

CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY'S  
  
  
 JUDY FORD WASON  
CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

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*Virginia Survey: 2013 Statewide Elections*

***Most voters favor Medicaid expansion, gay marriage and capping gifts to officeholders; Republicans lead in House of Delegates***

Summary of Key Findings

1. McAuliffe has an edge with likely voters on issues. A majority side with McAuliffe to expand Medicaid as part of Obamacare and to repeal the state ban on same-sex marriage. A majority side with him to oppose using vouchers to provide public money for religious schools.
2. In light of the gift scandal around Governor Bob McDonnell, voters strongly agree that Virginia should put a cap on the value of gifts to public officials and their families and create a bipartisan ethics commission.
3. Voters support amending the state constitution to put redistricting in the hands of an independent commission, not the General Assembly.
4. Republicans lead a generic House of Delegates ballot by 6% among likely voters who say they have a contested race; but 80% of likely voters say they either don't have a contested race or don't know.

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## Analysis

Just as Democrat Terry McAuliffe holds a 46% to 39% lead over Republican Ken Cuccinelli among likely voters, he also holds an edge with voters on several significant policy questions where the two candidates disagree.

While many voters say the election has been mostly negative (Wason Center poll, Oct. 9, 2013), serious discussions of public policy are taking place in this campaign, including whether Virginia should expand its Medicaid program, support religious schools with public money, repeal the state prohibition of same-sex marriage, reform the way the state draws political districts and strengthen ethics laws for public officials.

“McAuliffe and Cuccinelli don’t always disagree on these big policy issues, but where they do, a majority of voters are siding with McAuliffe,” said Dr. Quentin Kidd, director of the Wason Center for Public Policy. “The partisan divisions still show in the poll, but McAuliffe’s positions appears to resonate across all demographic groups and – except for Medicaid expansion -- with Independents.”

The three statewide races are almost completely overshadowing the local House of Delegates races. Although more than half of the 100 House elections are contested, only 20 percent of likely voters say they know there is a contested House race where they live. Overall, on a generic House ballot question, likely voters say they prefer the Republican (46%) to the Democrat (40%).

The Wason Center for Public Policy poll of 944 registered voters, including 753 likely voters, was taken Oct. 8-13. The survey’s total margin of error is +/- 3.2% at the 95% level of confidence. The likely voter margin of error is +/- 3.6% at the 95% level of confidence.

### Medicaid Expansion...

...support expanding the Medicaid program or oppose it?	RV n=994	LV n=753	Dem	Rep	Ind	Male	Female	White	Black
Support	52	51	86	18	42	49	53	48	78
No view (vol)	9	7	9	6	7	6	9	6	16
Oppose	39	42	5	76	51	46	38	46	6

A centerpiece of Terry McAuliffe’s campaign for governor is a proposal to expand the Medicaid program, and he appears to have the support of a very slim majority of Virginia voters 51%-42%. Democrats overwhelmingly support the expansion, while Republicans overwhelmingly oppose it. Independents break with Republicans in opposition, 51%-42%. Men and white voters are nearly evenly split on this issue, while women and African-American voters favor expansion, African Americans by 78%.

### School vouchers...

...support amending the constitution to allow public money to be used to educate students at religious school or oppose it?	RV n=994	LV n=753	Dem	Rep	Ind	Male	Female	White	Black
Support	33	31	18	43	30	33	28	31	24
No view (vol)	13	11	13	13	9	10	12	11	14
Oppose	53	58	69	43	61	56	60	57	62

Ken Cuccinelli's K-12 education proposals include seeking an amendment to Virginia's constitution to allow public money to flow to religious schools, but only a third of likely voters support such a plan. Democrats oppose it by almost 4 to 1 and Independents oppose it by 2 to 1. Republicans are split, with 43% supporting it and 43% opposing it. The plan is solidly opposed by men, women, white voters and African-American voters.

### Redistricting reform...

...support amending Virginia's constitution to take redistricting away from the General Assembly and give it to an independent commission or oppose it?	RV n=994	LV n=753	Dem	Rep	Ind	Male	Female	White	Black
Support	42	43	51	28	52	46	41	44	34
No view (vol)	25	25	26	26	21	24	26	23	34
Oppose	33	32	23	45	27	30	33	32	31

Both Cuccinelli and McAuliffe support redistricting reform, and whatever reform happens will require amending Virginia's constitution. Just over four in ten likely voters support amending Virginia's constitution to give redistricting to an independent commission, while a third oppose it. A quarter of registered voters have no view either way. A slim majority of Democrats and Independents support the reform, while only a quarter of Republicans support it. A plurality of men, women, whites and African Americans support the creation of an independent redistricting commission, but levels of support do not reach majorities across any of the demographic subgroups.

### Same sex marriage...

...support Virginia's ban on same sex marriage or oppose it?	RV n=994	LV n=753	Dem	Rep	Ind	Male	Female	White	Black
Support	36	36	19	60	31	40	32	37	31
No view (vol)	8	7	4	10	9	6	8	7	6
Oppose	55	56	76	29	59	52	59	55	63

McAuliffe and Cuccinelli take opposing views on gay marriage, with McAuliffe saying he supports gay marriage and Cuccinelli saying he supports the current ban on same-sex marriage. A strong majority (56%) of likely voters oppose Virginia's ban on same-sex marriage, while just over a third (36%) support the ban and 7% have no view either way. Three in four Democrats oppose the ban, while nearly six in ten Independents oppose it. Among Republicans, 60% support the ban. The ban is opposed by majorities of men, women, whites and African Americans; opposition is smallest among men (52%) and largest among blacks (63%).

### Gift ban...

...support banning gifts of \$100 or more from a single person to elected officials and their families?	RV n=994	LV n=753	Dem	Rep	Ind	Male	Female	White	Black
Support	74	76	81	67	80	80	72	77	78
No view (vol)	7	6	7	9	4	5	9	7	1
Oppose	19	17	13	24	16	15	19	15	21

### Ethics commission...

... support the creation of a bipartisan ethics commission or oppose it?	RV n=994	LV n=753	Dem	Rep	Ind	Male	Female	White	Black
Support	67	64	76	55	61	64	64	63	73
No view (vol)	10	10	11	8	9	8	11	9	13
Oppose	22	26	13	37	30	28	24	27	14

Both Cuccinelli and McAuliffe have said they support ethics reform in light of the gift scandal that has engulfed Governor Bob McDonnell's administration. The two major ethics reform proposals that have been discussed on the campaign trail – a cap on the value of gifts to public officials and the creation of an ethics commission – are strongly supported by Virginia voters. Three-fourths of likely voters support a ban on gifts of \$100 or more from a single person to an elected official or their family, which is the limit in McAuliffe's proposal. In his proposal, Cuccinelli has not specified a limit but would leave it to the General Assembly to decide. Nearly two-thirds of likely voters support the creation of a bipartisan ethics commission.

Majorities of Republicans, Democrats and Independents support both the gift ban and the ethics commission, as do strong majorities of all demographic sub-groups: men, women, whites and African Americans.

## Generic House of Delegates Ballot

<b>...do you know whether there is a contested House of Delegates race where you live, or are you not sure?</b>	Yes	22	<b>-&gt;</b>	<b>...if the election were held TODAY, would you vote for the [Rotate: Republican Party candidate or Democratic Party candidate] for the House of Delegates race in your district?</b>	Republican	46
	No	61			Democrat	40
	Don't know	17			Undecided (vol)	14

In addition to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General races this fall, all 100 seats in the House of Delegates are up for election on November 5, and 55 of those seats have contested races – two or more candidates vying to fill them, including 43 where Republican and Democratic candidates face one another. Yet, only 20% of likely voters say they know that there is a contested House of Delegates race where they live. Nearly two in ten (18%) say they are not sure and 62% say that there is not a contested House of Delegates race where they live.

Republicans hold a 6% lead over Democrats in a generic House of Delegates ballot among those likely voters who say there is a contested race where they live, with 46% saying they plan to vote for the Republican candidate and 40% saying they plan to vote for the Democratic candidate.

“These House races are being nearly completely overshadowed by the statewide races,” said Kidd. “And while there are far too many places where the incumbent is not facing any challenger at all – even many of the races that are contested aren’t actually known to voters.”

# The Wason Center Virginia Survey: 2013 Statewide Elections

Field Dates: Oct. 8-13

944 registered voters, including 753 likely voters

Total Margin of Error is +/- 3.1% at the 95% level of confidence

Likely Voter Margin of Error is +/-3.6 at the 95% level of confidence

Numbers are percentages; columns may not sum to 100 due to rounding

*(Omits questions released earlier)*

Q10. Elections for the House of Delegates will also take place in November...do you know whether there is a contested House of Delegates race where you live, or are you not sure?

Yes, there is	22
Not sure/don't know – skip to Q12	61
No, there is not – skip to Q12	17

Q11. Thinking about that House of Delegates race, if the election were held TODAY, would you vote for the [Rotate: Republican Party candidate or Democratic Party candidate] for the House of Delegates in your district?

Republican	47
Democratic	39
Other (vol)	3
Undecided (vol)	11

Q16. The Affordable Care Act calls for the expansion of the Medicaid program to make more people eligible. Some people support the expansion saying it would inject billions of dollars into the Virginia economy. Others oppose it saying the expansion could cost Virginia money if the federal government doesn't pay the funds it has promised. What is your view; do you generally support expanding the Medicaid program or oppose it?

Support	51
No View (vol)	7
Oppose	42

Q17. Some people have called for amending Virginia's constitution so that public money can be used to educate students at religious schools through a voucher-like program. What is your view; do you generally support amending the constitution to allow public money to be used to educate students at religious school or oppose it?

Support	31
No View (vol)	11
Oppose	58

Q18. Virginia redraws its congressional and General Assembly district boundaries every ten years after the census is taken. This process is known as REDISTRICTING. Currently, Virginia's constitution gives the General Assembly the power to redistrict. Some people have called for amending Virginia's constitution to take redistricting away from the General Assembly and give it to an independent commission instead. What is your view; do you generally support this effort or oppose it?

Support	43
No View (vol)	25
Oppose	32

Q19. Some people think in light of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision overturning the federal Defense of Marriage Act - which gave federal recognition to legally married gay and lesbian couples - that Virginia's ban on same-sex marriage should be removed. Others argue that Virginia's ban on same-sex marriage should not be removed. What is your view, do you generally support Virginia's ban on same sex marriage or oppose it?

Support	36
No View (vol)	7
Oppose	56
Refused (vol)	1

Q20. Some people think in light of the gift scandal related to Governor Bob McDonnell, that elected officials and their families should be prohibited from taking any gifts worth more than \$100 from a single person. What is your view; do you generally support such a ban or oppose it?

Support	76
No View (vol)	6
Oppose	17
Refused (vol)	1

Q21. Some people think in light of the gift scandal related to Governor Bob McDonnell, that Virginia needs a bipartisan ethics commission to investigate alleged ethics violations. What is your view; do you generally support the creation of such a commission or oppose it?

Support	64
No View (vol)	10
Oppose	26

**Demographics** [All Respondents]

EDUC: What is the last grade of school or college you had the opportunity to complete?

High school or less	11
Some college	26
Vocational or technical training	3
College graduate	31
Graduate study or more	29

HISPANIC: Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic or Latino?

Yes	2
No	98

RACE: Do you consider yourself to be:

White	78
Black or African American	16
Other	6

BORN: Could you please tell me the year in which you were born:

18-24	9
25-34	11
35-44	17
45-54	24
> 55	38

RELIG: What is your religious preference, are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, another religion, or no religion?

Protestant	30
Christian (non-specific) (vol)	25
Catholic	15
Jewish	2
Other	14
None	14

BORNAGAIN: Would you describe yourself as a “born-again” or evangelical Christian?

Yes	27
No	67
Don’t know/refused (vol.)	6

IDEOL: When it comes to your ideology, would you consider yourself to be a...

Strong liberal	8
Liberal	9
Moderate, leaning liberal	29
Moderate, leaning conservative	17
Conservative	26
Strong Conservative	12

PARTYID: In politics today, do you generally consider yourself to be a Democrat, Republican, or Independent?

Democrat	37
Republican	31
Independent	28
No preference(vol)	3
Other/don’t know (vol)	1

TYPE: Some people say that there are two types of Republicans, those who are more concerned about the business climate and less concerned about social issues, and those who are more concerned about social issues and less concerned about the business climate. Which type of Republican would you call yourself, or would you say that you are some of both? [ASKED ONLY OF REPUBLICAN PARTY IDENTIFIERS]

Business	29
Social	13
Both	52
Don’t know/refused (vol.)	6

TEA PARTY: How do you feel about the Tea Party movement, would you say that you support it, oppose it, or have no view of it either way?

Support it	22
No view either way	25
Oppose it	50
Don’t know/refused (vol.)	3



REGION: Region of Virginia

Northern Virginia	32
Richmond/Central	21
Hampton Roads	25
Southside/Southwest	22

INCOME: And, just for statistical purposes, in which of the following categories does your family income fall?

Under \$25,000	8
\$25-\$35,000	5
\$35-\$50,000	7
\$50-\$75,000	16
\$75-\$100,000	15
Over \$100,000	37
Don't know/refused (vol.)	12

SEX: Sex of Respondent

Male	48
Female	52

**How the survey was conducted:**

The results of this poll are based on 944 interviews of registered Virginia voters, conducted Oct. 8-13, 2013. The margin of error for the whole survey is +/- 3.2% at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for the likely voter model (n=753) is +/- 3.6 at the 95% level of confidence. In addition to sampling error, the other potential sources of error include non-response, question wording, and interviewer error. The response rate (AAPOR RRI Standard Definition) for the survey was 22%. Three callbacks were employed in the fielding process. Live calling was conducted by trained interviewers at the Wason Center for Public Policy Survey Research Lab at Christopher Newport University. The data reported here are weighted using an iterative weighting process on sex, age, race and region of residence to reflect as closely as possible the demographic composition of likely voters in the 2013 Virginia elections. The survey was designed by Dr. Quentin Kidd of the Wason Center for Public Policy at Christopher Newport University.