

THE 2010 UTAH PRIORITIES FALL SURVEY VOTERS' PREFERENCES FOR CANDIDATES AND POLICY SOLUTIONS

HIGHLIGHTS

- This survey focused on understanding voters' preferences regarding the most often discussed solutions relating to K-12 education, economy and jobs, immigration, government spending, and states' rights.
- For K-12 education, the most popular solution was that resources should be applied to ensure every student is reading at grade-level by the end of third grade. Other solutions that received high scores include reducing class size and applying resources to help 8th-graders successfully complete math and science courses.
- Utah voters most strongly agree that the government should lower taxes on small businesses to stimulate job growth as a way to address Utah's jobs and economy.
- Regarding immigration, Utah voters would like to mandate that English be the official language of the United States and fine employers who hire unauthorized immigrants. On average, Utah voters do not agree with allowing unauthorized immigrants to stay in Utah.
- In terms of solutions relating to government spending, Utah voters most strongly agree with the idea that federal government spending should be reduced to bring the budget into balance.

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.

Douglas Matsumori, Chairman
M. Bruce Snyder, Vice Chairman
Stephen J. Kroes, President

10 West Broadway, Suite 307
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
(801) 355-1400 • www.utahfoundation.org

The purpose of this Utah Priorities Survey is to delve deeper on five critical policy issues to better understand voters' preferences surrounding the most often discussed solutions. The issues that voters were surveyed about include K-12 education, economy and jobs, immigration, government spending, and states' rights. The results of this survey can help candidates understand how voters may react to their proposed solutions on these issues. The survey also asked voters about the upcoming election, including whom they plan to vote for in November for Governor and the U.S. Senate seat.

This is the third and final survey of the 2010 Utah Priorities Project. In February, Utah Foundation surveyed registered voters to determine their top issues of concern for this election year.¹ In the survey conducted in April, the questions were revised to be clearer about voters' priorities for action by elected officials, which produced a new list of priority issues.² Because the April survey was directed at three primary populations, the general population of likely voters, Republican Party state convention delegates, and Democratic Party state convention delegates, the survey was also able to show distinct differences between party delegates and voters.

Rather than asking voters about which issues they feel are most important, this survey focused on potential solutions to the state's most pressing issues. The survey asked voters to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a list of solutions to each of the five critical policy issues listed above. In addition to these policy questions, the survey also asked voters some candidate preference questions. The survey was administered to 600 active voters statewide by Dan Jones & Associates, which has conducted each of this year's Utah Priorities surveys.³

POLICY SOLUTIONS

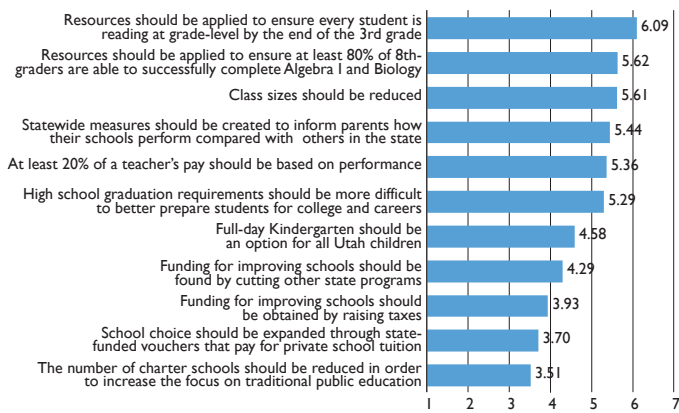
K-12 Education

When thinking of ways to improve the quality of education in kindergarten through 12th grade, voters were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the 11 solutions listed in Figures 1 and 2. The solution that received the highest mean score, or the highest average percent of voters agreeing with the solution, was that resources should be applied

Figure 1: When you think of improving the quality of education in kindergarten through 12th grade, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements, with 1 being “strongly DISAGREE” and 7 being “strongly AGREE”

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree	Don't know	Mean Score (1-7)
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
5. Class sizes should be reduced	2%	3%	5%	16%	14%	15%	44%	1%	5.61
6. High school graduation requirements should be more difficult to better prepare students for college and careers	4%	3%	6%	16%	19%	20%	31%	1%	5.29
7. The number of charter schools should be reduced in order to increase the focus on traditional public education	23%	14%	12%	22%	8%	8%	12%	1%	3.51
8. School choice should be expanded through state-funded vouchers that pay for private school tuition	27%	9%	7%	19%	11%	9%	16%	2%	3.70
9. Funding for improving schools should be found by cutting other state programs	10%	8%	8%	28%	21%	10%	14%	1%	4.29
10. Funding for improving schools should be obtained by raising taxes	19%	9%	8%	23%	17%	13%	11%	<1%	3.93
11. Statewide measures should be created to inform parents how their schools perform compared with others in the state	3%	2%	3%	17%	19%	25%	30%	1%	5.44
12. At least 20% of a teacher's pay should be based on performance	8%	4%	4%	10%	15%	20%	39%	<1%	5.36
13. Resources should be applied to ensure every student is reading at grade-level by the end of the 3rd grade	2%	1%	2%	7%	12%	20%	55%	1%	6.09
14. Resources should be applied to ensure at least 80% of 8th-graders are able to successfully complete Algebra I and Biology	3%	1%	3%	12%	21%	25%	35%	<1%	5.62
15. Full-day Kindergarten should be an option for all Utah children	14%	7%	7%	16%	14%	17%	24%	1%	4.58

Figure 2: Mean Scores of Voters' Preferences on K-12 Education Solutions



Note: As shown in the table above, these scores are on a scale of 1-7, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 7 being “strongly agree.”

to ensure every student is reading at grade-level by the end of third grade (6.09). This was the only solution out of all of the solutions in the five policy categories that received a mean score above 6.00. Other education solutions that received a mean score above 5.50 include applying resources to ensure at least 80% of 8th-graders are able to successfully complete Algebra I and Biology and reducing class size.

While no solutions received a score below 3.00 on the scale, three solutions did receive a mean score lower than 4.00. These solutions include raising taxes to improve schools, expanding state-funded vouchers that pay for private school tuition, and reducing the number of charter schools to increase focus on traditional public education. The fact that these three solutions received a mean score lower than 4.00 indicates most Utah voters do not agree that they should be

used to improve the quality of education in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Economy and Jobs

When thinking of jobs and the economy, voters were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the ten solutions listed in Figures 3 and 4. The solution that Utah voters most agree with is that the government should lower taxes on small businesses to stimulate job growth. Other solutions that received a high mean score include investing more in educating and preparing people to be skilled, productive workers and reducing federal regulation on private businesses. The only solution that Utah voters disagree with, on average, is extending unemployment benefits to 99 weeks.

Immigration

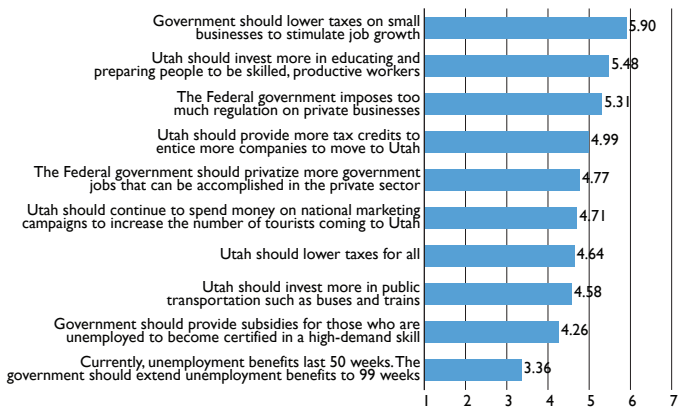
Utah voters were asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the nine solutions regarding immigration listed in Figures 5 and 6. Four solutions received a mean score above 5.00, indicating Utah voters strongly agree with their implementation. These include mandating that English be the official language of the United States, fining employers who hire unauthorized immigrants, authorizing a certain number of immigrants to legally come to Utah for a limited time to work each year, and preventing unauthorized immigrants from using government services such as health and welfare programs.

Only one solution received a mean score lower than 4.00—allowing unauthorized immigrants who are already in Utah to stay. This solution has the highest percent of Utah voters rating it as a “one,” meaning Utah voters strongly disagree with its implementation. As indicated in Figure 6, the solution with the second highest percent of Utah voters strongly disagreeing with it is amending the Constitution to prevent children of unauthorized immigrants from automatically becoming

Figure 3: When you think of jobs and the economy, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements, with 1 being “strongly DISAGREE” and 7 being “strongly AGREE”

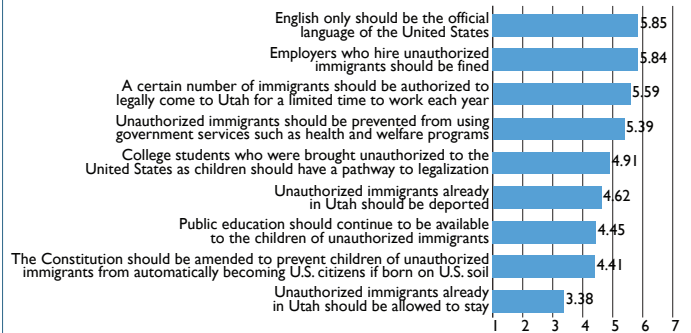
	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree	Don't know	Mean Score (1-7)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
16. Currently, unemployment benefits last 50 weeks. The government should extend unemployment benefits to 99 weeks	29%	12%	10%	18%	13%	7%	10%	1%	3.36	
17. Government should lower taxes on small businesses to stimulate job growth	1%	1%	2%	10%	18%	25%	43%	<1%	5.90	
18. Utah should provide more tax credits to entice more companies to move to Utah	5%	3%	6%	21%	23%	21%	20%	1%	4.99	
19. Government should provide subsidies for those who are unemployed to become certified in a high-demand skill	10%	7%	10%	24%	25%	14%	9%	1%	4.26	
20. Utah should lower taxes for all	8%	8%	7%	26%	14%	14%	23%	<1%	4.64	
21. Utah should invest more in educating and preparing people to be skilled, productive workers	3%	2%	3%	15%	21%	25%	31%	<1%	5.48	
22. The Federal government should privatize more government jobs that can be accomplished in the private sector	12%	6%	6%	14%	16%	18%	27%	1%	4.77	
23. Utah should invest more in public transportation such as buses and trains	9%	6%	8%	21%	24%	15%	17%	0%	4.58	
24. Utah should continue to spend money on national marketing campaigns to increase the number of tourists coming to Utah	6%	3%	7%	25%	27%	19%	12%	1%	4.71	
25. The Federal government imposes too much regulation on private businesses	7%	4%	5%	16%	11%	14%	41%	2%	5.31	

Figure 4: Mean Scores of Voters’ Preferences on Economic Solutions



Note: As shown in the table above, these scores are on a scale of 1-7, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 7 being “strongly agree.”

Figure 5: Mean Scores of Voters’ Preferences on Immigration Solutions



Note: As shown in the table below, these scores are on a scale of 1-7, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 7 being “strongly agree.”

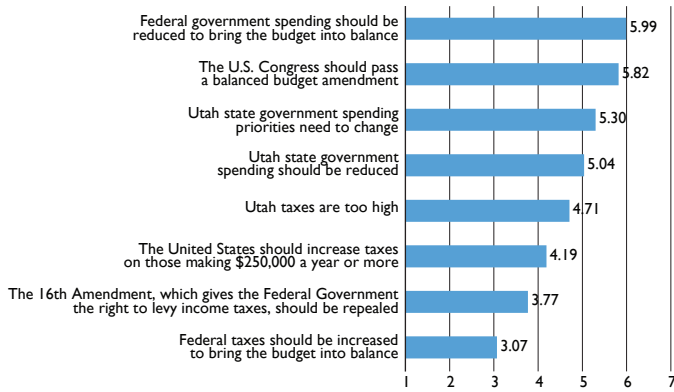
Figure 6: When you think of unauthorized immigration, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements, with 1 being “strongly DISAGREE” and 7 being “strongly AGREE”

	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree	Don't know	Mean Score (1-7)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
26. Employers who hire unauthorized immigrants should be fined	4%	2%	5%	9%	10%	15%	55%	0%	5.84	
27. Unauthorized immigrants already in Utah should be deported	11%	7%	10%	18%	16%	11%	27%	<1%	4.62	
28. Public education should continue to be available to the children of unauthorized immigrants	15%	5%	10%	16%	17%	15%	21%	1%	4.45	
29. The Constitution should be amended to prevent children of unauthorized immigrants from automatically becoming U.S. citizens if born on U.S. soil	22%	6%	6%	14%	8%	10%	32%	2%	4.41	
30. Unauthorized immigrants should be prevented from using government services such as health and welfare programs	8%	4%	5%	10%	12%	17%	43%	1%	5.39	
31. Unauthorized immigrants already in Utah should be allowed to stay	26%	9%	12%	25%	12%	7%	7%	2%	3.38	
32. A certain number of immigrants should be authorized to legally come to Utah for a limited time to work each year	4%	2%	4%	10%	17%	24%	37%	2%	5.59	
33. College students who were brought unauthorized to the United States as children should have a pathway to legalization	11%	3%	6%	16%	19%	16%	28%	1%	4.91	
34. English only should be the official language of the United States	9%	2%	3%	4%	7%	11%	63%	1%	5.85	

Figure 7: When you think of government spending, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements, with 1 being “strongly DISAGREE” and 7 being “strongly AGREE”

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree		Don't know	Mean Score (1-7)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
35. Federal government spending should be reduced to bring the budget into balance	4%	3%	2%	6%	10%	15%	59%	1%	5.99	
36. The United States should increase taxes on those making \$250,000 a year or more	24%	8%	6%	12%	11%	12%	26%	1%	4.19	
37. The U.S. Congress should pass a balanced budget amendment	4%	2%	2%	11%	12%	17%	50%	2%	5.82	
38. Federal taxes should be increased to bring the budget into balance	34%	10%	13%	16%	12%	7%	6%	2%	3.07	
39. Utah state government spending should be reduced	5%	3%	5%	25%	20%	14%	27%	1%	5.04	
40. Utah taxes are too high	6%	7%	9%	24%	17%	14%	22%	1%	4.71	
41. Utah state government spending priorities need to change	2%	2%	4%	24%	19%	17%	29%	3%	5.30	
42. The 16th Amendment, which gives the Federal Government the right to levy income taxes, should be repealed	23%	10%	7%	22%	10%	5%	18%	5%	3.77	

Figure 8: Mean Scores of Voters' Preferences on Government Spending Solutions



Note: As shown in the table above, these scores are on a scale of 1-7, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 7 being “strongly agree.”

U.S. Citizens if born on U.S. soil. However, because a higher percent of voters strongly agree with this solution as well (32%), the mean score falls just above the middle of the rating scale with a score of 4.41. The fact that most Utah voters rate this solution as either a “one” or a “seven” shows how polarizing this issue is among voters.

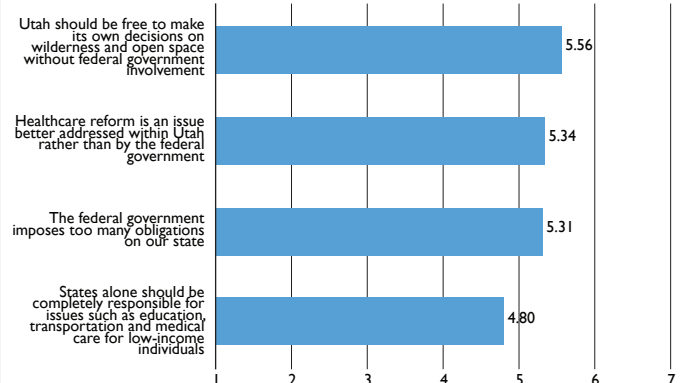
Government Spending

When asked to rate the extent to which Utah voters agree or disagree with the eight solutions relating to government spending listed in

Figures 7 and 8, results show Utah voters most strongly agree with the idea that federal government spending should be reduced to bring the budget into balance. Other solutions Utah voters strongly agree with include the U.S. Congress passing a balanced budget amendment, the Utah state government changing its spending priorities, and the Utah state government reducing its spending. All of these solutions received a mean score above 5.00.

The two solutions that Utah voters do not agree with are repealing the 16th amendment, which gives the federal government the right

Figure 9: Mean Scores of Voters' Preferences on States' Rights Solutions



Note: As shown in the table below, these scores are on a scale of 1-7, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 7 being “strongly agree.”

Figure 10: When you think of the shared responsibilities between the state and federal government, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements, with 1 being “strongly DISAGREE” and 7 being “strongly AGREE”

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree		Don't know	Mean Score (1-7)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
43. The federal government imposes too many obligations on our state	8%	4%	5%	14%	11%	14%	42%	2%	5.31	
44. Healthcare reform is an issue better addressed within Utah rather than by the federal government	12%	4%	5%	7%	10%	13%	49%	<1%	5.34	
45. Utah should be free to make its own decisions on wilderness and open space without federal government involvement	8%	3%	5%	8%	10%	17%	49%	<1%	5.56	
46. States alone should be completely responsible for issues such as education, transportation and medical care for low-income individuals	10%	7%	11%	12%	15%	15%	30%	0%	4.80	

to levy income taxes, and increasing federal taxes to bring the budget into balance. Increasing federal taxes is the solution with the highest percent of Utah voters rating it as a “one,” meaning they strongly disagree with it. Interestingly, Utah voters have split opinions about the United States increasing taxes on those making \$250,000 a year or more. About equal amounts of voters strongly disagree and strongly agree with this solution (24% vs. 26%, respectively, Figure 7).

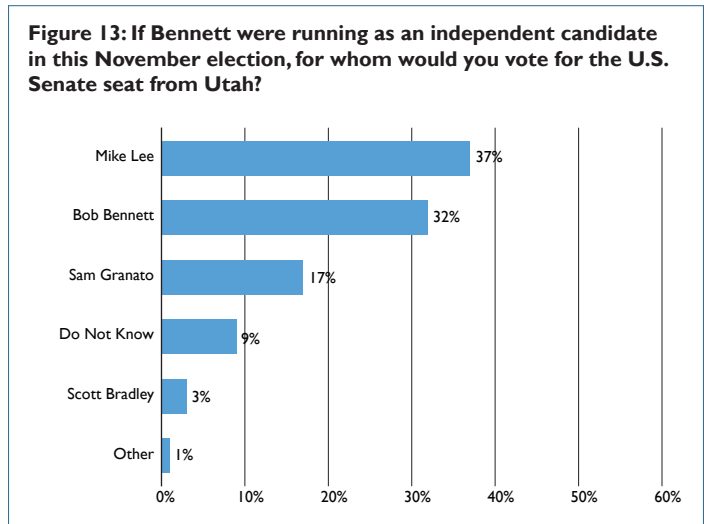
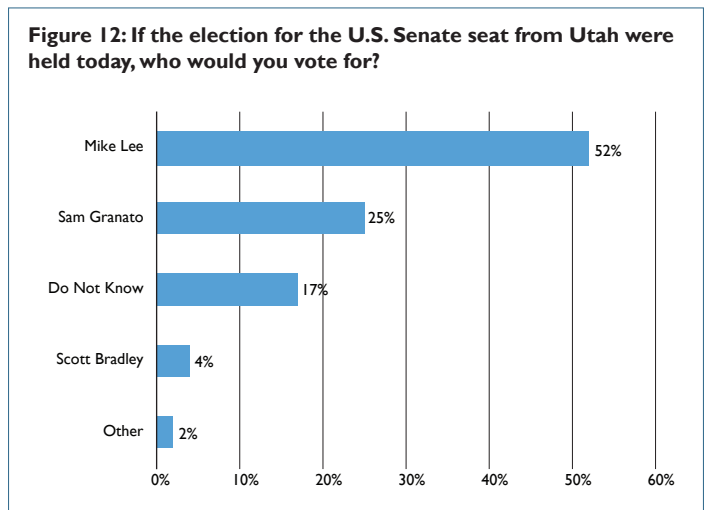
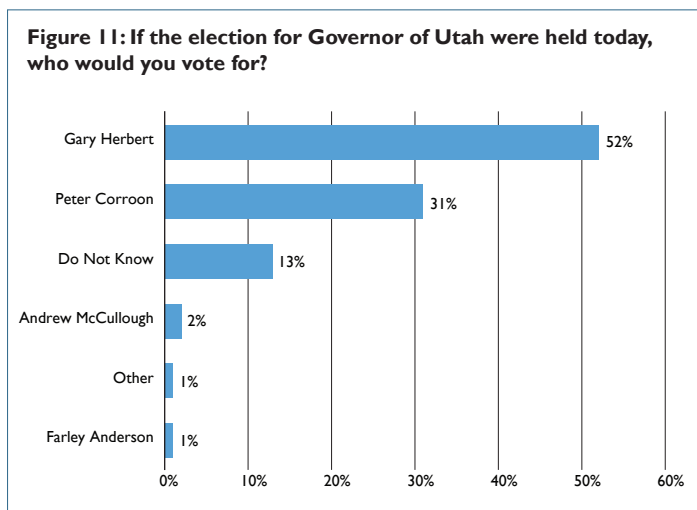
States’ Rights

To avoid biasing the survey results, the question about states’ rights was phrased in terms of “shared responsibilities between the state and federal government.” When thinking of these shared responsibilities, voters were asked to what extent did they agree or disagree with the four solutions listed in Figures 9 and 10. All four solutions received mean scores above 4.00, with Utah voters most agreeing with the idea that Utah should be free to make its own decisions on wilderness and open space without federal government involvement. The solution that received the lowest mean score was that states alone should be completely responsible for solutions such as education, transportation, and medical care for low-income individuals. However, on average, most Utah voters still agree with this solution.

CANDIDATE PREFERENCES

In addition to surveying Utah voters about their preferences for policy solutions, the survey also asked voters about who they plan to vote for in the upcoming election. Figures 11 through 14 show which candidates would win if these elections were held today. In terms of the Governor’s race, the survey shows current Governor Gary Herbert has 52% of the vote, compared to 31% held by challenger Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon. A significant percent of the population is still undecided, however, indicating the election still has the potential to be swayed in either direction.

In terms of the U.S. Senate seat, 52% of Utah voters would vote for Republican Mike Lee. Democratic challenger Sam Granato has 25% of the vote, with 17% of voters still undecided (Figure 12). The survey also asked voters who they would vote for if Senator Bennett, who lost in the Republican Primary, were running as an independent candidate. Interestingly, 32% of voters said they would vote for Senator Bennett. While Mike Lee still takes the lead with 37%, 9% reported they did not know (Figure 13). Most of the voters

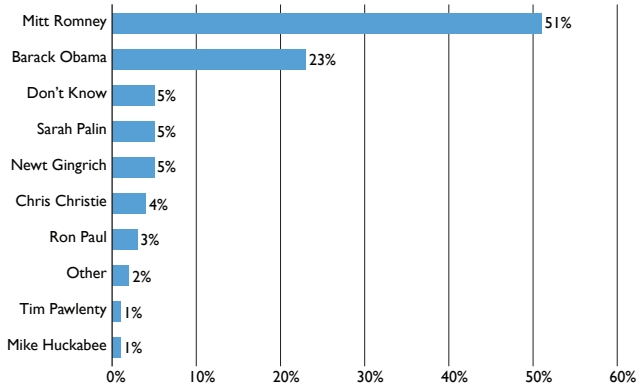


who switched their vote to Senator Bennett had previously said they would vote for Mike Lee.

In terms of the 2012 presidential election, most Utah voters said they would vote for Mitt Romney if the election were held today (51%). Newt Gingrich, Chris Christie, Ron Paul, and Sarah Palin share equally small percentages of the vote. President Barack Obama would receive 23% of Utah’s votes today (Figure 14).

A few questions asked at the end of the survey focused on the political views of Utah voters. While 18% of those surveyed fell into the “most conservative” category, the majority of Utah voters consider themselves to be moderate or on the spectrum between moderate and conservative. When asked to what degree they support the Tea Party and the 9.12 Project, respondents were mixed: 19% of Utah voters strongly oppose this political movement, 18% neither oppose nor support the movement, and 15% strongly support the movement (most of the remaining voters fall in between neither opposing nor supporting and strongly supporting the movement). When asked how interested they were in the November 2010 General Election, 65% of Utah voters said they were very interested.

Figure 14: If the 2012 presidential election were being held today, who would you vote for?



ENDNOTES

- 1 “The 2010 Utah Priorities Survey: The Top Issues and Concerns of Utah Voters for the 2010 Election,” Utah Foundation 691 (2010), <http://utahfoundation.org/img/pdfs/rr691.pdf>.
- 2 “The 2010 Utah Priorities Survey of Party Delegates and Voters,” Utah Foundation 692 (2010), <http://utahfoundation.org/img/pdfs/rr692.pdf>.
- 3 Surveys were conducted by phone from September 7-13, 2010 by Dan Jones & Associates. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 4.0%. The majority of respondents were from Salt Lake County (40%); 17% from Utah County, 11% from Davis County, 9% from Weber County, and the remaining 23% from a sampling of other counties around Utah. The sample was nearly equally divided among Utah’s three congressional districts.

The Utah Priorities Project is a collaboration of Utah Foundation, KSL TV and Radio, Deseret News, and the Hinckley Institute of Politics. This research report was written by Research Analyst Laura Summers with assistance from President Stephen Kroes. Mr. Kroes may be reached for comment at (801) 355-1400. He may also be contacted by email at: steve@utahfoundation.org.

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