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COUNCIL FOR A BETTER LOUISIANA

THE STATE OF MIND OF LOUISIANA VOTERS

CITIZEN OUTLOOK GENERALLY POSITIVE, BUT CONCERNS REMAIN AMONG MANY IN LOUISIANA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Baton Rouge, LA) – In the aftermath of this year’s elections, citizens have a generally positive outlook about life in Louisiana, but their overall trust in state government remains modest at best, and a significant number remain frustrated and express a lack of confidence which could threaten the state’s ability to succeed in the future.

Those are among the findings of a new statewide survey of registered voters conducted for the Council for A Better Louisiana, November 17-18.

Fifty-three percent of those surveyed believe Louisiana is headed in the right direction. That compares with 49% who expressed that view in 2002. But the number of people who believe the state is “seriously off on the wrong track” has also increased, from 28% last year to 33% in 2003. In 1994, when CABL first began asking voters this question, only 19% thought Louisiana was moving in the right direction. The highpoint came in 1998 when 67% expressed that view.

This generally positive feeling expressed by citizens is also reflected in their responses to a question exploring how they feel about living in Louisiana. While significant numbers of voters continue to express concerns about various aspects of life in Louisiana, their overall feelings appear more positive than negative.

In order to learn more about the state of mind of Louisiana citizens, CABL gave them a list of 14 words generally tied to emotions and asked them whether or not they describe how they personally feel about living in Louisiana. The percentages of those who replied that they did describe their feelings is as follows:

Happiness	81%	Complacency	51%
Compassion	73%	Trust	50%
Pride	72%	Being Progressive	49%
Optimism	67%	Being Worried	45%
Frustration	60%	Indifference	41%
Success	58%	Embarrassment	40%
Confidence	57%	Anger	33%

The results indicate the overall state of mind of voters about living in Louisiana is good: more than two-thirds of those surveyed are happy, they feel compassionate, they have pride in the state and are optimistic about the future. But significant numbers of citizens also express concerns. For example:

- ?? 60% of those surveyed feel a sense of frustration living in Louisiana
- ?? 51% feel a sense of complacency
- ?? 45% say they are worried
- ?? 41% feel a sense of indifference
- ?? 40% are embarrassed about living in Louisiana

In addition more than 40% of those surveyed do not believe “trust,” “success” or “confidence” describe living in Louisiana. This is a significant finding because Louisiana still has much to do to solve its most serious problems, and that becomes increasingly difficult if large groups of voters lack trust or confidence, or are doubtful about the chances for success.

“The good news out of this survey is that more people have positive feelings about their life in Louisiana than negative ones. That gives us a foundation to continue to build upon for improving our state,” said Barry Erwin, CABL President. “At the same time it is important to recognize that significant numbers of people are still frustrated by things in Louisiana. Many are worried and embarrassed, and they lack trust and confidence in the state. Hopefully, these are things the new administration won’t lose sight of and will work to address.”

Some of these feelings come through in voters’ responses to other questions. When asked to rate their level of trust in state elected leaders to “do what’s right” on a 10-point scale, the mean was 5.4. Though that is significantly higher than the 3.5 registered back in 1994, the trends indicate that public trust in government leaders has risen over the years and then reached a plateau from which there has been little significant movement. This indicates a continued substantial degree of skepticism among voters, but also opportunities for the new administration to address this issue and work to build voter confidence.

Still voter concerns about political corruption seem to have eased. Since 1994 CABL has asked voters whether they agreed or disagreed with a very strong statement about political corruption: Louisiana politics has become so corrupt and dishonest their vote for change will never make a difference.

Even today, without the high profile political scandals that have plagued Louisiana in the past, 40% of those surveyed agreed with that statement, indicating that a significant number of Louisiana citizens continue to have a deeply-held cynicism about politics in the state. The good news, however, is that this represents the lowest percentage of voters responding this way since we have been posing this question, and much improved over the 55% who held this view in 1994.

On another note, a significant percentage of voters continue to say they would leave Louisiana given the means and opportunity. Today 33% would leave, a slight increase from the 31% who said it in 2001, but less than the 38% in 1994. Interestingly, 33% of those we surveyed said that someone in their family has left the state to pursue a job or other economic opportunity in the last two years. Of those, 86% said their family member is still living away.

Taken together, these findings show that voters have extremely mixed feelings about various aspects of life in Louisiana. There is a general happiness, optimism and pride associated with living in Louisiana, but it is tempered with concerns about economic uncertainty, lack of trust in politics and political leaders, and a clear level of frustration.

From CABL's perspective it is important to note that the current state of mind of voters appears vastly improved over what it was almost a decade ago, and it is evident that progress in positively changing voter attitudes is indeed possible. CABL has long believed that the trust and confidence of citizens in their political leaders is critical if Louisiana is to address some of its most pressing problems.

It is our hope that Governor-elect Blanco and her administration will work to help bolster voter confidence, and in doing so, help set the stage for progress in dealing with some of Louisiana's difficult, but important issues.

The poll questioned 600 registered voters of whom 497 voted in the November 15 general election and 103 did not vote. It was conducted November 17-18, 2003 by Wirthlin Worldwide. It has a margin of error of +/- 4%.

Tomorrow: Voter Expectations for the New Governor

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PERSONAL/CONFIDENTIAL

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CABL 2003 POST ELECTION

Project #: 03-8451

Field Dates: November 17-18, 2003

Respondents: 600 registered voters in Louisiana

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

1. Overall, do you think Louisiana is heading in the right direction or is the state seriously off on the wrong track?

1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2003	
19%	56%	67%	50%	49%	53%	Right direction
60%	32%	27%	37%	28%	33%	Wrong track
11%	7%	5%	4%	--	12%	No opinion
10%	5%	1%	8%	23%	1%	Don't Know/Refused

2. Now let's think about whether you trust Louisiana elected officials to do what's right. If 0 represents absolutely no trust in Louisiana officials to do what's right, and 10 represents total trust in Louisiana government officials, what number between 0 and 10 best describes how much trust you have in Louisiana government officials?

1998	2000	2001	2003	
5%	3%	4%	6%	10
16%	14%	23%	14%	(8-9)
50%	43%	49%	29%	(6-7)
19%	41%	26%	50%	(0-5)
16%	10%	4%		0
5.0	4.6	5.5	5.4	Mean

3. Now let's do something a little different. I going to read you a list of words that may or may not describe how you personally feel about living in Louisiana. After I read each one, please tell me whether, **YES**, that word describes how you feel about living in Louisiana, or **NO**, it does not describe how you feel about living Louisiana. **[RANDOMIZE]** Does living in Louisiana give you a feeling of...?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>A. OPTIMISM
67% Yes
31% No
1% Don't Know/Refused</p> | <p>24% No
3% Don't Know/Refused</p> |
| <p>B. PRIDE
72% Yes
28% No
1% Don't Know/Refused</p> | <p>J. BEING WORRIED
45% Yes
54% No
1% Don't Know/Refused</p> |
| <p>C. TRUST
50% Yes
46% No
4% Don't Know/Refused</p> | <p>K. ANGER
33% Yes
66% No
1% Don't Know/Refused</p> |
| <p>D. SUCCESS
58% Yes
41% No
1% Don't Know/Refused</p> | <p>L. FRUSTRATION
60% Yes
39% No
1% Don't Know/Refused</p> |
| <p>E. COMPLACENCY
51% Yes
41% No
8% Don't Know/Refused</p> | <p>M. INDIFFERENCE
41% Yes
57% No
2% Don't Know/Refused</p> |
| <p>F. HAPPINESS
81% Yes
19% No
0% Don't Know/Refused</p> | <p>N. BEING PROGRESSIVE
49% Yes
48% No
2% Don't Know/Refused</p> |
| <p>G. EMBARRASSMENT
40% Yes
59% No
1% Don't Know/Refused</p> | |
| <p>H. CONFIDENCE
57% Yes
42% No
2% Don't Know/Refused</p> | |
| <p>I. COMPASSION
73% Yes</p> | |

SUMMARY TABLE OF YES

81%	F. Happiness	51%	E. Complacency
73%	I. Compassion	50%	C. Trust
72%	B. Pride	49%	N. Being progressive
67%	A. Optimism	45%	J. Being worried
60%	L. Frustration	41%	M. Indifference
58%	D. Success	40%	G. Embarrassment
57%	H. Confidence	33%	K. Anger

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)?

4. If I had the opportunity and the means TODAY to leave Louisiana, I would.

1994	1996	1997	1998	2000	2001	2003	
38%	32%	37%	35%	37%	31%	33%	TOTAL AGREE
30%	21%	22%	21%	24%	19%	24%	Strongly agree
8%	11%	15%	13%	13%	12%	9%	Somewhat agree
60%	66%	63%	64%	62%	68%	67%	TOTAL DISAGREE
16%	20%	17%	23%	19%	16%	12%	Somewhat disagree
45%	46%	45%	41%	43%	52%	55%	Strongly disagree
2%	2%	--	1%	1%	--	--	Don't Know/Refused

5. Louisiana politics has become so corrupt and dishonest, I feel like my vote for change will never make a difference.

1994	1996	1998	2000	2003	
55%	49%	43%	48%	40%	TOTAL AGREE
37%	30%	24%	29%	25%	Strongly agree
17%	19%	18%	19%	15%	Somewhat agree
44%	50%	57%	50%	58%	TOTAL DISAGREE
16%	25%	26%	23%	21%	Somewhat disagree
28%	24%	31%	27%	37%	Strongly disagree
1%	1%	--	2%	2%	Don't Know/Refused

6. And, has anyone in your family left Louisiana within the past two years for a job or some other economic opportunity?

33%	Yes
66%	No

IF YES, ASK: N=201

7. And, did they come back to Louisiana to live or are they still away?

10%	Came back
86%	Still living away
4%	Don't Know/Refused

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

8. 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

9. 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

10. 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

11. 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

12. REGION [CHECK QUOTAS]

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