers should recognize that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls. As often as possible, the *Louisiana Survey* follows the wording of relevant questions repeatedly used by reputable public opinion research institutions and projects, such as the Pew Research Center, Gallup Inc., and the American National Election Studies.

This version of the *2022 Louisiana Survey* has a response rate of 6%. This response rate is the percentage of eligible residential households or personal cell phones in the sample for which an interview is completed. The rate is calculated using the American Association for Public Opinion Research's method for Response Rate 3 as published in their Standard Definitions. Response rates for telephones have been on decline for several decades and frequently fall in the single digits even among the very best survey research organizations.

Survey 2: Non-probability sample administered online

As the technology and science of the survey industry continues to evolve – especially in the face of declining response rates among traditional probability-based telephone surveys – the *2022 Louisiana Survey* included a second design: An online survey administered by the survey firm *YouGov* to a nonprobability sample of adult Louisiana residents. *YouGov* recruits individuals online to join its panel of survey respondents and periodically answer online questionnaires.

For this survey, 623 adult Louisiana residents in the *YouGov* panel completed the questionnaire. *YouGov* then matched 500 respondents to a sampling frame representing the adult population of the state on gender, age, race, and education. *YouGov* constructed this frame by stratified sampling from the full 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) one-year sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file). The frame reflects, on average, what probability samples of adult Louisiana residents would look like in terms of these demographic characteristics. The 500 respondents were then weighted to this sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, and region. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles. The weights were then post-stratified on 2016 and 2020 Presidential vote choice, and a four-way stratification of gender, age (4-categories), race (4-categories), and education (4-categories), to produce the final weight.

Respondents completed this survey from March 1 to March 21, 2022.

The margin of error for this survey is +/- 6.1%.

With its innovative approach to online polling, *YouGov* conducts surveys for a variety of business, university, and media clients, including *CBS News*, the *Economist* and the *New York Times*. [Research from scholars at Harvard University and Tufts University](#) shows that well-designed online opt-in sampling techniques, like those *YouGov* uses for its surveys, perform as well as traditional random digit dialing telephone polls.

Although the results discussed above in this report focus on Survey 1, readers can find topline results from Survey 2 below.

Comparison of samples

The following table displays demographic characteristics of each sample as well as population estimates based on the ACS.

Table: Comparison of survey samples to population benchmarks

Characteristic	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample	Benchmark
High school diploma or less	36.3%	46.9%	47.8%
Some college	34.1%	29.1%	29.3%
College degree or higher	28.5%	24.0%	22.9%
White, non-Hispanic	62.4%	57.7%	60.5%
Black, non-Hispanic	25.5%	33.3%	31.2%
Hispanic	3.1%	4.8%	4.8%
Other	6.5%	4.1%	3.5%
18-24	8.7%	7.2%	11.9%
25-34	16.1%	17.3%	18.7%
35-44	16.2%	20.5%	16.5%
45-54	15.6%	20.0%	15.8%
55-64	17.4%	11.8%	16.9%
65+	25.6%	23.2%	20.2%
Men	47.2%	47.1%	48.2%
Women	52.0%	52.9%	51.8%
Metro BR	18.7%	19.4%	17.8%
Metro NOLA	29.8%	29.5%	31.0%
South Louisiana	23.6%	23.1%	25.2%
North Louisiana	26.5%	28.0%	26.0%

Characteristic	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample	Benchmark
Registered to vote	92.1%	82.7%	84.5%
Have driver's license	88.8%	84.9%	94.6%
Average size of household	2.6	3.7	2.6
Employed	52.7%	45.9%	55.4%
Married (not separated)	46.4%	44.2%	43.4%
Have cell phone	98.3%	98.4%	90.6%
Have cell phone only	72.0%	73.8%	64.0%
Have internet access at home	82.3%	88.5%	78.5%

Statistics for both Louisiana Survey samples incorporate the sample weights. All sample statistics and benchmarks are for the adult population of Louisiana. Benchmarks represent data from the following data sources:

- U.S Census American Community Survey (ACS), 2020 5-year estimates (education, race and ethnicity, age, gender, average size of household, employment, and marital status);
- U.S Census ACS, 2019 1-year estimate (region);
- Louisiana Secretary of State (voter registration count is for March 1, 2022, and divided by the adult population from the 2022 5-year ACS estimate);
- Federal Highway Administration (the number of adult licensed drivers from 2019, which is divided by the 2019 ACS population estimate);
- National Health Insurance Survey (cell phone access); and
- National Center for Education Statistics (household internet access).

These comparisons indicate that both samples are often close to the benchmark (within five percentage points) for education, race and ethnicity, age, gender, and region. The exceptions are that the probability sample underestimates the share who have no experience with college, overestimates the share with a college degree, underestimates the share of non-Hispanic Black residents, and overestimates the share who are 65 years or older. The non-probability sample overestimates the share who are 55 to 64 years old. The general similarity of both samples to population benchmarks for this set of demographics is unsurprising given that both samples are weighted to these characteristics of the population.

The comparisons to the remaining benchmarks are more interesting because they reveal whether the samples represent the population even on characteristics to which they are not weighted. Ideally, this would be the case. In most cases, the probability sample comes within five percentage

points of the population benchmark. It overestimates voter registration, underestimates the share of adults with a driver's license, and overestimates cell phone access. The non-probability sample performs slightly less well, generally. It overestimates the share with a driver's license, overestimates the size of households, underestimates employment, overestimates cell phone access, and overestimates home internet access.

Question Wording and Toplines

Unless otherwise indicated, results are for the total sample. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Q1: Please choose the statement that comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right.

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
Voting is a fundamental right for every adult U.S. citizen and should not be restricted in any way.	53	57
Voting is a privilege that comes with responsibilities and can be limited if adult U.S. citizens don't meet some requirements.	46	43
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	1	0

Q2: Please choose the statement that comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right.

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
If election rules were changed to make it easier to register and vote, that would also make elections less secure.	41	49
It would not make elections any less secure if election rules were changed to make it easier to register and vote.	53	51
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	7	0

Q3: Please choose the statement that comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right.

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
Most elected officials in Louisiana care what people like me think.	26	27
Most elected officials in Louisiana don't care what people like me think.	69	73
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	5	0

Q4: Please choose the statement that comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right.

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
Ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Louisiana if they are willing to make the effort.	55	50
There's not much ordinary citizens can do to influence the government in Louisiana.	43	50
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	2	0

Q5: Thinking about elections in Louisiana, how confident, if at all, are you that people who are NOT legally qualified to vote are prevented from casting a ballot? Would you say you are... [ORDER OF Q5 AND Q6 RANDOMIZED ACROSS RESPONDENTS.]

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
Very confident	24	24
Somewhat confident	37	36
Not very confident	19	26
Not at all confident	16	14
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	3	0

Q6: Thinking about elections in Louisiana, how confident, if at all, are you that people who are legally qualified and want to vote are able to cast a ballot? Would you say you are...?

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
Very confident	53	50
Somewhat confident	35	34
Not very confident	6	13
Not at all confident	4	3
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	1	0

Q7: How much, if at all, do you trust the information you get from local news organizations? Would you say you trust it... [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q7-Q9 ABOUT LOCAL MEDIA OR TO Q10-Q12 ABOUT NATIONAL MEDIA.]

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
A lot	9	15
Some	42	55
Not too much	27	24
Not at all	23	6
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	0	0

Q8: In presenting the news dealing with political and social issues, do you think that local news organizations deal fairly with all sides, or do they tend to favor one side? [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q7-Q9 ABOUT LOCAL MEDIA OR TO Q10-Q12 ABOUT NATIONAL MEDIA.]

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
Deal fairly with all sides	26	45
Tend to favor one side	68	55
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	6	0

Q9: In general, do you think local news organizations get the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate? [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q7-Q9 ABOUT LOCAL MEDIA OR TO Q10-Q12 ABOUT NATIONAL MEDIA.]

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
Get the facts straight	41	53
Often inaccurate	51	47
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	7	0

Q10: How much, if at all, do you trust the information you get from national news organizations? Would you say you trust it... [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q7-Q9 ABOUT LOCAL MEDIA OR TO Q10-Q12 ABOUT NATIONAL MEDIA.]

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
A lot	3	12
Some	33	39
Not too much	37	29
Not at all	26	20
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	1	0

Q11: In presenting the news dealing with political and social issues, do you think that national news organizations deal fairly with all sides, or do they tend to favor one side? [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q7-Q9 ABOUT LOCAL MEDIA OR TO Q10-Q12 ABOUT NATIONAL MEDIA.]

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
Deal fairly with all sides	12	32
Tend to favor one side	86	68
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	2	0

Q12: In general, do you think national news organizations get the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate? [RESPONDENTS RANDOMLY ASSIGNED EITHER TO Q7-Q9 ABOUT LOCAL MEDIA OR TO Q10-Q12 ABOUT NATIONAL MEDIA.]

Response	Probability-based Telephone Sample	Non-probability Online Sample
Get the facts straight	25	37
Often inaccurate	71	63
Don't know / Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	4	0