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Research Report

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2016 Utah Priorities Project

Part III: Survey of State Party Delegates



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The mission of Utah Foundation is to promote a thriving economy, a well-prepared workforce, and a high quality of life for Utahns by performing thorough, well-supported research that helps policymakers, business and community leaders, and citizens better understand complex issues and providing practical, well-reasoned recommendations for policy change.

2016 Utah Priorities Project

Part III: Survey of State Party Delegates

The 2016 election cycle is the first impacted by changes to the candidate nomination process as a result of Senate Bill 54, passed in 2014. Since a 2016 court ruling deems that the legislation was constitutional, this new process might reduce the concern that some have regarding the differences between voters and delegates.

Utah Foundation performs the Utah Priorities Project each gubernatorial election year. This is the third time that the project includes a survey of party delegates who choose candidates at party conventions. This report – Part III of the 2016 Utah Priorities Project – details the party delegates’ survey responses. It also uses responses from the voter survey to gain an understanding of how party voters and delegates are similar and how they are different.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Democratic party delegates share the same top 10 priorities as Democratic voters. Republican delegates share 8 of 10 priorities with voters (see page 4).
- Party delegates are more ideologically polarized than voters (see pages 6-8).
- Of the 21 hot button issues, those related to public lands show some of the greatest contrasts between Republican and Democratic delegates (see page 5).
- The phrase “authorized immigrants have a positive impact on Utah’s economy” is the only hot button issue upon which Republican and Democratic voters and delegates all agree. Of the 21 hot button issues, their levels of agreement on this topic were unique (see page 6).
- There is some misalignment in the demographic characteristics of voters and delegates, particularly in respect to gender and age (see pages 8 and 9).

Top 10 Issues for Voters and Delegates, Democrats and Republicans

Democrats	
Voters	Delegates
Air quality	1 Air quality
Healthcare	2 Healthcare
The environment	3 The environment
Partisan politics	4 K-12 education
Religion in politics	5 Partisan politics
Homelessness & poverty	6 Religion in politics
K-12 education	7 Water supply & quality
Water supply & quality	8 LGBTQ rights
LGBTQ rights	9 Homelessness & poverty
Higher education	10 Higher education

Republicans	
Voters	Delegates
Healthcare	1 States' rights
K-12 education	2 State taxes & gov't spending
State taxes & gov't spending	3 K-12 education
Crime	4 Public lands
Jobs & the economy	5 Jobs & the economy
States' rights	6 Healthcare
Air quality	7 Water supply & quality
Water supply & quality	8 Immigration
Immigration	9 Energy issues
Public lands	10 Transportation & traffic

This research report was written by Utah Foundation Research Analysts Christopher Collard and Mallory Bateman and Research Director Shawn Teigen. Assistance was provided by Research Intern Susan Palmer. The authors can be reached for comment at 801.355.1400.

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INTRODUCTION

This survey highlights the differences and similarities of delegates and voters of the Republican and Democratic parties. While there are a number of issues where delegates line up with the respective voters of their parties, survey results show an underlying difference in the demographic makeup and the ideological consistency of individuals who are elected as delegates. Since 2010, Utah Foundation has reported on the similarities and differences between delegates and voters.

DELEGATES AND CAUCUSES

Over 80,000 Utahns attended the Democratic caucus meetings and over 200,000 Republicans participated in their caucuses in 2016.¹ Although voter turnout in 2016 was lower than in 2008 when the state administered a presidential primary, this level of turnout for caucus meetings is remarkable. One important aspect of caucus meetings is the selection of delegates, who go on to represent their geographic areas at county, state and national conventions.

Utah is one of only seven states that utilizes a convention-primary system.² Historically, this process has given a small group of delegates the power to select party candidates. If a candidate garnered 60% of the delegates' support, they moved directly to the general election rather than having to participate in a primary. Legislation passed in 2014, Senate Bill 54, allows candidates who have gathered enough signatures to also participate in the primary along with the candidates selected by a delegate convention in 2016.

Because 43% of Utah voters are Republican and the 35% of unaffiliated voters in Utah tend to lean conservatively, many races in the general election tend to lack competition. This moves a large portion of the debate to the convention, when delegates select Republican candidates. Since delegates are representatives of their party and making choices about potential party candidates on their behalf, it is important to understand in what ways delegates reflect the views of their voters – whether similar or different. This survey seeks to highlight the similarities and differences in order to better understand Utah politics.

ABOUT THE DELEGATE SURVEY

Since 2004, Utah Foundation has conducted voter surveys during gubernatorial election years as part of the Utah Priorities Project. For the 2010 and 2012 iterations of the project, a unique survey was also created specifically for the delegates which asked pointed policy questions to see how delegates and voters compared to each other.

This year, in an effort to streamline the survey process, all voter and delegate survey respondents were asked the same sets of survey questions. Respondents were asked about the direction of the state and respondents' quality of life, their level of concern about 21 priority topics, and 10 questions to gauge their political ideology. In addition, a set of "hot button" statements were included to identify how respondents felt about specific policy actions or current events. Results from these last two sets of questions will be discussed both in this report as well as in future Utah Priority Project briefs to be released throughout the rest of 2016.

Dan Jones and Associates surveyed 973 delegates for Part III of the Utah Priorities Project in 2016. The polling firm was unable to procure delegates lists from all precincts before they closed the delegate survey on April 11. This was due to the high turnout at the Democratic caucuses across the state and the fact that many Democratic precincts do not finalize delegate lists until after county conventions on April 16th. Accordingly,

95% of the Democratic delegate respondents in the survey were from Salt Lake County.

IS UTAH ON THE WRONG TRACK?

Nearly two-thirds of Utah voters agree that Utah is “headed in the right direction.” For Republicans, that proportion jumps to three-quarters. Utah’s Republican delegates closely align with their Republican voters. Democratic voters do not align as well with their delegates. Two-thirds of Democratic voters think Utah is “on the wrong track,” while three-quarters of Utah’s Democratic delegates feel that way.

UTAH’S QUALITY OF LIFE

The largest group of Utah voters and delegates are on the fence when asked whether their quality of life has improved or deteriorated over the past five years. Nearly half of all voters indicated their quality of life was “about the same” as five years ago, while one-third said it was “somewhat better” or “much better.” While Republican voters are very similar to Utah voters at large, the Republican delegates are much more positive, with almost half reporting that their quality of life has improved. Democratic voters and delegates, on the other hand, were slightly more pessimistic, though less than one-third of Democratic responses went so far as to list their quality of life as “somewhat worse” or “much worse.”

TOP TEN ISSUES – VOTER AND DELEGATE COMPARISONS

When comparing the top ten priorities of Republican voters with their delegates, eight of the ten items are the same, as seen in Figures 3 and 4. However, three of these shared priorities are in substantially different places on the list. *States’ rights* is sixth among voters, but the top priority among delegates. *Public lands*, a related issue, saw a similar difference: tenth among voters but fourth among delegates. As discussed later in this report, the answers to questions related to both of these issues vary widely among voters and delegates.

In contrast, healthcare ranked as the most important issue among Republican voters but came in at sixth place among delegates. *Crime*, which ranked fourth among voters, and *air quality*, which ranked seventh, did not appear on the Republican delegate’s top ten list. Instead, Republican delegates included *energy issues* and *transportation and traffic*, ranking them ninth and tenth, respectively.

The top ten lists for Democratic voters and delegates were remarkably alike. All of the priorities of Democratic voters were consistent with those of delegates, with the exception of two topics. *K-12 education* ranked

Figure 1: Is Utah “Headed in the Right Direction” or “On the Wrong Track,” for Utah Voters and Delegates

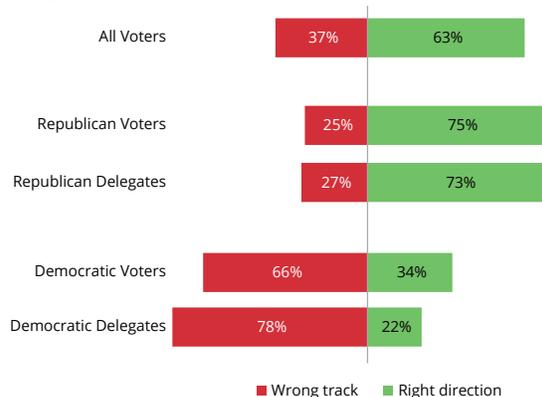
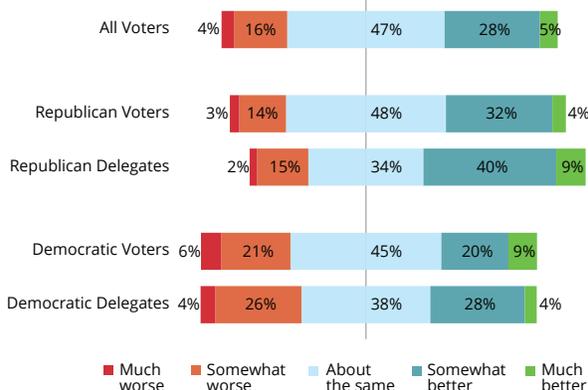


Figure 2: Quality of Life Compared with Five Years Ago, for Utah Voters and Delegates



seventh among voters but fourth among delegates. *Homelessness and poverty* ranked sixth among voters and ninth among delegates.

Figure 3: Top 10 Priorities of Utahns, with Comparison of Republican Voters and Delegates

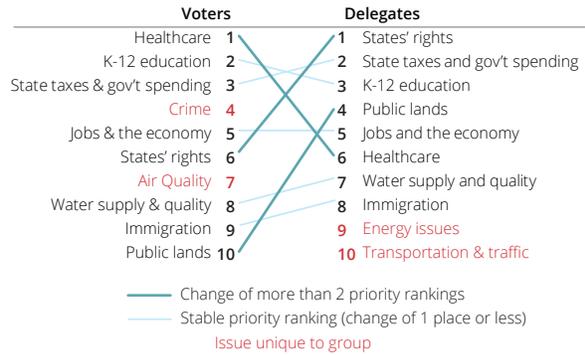
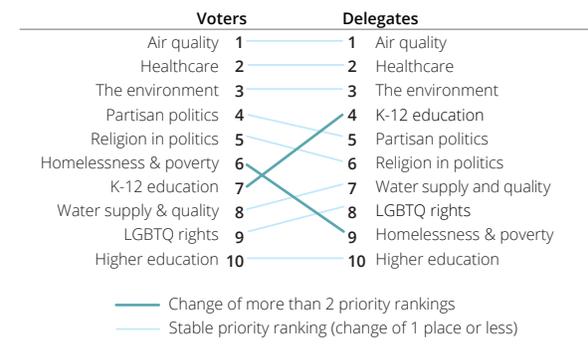


Figure 4: Top 10 Priorities of Utahns, with Comparison of Democratic Voters and Delegates



HOT BUTTON ISSUES

The survey included 21 “hot button” statements where respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed – such as “the Common Core has helped Utah schools improve.” These questions were based on the 21 priorities topics and designed to illustrate how Utahns feel about specific elements of these issues rather than just how concerned they were about a topic.

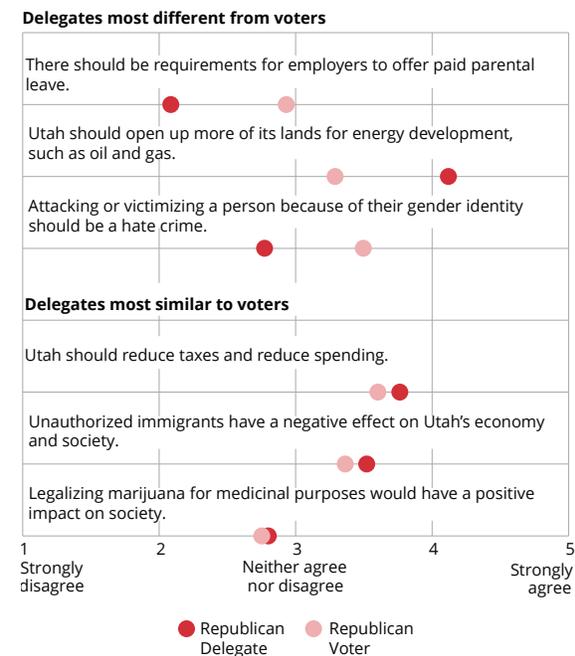
This section highlights the hot button issues where voters’ and their delegates’ responses are the most different and the most similar. The full list of questions can be found in Appendix A.

Republicans

Republican delegates and voters disagreed most on issues concerning jobs and the economy, energy, and LGBTQ rights. The specific questions related to these issues are shown in Figure 5.

The hot button issue for LGBTQ rights was how much respondents agreed or disagreed with whether “attacking or victimizing a person based on gender identity should be a hate crime.” Related legislation – Senate Bill 107 – failed to pass during the 2016 General Session of the Utah Legislative. However, based upon Utah Priorities Project survey responses, the failure of the bill may not be representative of what the larger Utah population believes. On average, the only group in this portion of the survey that disagreed with the hot button statement were

Figure 5: Hot Button Issues, Republican Differences and Similarities



Republican delegates. Although the average level of agreement varied, Republican voters, Democratic voters, and Democratic delegates all agreed with the statement. Republican delegates aligned most closely with their voters on topics regarding state taxes and government spending, immigration, and marijuana laws.

Democrats

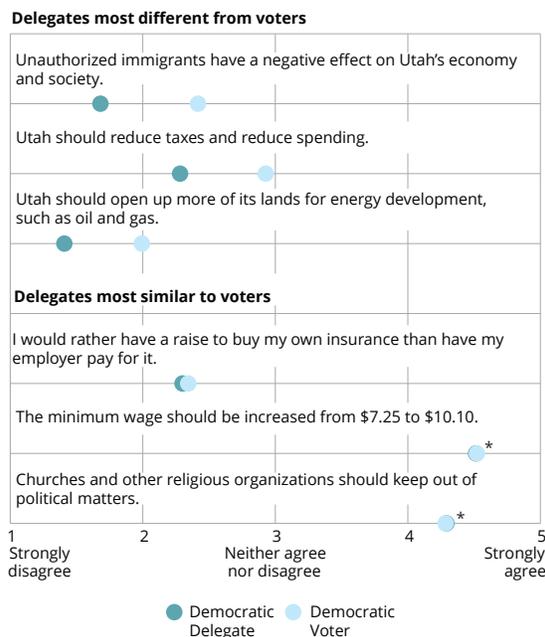
Democratic delegates differed the most from their voters on questions regarding immigration, state taxes and government spending, and energy, showing a higher average level of disagreement with their corresponding hot button statements than their party’s voters. It is interesting to note that two of the three questions where Democratic delegates are most dissimilar from their voters were the same issues where Republican delegates were most similar to their voters: “Utah should reduce taxes and reduce spending” and “unauthorized immigrants have a negative effect on Utah’s economy and society.” The third issue where Democratic delegates are most different from their voters – “Utah should open up more land for energy development, such as oil and gas” – is also one of the issues where Republican voters are most different from their delegates.

Democratic delegates and voters shared the same average level of agreement for two statements. There was a high level of agreement with the statement regarding the involvement of churches and religion in political matters. Also, lining up with campaigns occurring nationwide, Democratic voters and delegates showed strong agreement with the statement that “the minimum wage should be increased from \$7.25 to \$10.10.” Both of these responses received the highest level of agreement of any of the 21 hot button questions asked in the survey.

States’ Rights and Lands Issues

Three of the top four hot button issues with the largest divide between Republican and Democratic delegates focused on states’ rights and public lands issues. The statements concerning states’ rights and Utah’s ability to manage its public lands also highlight the largest differences between the position of Democratic and Republican voters. It is interesting that while Republicans and Democrats have very different opinions with regard to states’ rights and the Utah’s management of public lands, whether “Utah should open up more land for energy

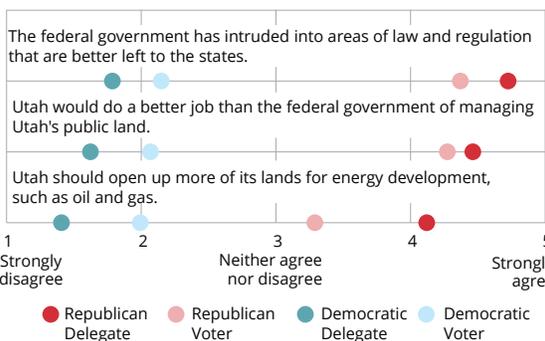
Figure 6: Hot Button Issues, Democratic Differences and Similarities



* Democratic delegates' markers are hidden because they and Democratic voters are nearly identical.

Utah should open up more land for energy development from \$7.25 to \$10.10.” Both of these responses received the highest level of agreement of any of the 21 hot button questions asked in the survey.

Figure 7: Hot Button Issues, States’ Rights and Land Issues

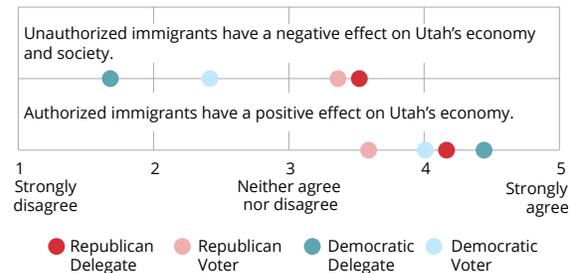


development, such as oil and gas” had one of the biggest differences in responses between the delegates of both parties and their respective voters. In other words, there is a large partisan divide on whether the state should have more control over its public lands, in addition to a large divide between delegates and their party’s voters on what the best use of that land would be.

Immigration

The hot button statements on immigration illustrate some interesting nuances. It is unsurprising that on average Republicans agree and Democrats disagree that “*unauthorized* immigrants have a negative effect on Utah’s economy and society.” However, it is surprising that the difference between Democratic voters and delegates about this statement represents one of the largest differences between Democratic delegates and their voters.

Figure 8: Hot Button Issues, Immigration



Another immigration question resulted in equally surprising responses. Whether “*authorized* immigrants have a positive impact on Utah’s economy” is the only one of the 21 hot button issues where delegates and voters of both parties all agree with the statement. This subject is also unique in that the delegates from both parties are noticeably different from their voters in the same direction – delegates of both parties are more likely to agree more strongly with this statement. In fact, Republican delegates are more likely to agree about the positive impact of legal immigrants than Democratic voters. This issue also represents the smallest difference of opinion between Democratic and Republican delegates.

UTAH’S IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES – VOTERS AND DELEGATES

The voter and delegate surveys included a series of questions to help understand the ideology of voters and delegates. These questions followed methodology developed and used by the Pew Research Center since 1994. Survey respondents were asked whether they identified more with a typically conservative or liberal position on ten issues, using text created by the Pew Research Center. Responses were used to create a scale from negative ten to positive ten, or “consistently liberal” to “consistently conservative.” More information on this methodology can be found in Part I of the Utah Priorities Project, Appendix B.

Part I of the Utah Priorities Project illustrated that the gap between voters in the Democratic and Republican parties is larger in Utah than nationwide. In addition, Figure 9 illustrates that the gap between party delegates is even wider than the gap between voters. While the median Democratic delegate had the same ideological consistency as the median Democratic voter, the median Republican delegate was slightly more conservative than the median Republican voter.

Utah Republicans were slightly more conservative than their national counterparts, with a 90% overlap in their ideology (100% overlap would mean they match up exactly). Utah delegates were even more conservative than Utah voters with a 76% overlap. In contrast, Utah Democrats were much more liberal than their national counterparts with only a 70% overlap. Utah delegates were even more liberal than Utah voters with a 77% overlap.

While 27% of Republican voters were “consistently conservative,” 46% of Republican delegates fell in the same category. On the Democratic side, 55% of the voters were “consistently liberal,” while 75% of

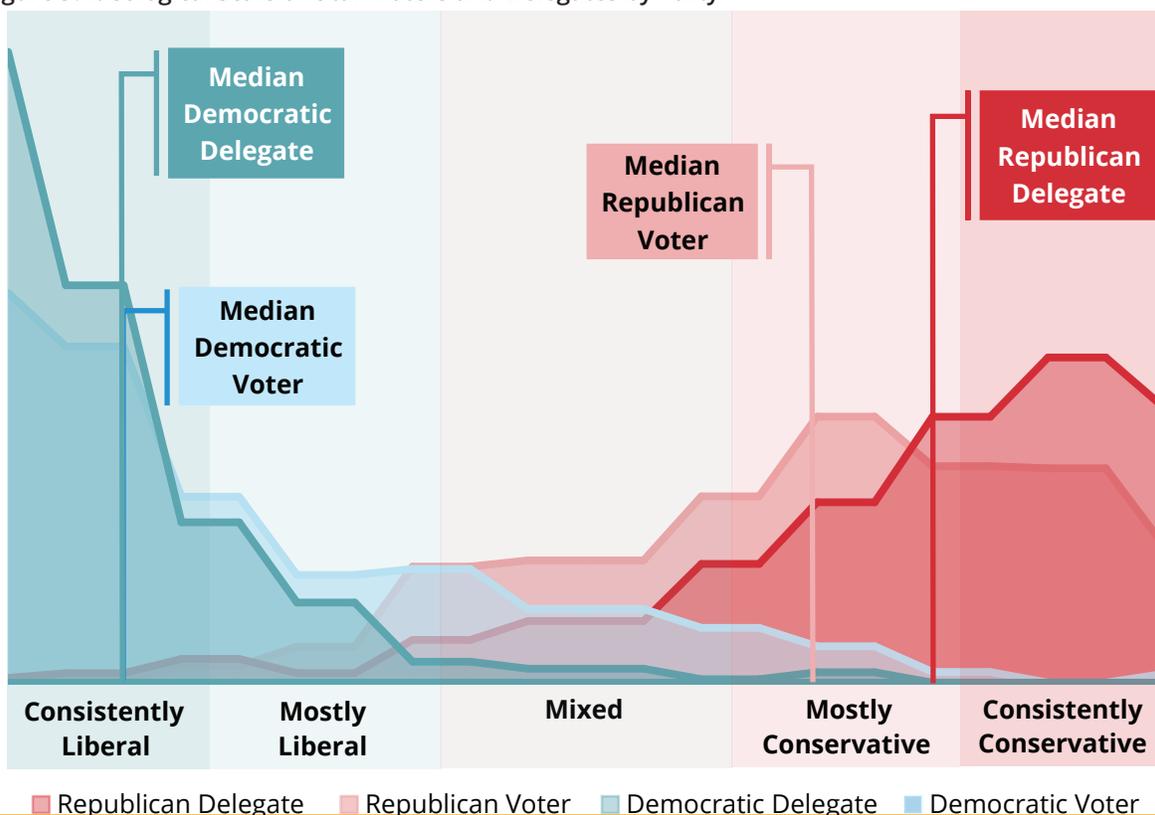
delegates fell in this category. Furthermore, 77% of Democratic voters were either “mostly” or “consistently liberal,” while nearly all (96%) Democratic delegates received a similar score.

When looking at how Utahns scored on specific questions used to create the ideological scale, some interesting findings arose. Utah Republicans were most likely to choose the liberal position for the statement regarding immigration. Republican voters were split 50/50 when asked to choose between the statements “immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and healthcare” and “immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents.” Similar to the issue regarding authorized immigrants discussed above, Republican delegates were even more likely (61%) than their party’s voters to identify with the second, more traditionally liberal position.

The largest cross-ideology shift for Democratic delegates was much less pronounced, and had to do with corporate profits. When asked to choose between the statements “most corporations make a fair and reasonable amount of profit” and “business corporations make too much profit,” 19% of Democratic delegates chose the more conservative first option.

While parties identifying strongly with the ideological statements geared toward them is not surprising, the percentage of respondents agreeing with the statements might be. Republican voters and delegates had the highest level of agreement with the traditionally conservative position regarding the government’s ability to take care of low-income individuals. An overwhelming majority of Republican voters (88%) and delegates (95%) agreed with the statement “the government today can’t afford to do much more to help the needy.” This statement also garnered the largest share of Democratic voters agreeing with the more conservative position (31%).

Figure 9: Ideological Scale of Utah Voters and Delegates by Party



Democratic voters and delegates identified most strongly with the typically liberal statements regarding the role of government in business and regarding the environment. The majority of Democratic voters (87%) thought that “government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest,” while 13% chose the conservative statement “government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.” Nearly all (96%) of Democratic delegates agreed with the statement “stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost,” with the remaining 4% agreeing that “stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy.”

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

The delegate surveys from 2010 and 2012 showed some interesting differences between not only the opinions of delegates and voters, but also in their demographics. The percentage of female Republican delegates did not vary from previous surveys, with 24% of delegates being women in 2016. Although the percentage of female delegates was consistent with past years, more than one-half (56%) of Republican voters were women.

Democrats saw a slight increase in female delegates from 43% in 2010 and 2012 to 47% in 2016.³ In 2016, 55% of Democratic voters were women.

Another shift occurred in the age breakdown of delegates. The 2010 and 2012 reports both indicated that state delegates were likely to be more than 50 years old.⁴ However, in 2016 there was a jump in under-50-year-old-delegates for both the Republican and Democratic parties. In 2012, 37% of Democratic delegates were under 50. In 2016, this jumped to 61%.

Similarly, although less dramatic, under-50 Republican delegates increased from 42% in 2012 to 55% in 2016. This could be due in large part to the 2016 presidential election, with a contentious and lively field of candidates being catalysts for younger Utahns getting involved.

One last comparison between current and past reports regarding the religious identification of respondents. Between 2010 and 2012, there was a large increase (78% to 92%) in the percentage of Republican delegates who identified as members of

Figure 10: Demographics of Delegates and Voters

	Republican Voters	Republican Delegates	Democratic Voters	Democratic Delegates
Gender				
Female	56%	24%	55%	47%
Male	44%	76%	45%	53%
Race/ethnicity				
White	94%	95%	83%	89%
Hispanic/Latino	2%	3%	13%	7%
Other	4%	3%	4%	4%
Generation				
Millennial	19%	19%	23%	34%
Gen X	23%	36%	18%	27%
Boomer	38%	40%	42%	35%
Silent	20%	6%	17%	4%
Length of time living in Utah				
0-10 years	7%	10%	6%	12%
11-20 years	15%	17%	10%	15%
21-40 years	33%	37%	40%	40%
41+ years	45%	35%	44%	33%
Religion				
LDS	84%	93%	30%	24%
Non-LDS Christian	11%	4%	31%	19%
Other religion	0%	0%	3%	6%
Atheist, agnostic, or nothing in particular	5%	3%	35%	52%
Employment				
Full-time	32%	61%	37%	59%
Part-time	13%	8%	12%	10%
Self-employed	10%	14%	8%	11%
Homemaker	14%	7%	10%	3%
Retired	29%	10%	29%	17%
Unemployed	3%	2%	3%	1%
Educational Attainment				
High School	9%	1%	13%	2%
Some College	28%	15%	19%	13%
Vocational or Technical Certification	7%	4%	6%	3%
Associates degree	13%	7%	14%	6%
Bachelors degree	26%	37%	22%	34%
Graduate	16%	37%	26%	41%
Family characteristics				
Family income				
\$0-\$24,999	10%	3%	14%	7%
\$25,000-\$49,999	23%	10%	26%	19%
\$50,000-\$74,999	26%	20%	18%	24%
\$75,000-\$99,999	22%	24%	20%	21%
\$100,000+	19%	44%	23%	29%
Marital status				
Married	80%	91%	64%	61%
Single	14%	8%	25%	34%
Other	7%	1%	12%	5%
Children in public school				
Yes	31%	50%	27%	29%
No	69%	50%	73%	71%

the LDS church. The suggested logic for this jump was a concerted effort by the LDS church to encourage participation in local caucuses.⁵ The high percentage of Republican delegates who identified as LDS was maintained in 2016, with 93% of delegates responding that they were members of the LDS church. Throughout the three delegate survey years (2010, 2012, and 2016) the percentage of Republican voters who identified as LDS ranged from 88% to 84%.

On the Democratic side, about one-third of voters identified as LDS in both 2012 and 2016, but the proportion of LDS delegates decreased from 38% to 24% over that time period. The proportion of Democratic delegates who did not identify with a religion increased from 32% in 2012 to 52% in 2016.⁶

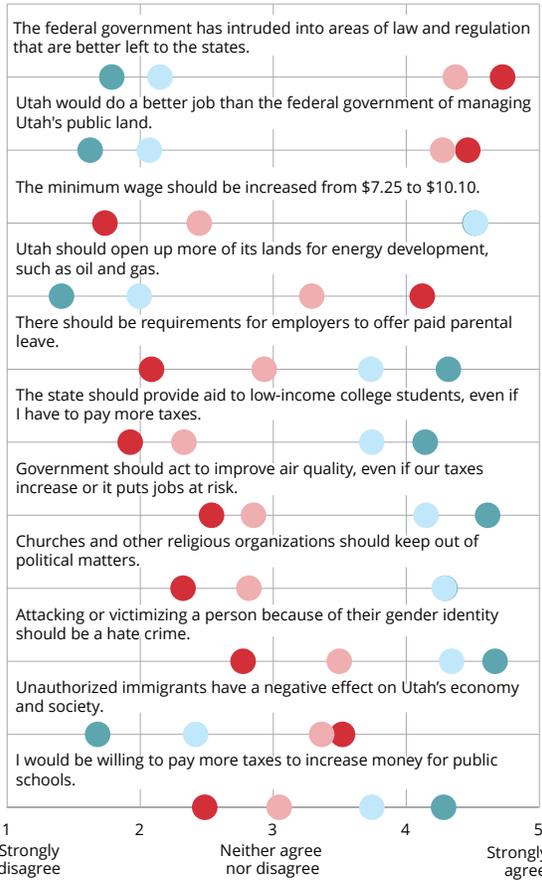
There were many similarities between delegates and their related voters regarding demographic factors such as race and ethnicity (both are predominantly white, although 13% of Democratic voters identify as Hispanic or Latino), employment status (delegates for both parties are more likely to be full-time employees than voters), and length of time living in Utah (the majority of voters and delegates for both parties have lived in Utah for over 20 years). However, there were a handful of differences. Republican delegates were far more likely than their voters to have a household income of over \$100,000 – 44% of delegates fell in this category, while only 19% of voters did. Additionally, Republican delegates were more likely to be married than their voters – 89% of delegates were married compared to 79% of voters. Democrats actually saw the reverse, to a lesser degree, with 60% of delegates being married compared to 63% of voters.

CONCLUSION

The delegate convention-primary system has played an influential role in Utah politics for decades, but that role has been questioned in recent years. The attempts of the Count My Vote campaign, which resulted in the Senate Bill 54 legislation during the 2014 legislative session, and the ensuing lawsuit from the Utah Republican party, have all cast doubt on how the 2016 election season will play out in the state.

Since 2010, Utah Priorities Project reports have shown some misalignment between delegates and voters regarding some priority areas, as well as demographic factors. This mismatch seems to warrant continued conversations regarding how well the convention system represents Utahns.

APPENDIX A: HOT BUTTON ISSUES



● Republican Delegate
 ● Republican Voter
 ● Democratic Delegate
 ● Democratic Voter

ENDNOTES

1. Deseret News, Despite record caucus turnout, fewer votes cast for president than in 2008, March 23, 2016, accessed on April 12, 2016 (<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865650762/Despite-record-caucus-turnout-fewer-votes-cast-for-president-than-in-2008.html>), and interview with Sherrie Swenson, Salt Lake County Clerk, on March 28, 2016.
2. Utah Foundation, Nominating Candidates: The Politics and Process of Utah's Unique Convention and Primary System, November 2011, accessed on April 6, 2016 (<http://www.utahfoundation.org/uploads/rr704.pdf>).
3. Utah Foundation, The 2012 Utah Priorities Survey of Party Delegates and Voters, April 2012, accessed on April 12, 2016 (<http://www.utahfoundation.org/uploads/rr708.pdf>).
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

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