



P.O. Box 4308
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821
(225) 344-2225 FAX (225) 338-9470
COUNCIL FOR A BETTER LOUISIANA

NEW CABL VOTER SURVEY SHOWS VOTERS FOCUSED ON ISSUES IN SELECTING NEW GOVERNOR

December 9, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Barry Erwin
or Stephanie Desselle
(225) 344-2225

(Baton Rouge, LA) – When voters went to the polls on November 15 the most important factor in choosing whom to vote for was the candidates’ position on issues, and the most important issues to voters were education, jobs and health care.

Those are among the findings of a new statewide survey of citizens conducted for the Council for A Better Louisiana immediately after Louisiana’s general election. The survey also shows that a significant number of voters felt like they knew more about the candidates’ position on issues than they did in years past, and a strong majority believe the outcome of the 2003 gubernatorial election sends a positive message to the rest of the country about Louisiana.

“I think the findings of this survey are very encouraging, because they show that many voters really focused on the issues and the candidates’ ideas for moving the state forward.” said Barry Erwin, CABL President. “I think voters also made it clear they believe education, our economy and health care should be the top priorities for the new administration.”

They also have a good feeling about the outcome of the election. Seventy-one percent believe that the election of Kathleen Blanco as governor sends a positive message to the rest of the country. Interestingly, 45% of those surveyed strongly believe that and nearly half of those who voted for Bobby Jindal also believe the election sends a positive message.

When asked why they voted they way they did in the election for governor, 49% said the most important reason was the candidate’s position on issues. Twenty-three percent said they just liked the person they voted for, 17% mentioned political party affiliation, 12% said experience and 10% cited effective leadership skills. Significantly, only 9% said they voted for one candidate because they didn’t like the other, and only 2% mentioned endorsements as a reason.

Voters were also asked in an open-ended question to name the issues that were most important in deciding whom to vote for. They were allowed to name more than one issue. Education was the leading answer, being mentioned by 66% of those surveyed. Interestingly, out of that group 28% specifically mentioned K-12 public education, 21% said higher education and 17% said early childhood education. Jobs and the economy were next, being mentioned by 35% of voters followed by health care cited by 32%. After that there was a big gap, with cleaning up political corruption and tax issues mentioned by only 5% of voters.

To some degree it appears voters were turned off by some aspects of the campaign. Forty-four percent said they thought there were too many negative, personal attacks, though another 34% felt the candidates focused on the most important issues facing the state. CABL believes this finding continues to send a strong signal to candidates that voters want substantive discussion of ideas and solutions to Louisiana's problems.

It also appears a significant number of voters felt good about the information they had on the candidates' position on issues. Thirty-two percent said they knew more about where the candidates' stood on major issues than they did in years past compared to just 8% who said they knew less.

They got their information from a variety of sources, but news media coverage was the one mentioned most often by voters. Seventy-percent of those surveyed said they relied on the media for information, 60% mentioned campaign advertising on television or radio and 20% mentioned debates.

"I think this survey shows that to a large degree this year's election for governor was based on issues, and from CABL's perspective that's a very positive thing," Erwin said. "Hopefully this means we have turned the corner on personality-driven campaigns and candidates will feel the need to address important issues in substantive ways."

The poll of 600 registered voters in Louisiana was conducted November 17-19, 2003 by Wirthlin Worldwide. It has a margin of error of +/- 4%.

Tomorrow: The State of Mind of Louisiana Voters

###

PERSONAL/CONFIDENTIAL

WIRTHLIN WORLDWIDE

406 West South Jordan Parkway, Ste. 550

South Jordan, UT 84095

801-523-2553

CABL 2003 POST ELECTION

Project #: 03-8451

Field Dates: November 17-19, 2003

Respondents: 600 registered voters in Louisiana

Margin of Error: +/- 4.0% in 95 out of 100 cases

1. As you may recall, last Saturday was the election for governor of Louisiana. Did you vote last Saturday or were you unable to do so?

83% TOTAL VOTED

80% Yes/Voted

3% Yes/Voted absentee

17% No/Did not vote

2. And, why didn't you have the chance to vote? (DO NOT READ LIST) (PRE-CODED OPEN-END) (ACCEPT MULTIPLE MENTIONS)

50% Couldn't get to the polls

24% Busy doing something else

5% Didn't like the choices

5% Didn't know it was Election Day

4% Forgot

3% Couldn't make up my mind

3% Didn't care who won

1% Campaign was too negative

7% Other

3. And in the election for governor of Louisiana, for whom did you vote last Saturday? Did you vote for (ROTATE) Kathleen Blanco, Democrat, or Bobby Jindal, Republican?

51% Blanco

48% Jindal

0% Cannot remember

1% Don't Know/Refused

4. And, when did you make up your mind to vote for either Bobby Jindal or Kathleen Blanco....READ LIST

63% When I voted in the primary election on October 4th or before

13% About a month before last Saturday's run-off election

- 11% About 2 weeks before Saturday's election
- 6% A few days before Saturday's election
- 6% The day of the election on Saturday
- 2% Don't Know/Refused

Let's move on and talk about some issues...

5. And thinking about why you voted the way you did in the election for governor, what was the most important reason you had for choosing the candidate you voted for...[DO NOT READ LIST; ACCEPT MULTIPLE MENTIONS]

- 49% Position on issues/Ideas
- 23% I just liked the person
- 17% Their political party affiliation
- 12% Their experience
- 10% They are the most effective leader
- 9% Didn't like the other candidate
- 8% Their gender
- 4% Their age
- 3% They are from my area/Region
- 2% They had important endorsements
- 9% Other
- 2% Don't Know/Refused

6. And, thinking back to how you voted in the election for governor...What issues were most important in determining who you voted for? Any others? Any others? [DO NOT READ LIST; ACCEPT MULTIPLE MENTIONS]

- 35% Jobs/Economy
- 32% Health care
- 28% K-12 public education
- 21% Higher education
- 17% Early childhood education/Pre-K
- 5% Cleaning up political corruption
- 5% Tax restructuring
- 4% Abortion
- 4% Ending wasteful spending
- 3% Senior citizens issues
- 2% People leaving the state
- 2% Roads/Infrastructure
- 2% Coastal erosion
- 2% Juvenile justice
- 1% Crime
- 1% Other environment
- <1% Worker training
- 19% Other
- 11% Don't Know/Refused

7. How would you describe the overall tone of this year's election campaign for GOVERNOR...

- 34% The candidates focused on the most important issues facing the state
- 44% There were too many negative, personal attacks. The candidates did not focus on issues
- 15% The candidates were not focused on the right issues that I care about
- 7% Don't Know/Refused

8. And, what sources did you rely upon to get information about the candidates' position on issues? Any Others? [DO NOT READ LIST; ACCEPT MULTIPLE MENTIONS]

- 70% News media coverage
- 60% Campaign advertising on TV or radio
- 20% Debates
- 9% Word of mouth
- 8% Information in the mail
- 7% Websites and information from independent nonpartisan groups
- 5% Campaign websites
- 7% Other
- 3% Don't Know/Refused

9. During this election do you think you.....

- 32% Knew more about where the candidates stood on major issues than years past
- 8% Less about where they stood than in years past
- 57% About the same as in years past
- 3% Don't Know/Refused

We are almost done. I just have a few more questions.

I am now going to read to you a series of statements. After I read each one, please tell me if you agree or disagree with that statement Let's begin ... **(ROTATE)**

Would that be **STRONGLY** or **SOMEWHAT** (agree/disagree)?

10. The election of the new Governor sends a positive message to the rest of the country about Louisiana.

- 71% TOTAL AGREE**
- 45% Strongly agree
- 26% Somewhat agree
- 27% TOTAL DISAGREE**
- 12% Somewhat disagree
- 16% Strongly disagree
- 2% Don't Know/Refused

Now, I have just a few final questions for statistical purposes only and then we will be finished...

11. What is your age, please?

8%	18 - 24
5%	25 - 29
7%	30 - 34
10%	35 - 39
8%	40 - 44
14%	45 - 49
10%	50 - 54
11%	55 - 59
8%	60 - 64
5%	65 - 69
7%	70 - 74
6%	75 and older
1%	Don't Know/Refused

12. Are you currently registered to vote as a Republican, a Democrat, a Independent, or something else?

23%	Republican
57%	Democrat
14%	Independent
2%	Other
4%	Don't Know/Refused

13. What is the last grade of formal education you completed?

9%	Less than high school
28%	High school graduate
3%	Technical/Vocational
23%	Some college
27%	College graduate
10%	Post-graduate

14. What is your main racial heritage.... **(READ LIST)**

29%	Black American or African-American
66%	Caucasian
1%	Hispanic
1%	Asian
1%	American Indian
1%	Other
1%	Don't Know/Refused

15. When it comes to elections, would you say.... [READ LIST]

- 66% You always vote
- 27% You usually vote
- 6% You don't usually vote, but will vote depending on the candidates or the issues
- 1% You never vote

16. REGION

- 11% Northwest
- 11% Northeast
- 6% Central
- 16% Cajun SW
- 9% Cajun SE
- 16% Baton Rouge
- 20% New Orleans Metro
- 11% Orleans