

### The 2004 Utah Priorities Poll: The Top Issues and concerns of Utahns for the 2004 Gubernatorial Election

Research Report #665, March 2004

#### Lesson Summary

This lesson describes the results of a poll of registered voters before the 2004 gubernatorial election regarding Utah's top issues and challenges. The report describes each of the top 10 issues identified by the poll. In addition, the report discusses differences in state and national priorities as well as differing regional priorities within Utah. The number one issue is public education.

#### Related Websites

- Utah Priorities: a project of the Utah Foundation  
<http://www.utahpriorities.net>
- Envision Utah: a public/ private partnership for quality growth  
<http://www.envisionutah.org/>
- The Salt Lake Tribune  
<http://www.sltrib.com/>
- The Deseret News  
<http://www.deseretnews.com/>

#### Utah Core Curriculum

U.S. Govt. and Citizenship

- Std 4, Obj 3: Assess methods for respectfully dealing with differences.

Economics

- Std 5, Obj 4: Describe the various forms and roles institutions take in furthering both continuity and change.

*This lesson plan is provided by Utah Foundation to assist in using the accompanying Research Report in high school or middle school classes. Please feel free to copy the Research Report for your students.*

#### Vocabulary

Delve: Search deeply.

Demographic: Characteristics of a population (for example: age, gender, education level).

Gubernatorial: Of or relating to the governor.

Heightening: Raising, increasing, and intensifying.

Incentive: Something that causes action.

Infrastructure: The whole system of facilities, equipment, and services needed for a city or state.

Prioritize: To place in rank order, with the most important items first.

#### Quick Questions

1. How do the majority of Utahns feel about the direction the state is moving in?

Answer: 65% right direction, 23% wrong direction, and 12% don't know.

2. How does optimism in the state compare to the national level?

Answer: Generally, significantly higher, 55% agree with direction of the country, 43% dissatisfied.

3. What are considered the three highest priorities in the state of Utah?

Answer: 1) Public education, 2) jobs and the economy, and 3) water supply & quality.

4. How do these compare to national priorities?

Answer: Nationally, 44% feel that jobs and the economy are #1, health care was #2, and moral values were #3, with public education at #4.

5. How do most people polled form their opinions about the quality of public education?

Answer: 38% from media reports, 35% based their opinions on experience with their neighborhood schools.

6. Jobs and economic development ranked highly both on the state and national level. Specifically what are the greatest concerns with this category in Utah?

Answer: Creation of new jobs, wage rates, and attracting new business.

7. What other issues are included in the top ten?

Answer: Health Care, Crime & Security, Higher Education, Taxes, Dealing with Growth, Environment, and Parental Rights.

8. How do Cache and Washington counties differ from the rest of the state in their top priorities?

Answer: Cache County puts a stronger emphasis on higher education, while Washington County has water as #1.

## Critical Thinking Activities

1. Working in small groups, prepare a survey to determine the priorities in your area. Have both adults and students take the survey and tabulate the results. How did your survey compare to the one used in the report? How would you explain the differences?
2. A large number of respondents get their opinions about schools from the media. What messages are they hearing about public schools? What could schools do to improve the way voters feel about public education? Why is it important for public schools to maintain a positive image?
3. Utah is growing rapidly both because of new move-ins and a high birth rate. What problems does this rapid growth rate cause for the state? How can the state fund the infrastructure needs? How does this growth rate affect your future?
4. There are several important issues raised in this article. However, defining a problem is different from solving it. Pick an issue from the list and write a short paper on your recommended solution. Identify alternative solutions and explain why you chose your solution. What do you think would happen if your recommendation were followed? How would the state pay for it? Would it be cost effective?

## Quiz Page

### Vocabulary

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Heightening

Prioritize

Demographic

Incentive

Gubernatorial

Infrastructure

### Quick Questions

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3. What are considered the three highest priorities in the state of Utah?
4. How do these compare to national priorities?
5. How do most people polled form their opinions about the quality of public education?
6. Jobs and economic development ranked highly both on the state and national level. Specifically what are the greatest concerns with this category in Utah?
7. What other issues are included in the top ten?
8. How do Cache and Washington counties differ from the rest of the state in their top priorities?