

Republican Review

A Publication of the New Hampshire House Majority Office

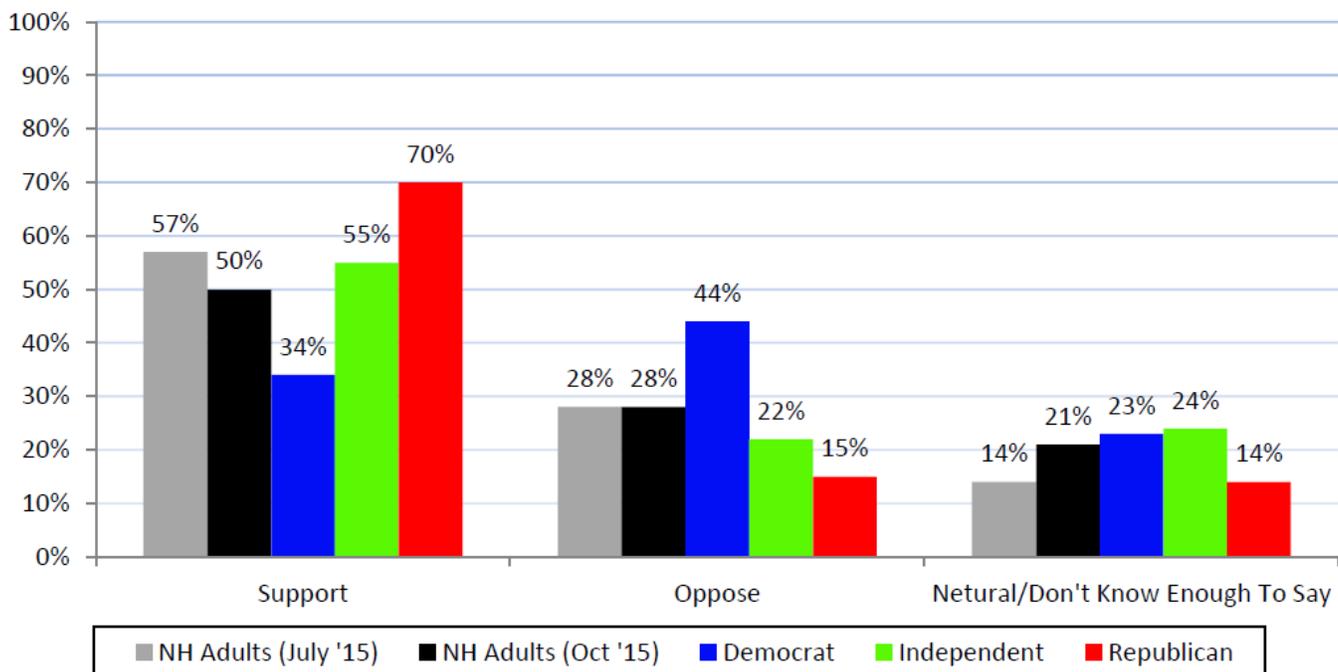
UNH/WMUR POLL: VOTERS [STILL] SUPPORT 30 DAY RESIDENCY BILL

On Wednesday, WMUR release the latest poll results on several questions dealing with state policy measures. Absent from the twitter feed of the New Hampshire Democratic Party or its chairman was the stark and continuing level of support for the concept of having a 30 day residency requirement in order to participate in New Hampshire elections, otherwise known as SB 179.

SB 179 passed the legislature with ease, but was vetoed by Governor Hassan. Without a 2/3 majority vote to override the veto, the bill's life was cut short despite its broad base of support.

According to poll results, 70% of Republicans and 55% of independents support the concept of SB 179. Overall, poll respondents who support the legislation outnumber those who oppose it by a nearly 2 to 1 margin.

A plurality of the Democrats said they oppose the measure, but not a clear majority.



This recent polling data supports earlier polls that showed a similar level support for the bill. When the bill was before the House, 97% of House Republicans supported SB179.

In addition to opinion on SB179, the survey also asked questions relative to approval of the legislature and what voters believe are the most important policy issues facing New Hampshire. We have more analysis on page 3.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: BUDGET SURPLUS

Recent reports suggested that the state had a \$73.2 million surplus. Is that accurate?

\$73.2 million simply represents the total of undesignated funds at the end of the biennium (FY2014-2015). It is calculated by looking at total net revenue, total net appropriations and other adjustments. It does not take into account how the budgets immediately before or after may have been tied to it. It is a snapshot of how the state ended the period that started July 1, 2013 and ended June 30, 2015. That's all.

If you expand your view to look forward, and include how the \$73.2 million is utilized after June 30, 2015, you'd need to take into account that \$49 million of it is being carried forward to be spent in the in FY2016-2017 budget. If you subtract \$49 million now designated to be spent from the \$73.2 million previously undesignated funds, the result is \$24.2 million.

If \$73.2 million is not entirely accurate, what is a truer representation of what our surplus funds are?

After deducting the carry-forward amount to be spent in FY2016-2017, we have \$24.2 million, which better represents what is truly left as undesignated funds and is the amount that will be deposited into the Rainy Day Fund.

How common is the carry-forward procedure in state budgets?

In the last 8 biennial state budgets, 4 have used funds carried forward from the previous budget. 4 budgets have not.

FY2016 - 2017	\$49 million
FY2014 - 2015	\$72 million
FY2012 - 2013	No Carry Forward
FY2010 - 2011	No Carry Forward
FY2008 - 2009	\$28 million
FY2006 - 2007	\$30 million
FY2004 - 2005	No Carry Forward
FY2002 - 2003	No Carry Forward

While it is important to note that it is the decision of legislative budget writers to carry forward funds, it also depends highly on the availability of funds to carry over. Not every legislature has had the benefit of economic conditions and fiscally responsible budgets that produce surplus funds.

Some have suggested our true surplus is only \$1 million. Where do they get that figure?

In the answer to the last question, you'll notice that the amount carried forward into the FY2014-2015 budget (that just ended June 30th, 2015) was \$72 million. Had that carry forward not occurred, and all other factors remained the same, one could say that we would only have \$1 million remaining.

In reality, budget writers in 2013 (when the 2014-2015 budget was passed) built their budget with the assumption that they would utilize the \$72 million. Had they chose to deposit those funds into the Rainy Day Fund, it is very likely they would have made different decisions in how to build the budget with \$72 million less.

In short, the \$1 million figure is comparing apples to oranges.

POLL: HEROIN CRISIS DEMANDS ACTION

WMUR/UNH polling released this week also have several questions related to New Hampshire’s heroin and drug addiction crisis. The survey reported the following important trends in attitude towards the epidemic:

- For the first time in nearly eight years, a plurality of Granite Staters think that something other than jobs and the economy is the most important problem facing the state. Currently, 25% of New Hampshire adults cite drug abuse as the most important problem facing the state, followed by jobs and the economy (21%), education (9%), health care (6%), taxes (4%) and the state budget (3%). At this point last year just 3% of New Hampshire residents cited drug abuse as the most important problem.
- 48% of New Hampshire residents say they personally know someone who has abused heroin in the past 5 years. Younger residents are more likely to know someone who has abused heroin than older residents as nearly three in five (60%) adults under 35 say they personally know someone who has abused heroin in the past 5 years.
- When asked whether or not state and local governments should be spending more on programs to combat heroin abuse, a majority (53%) believe the government should spend more, 16% believe we are spending enough now and 31% don’t know enough to say. Democrats (64%) are more likely to say the government should spend more to reduce heroin abuse than Independents (50%) or Republicans (39%). The percentage of residents who believe the government should spend more has increased 11 points since July.

LEGISLATURE APPROVAL NUMBERS POSITIVE

In addition to policy related questions the WMUR/UNH poll released results from their survey question on if voters approve or disapprove of the job the state legislature is doing.

Improving figures over the last time this question appeared in their survey back in July, respondents conclude that overall, the legislative is doing a good job, with a +8% net approval rating (45% approve, 37% disapprove).

Approval Rating – NH Legislature

