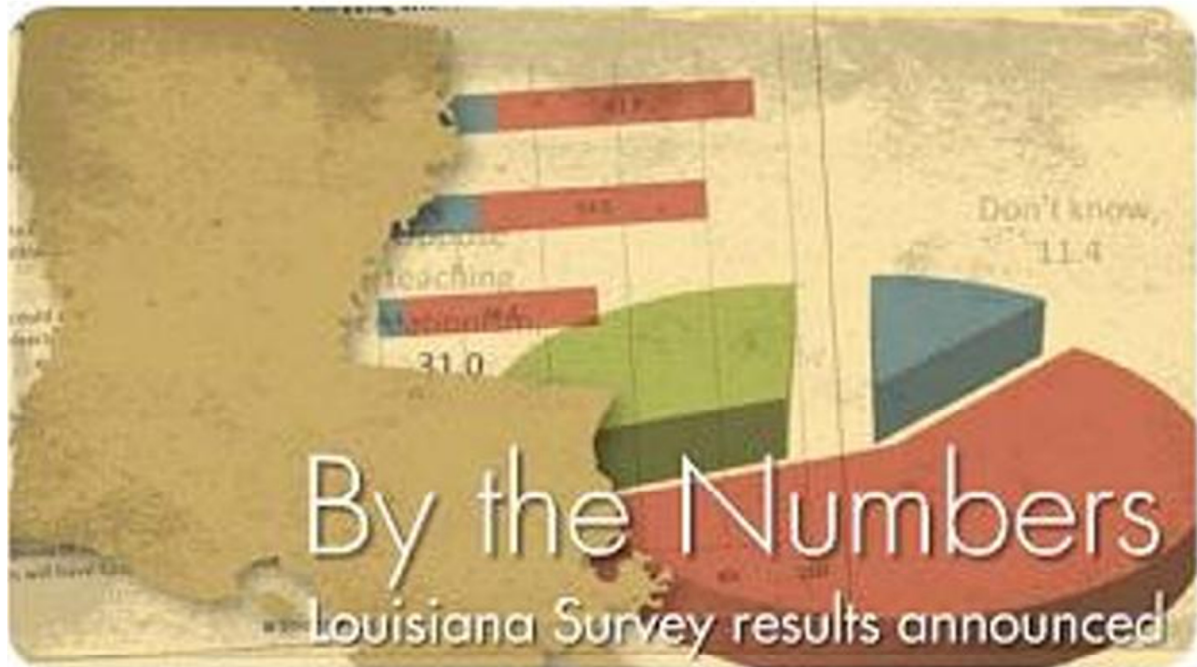


# THE PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH LAB



Dr. Kirby Goidel

Dr. Belinda C. Davis

Michael Climek

Lina Brou

Sponsored by the  
**Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs**  
**Manship School of Mass Communication**  
**Louisiana State University**  
**Spring 2013**

2013 Louisiana Survey

Social Issues

# SURVEY INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Louisiana Survey is to establish benchmarks and assess progress and regressions in residents' assessments of state government services. The Survey has been conducted annually since 2002, and was conducted twice in 2005 and 2006. Each survey includes core items designed to serve as barometers of public opinion including whether the state is moving in the right direction, identification of the most important issues, grades for various areas of government service, evaluations of state taxes, and identification of spending priorities. Each survey also includes items designed to better understand contemporary issues.

As part of an effort to assure that the Louisiana Survey fulfills its public service mission, input was solicited from a statewide Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee provided invaluable insight into the design of the questionnaire and in identifying the issues that most need to be addressed by the survey. While we are greatly indebted to the committee members for their time and contributions, they bear no responsibility for any mistakes in the questionnaire, analysis, or interpretation presented in this report.

We also thank the Reilly Family Foundation for their generous support and vision in helping to create the Louisiana Survey.

The results from this survey are being separated into several reports and releases. This particular report focuses on **Social Issues** in Louisiana. The full report with all sub reports included will be released in May/June 2013.

Questions regarding the content of this report should be directed to:

Kirby Goidel, Director of the Louisiana Survey  
Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs  
Manship School of Mass Communication  
Louisiana State University  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
Phone: (225)-578-7588  
E-mail: [kgoidel@lsu.edu](mailto:kgoidel@lsu.edu)

For more information on previous surveys, please visit: [www.survey.lsu.edu](http://www.survey.lsu.edu).



**Manship School Research Facility**  
**Public Policy Research Lab**  
**Media Effects Lab**

The **Manship School's Research Facility** houses the **Public Policy Research Lab (PPRL)** and the **Media Effects Lab (MEL)**. The **Public Policy Research Lab** is dedicated to quality public policy research through state-of-the-art survey technologies. It helps advance scholarly and practical research while playing a leadership role in state and national public policy development. The lab serves other units on campus, government agencies, non-profits, business and industry. National surveys have resulted in publication in both practical and scholarly journals.

The **Public Policy Research Lab** has 52 computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) workstations, mail survey and web survey capability in addition to analytical services. The lab is dedicated to meeting the unique goals and objectives of each project by working closely with those seeking data, research expertise and analysis. The lab's projects benefit from the multiple disciplines and intellectual assets at LSU. One of the lab's core projects is the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs' **annual Louisiana Survey**, a longitudinal study of advancements and regressions of citizen views regarding state services and contemporary issues. Clients include: Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals; Louisiana Department of Labor; Louisiana Division of Administration; and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The **Media Effects Lab** is one of the largest and most sophisticated of its kind within a mass communication program in the country. It is a state-of-the-art experimental lab equipped with 16 computer stations and a living room area for research in a more natural environment. Researchers can measure audiences' physical responses (heart rate, blood pressure, eye movement and brain activity) to various media messages as well as gather their attitudes toward those messages. Experiments and projects track people's responses to particular media content: what stimulates them; what doesn't; what images they pay attention to; which ones don't resonate. Specific software measures user interactivity and responses to news websites and social networking sites. Unconscious attitudes can also be measured. For example, one study looks at the effectiveness of product placement in television dramas by using the heart rate as a measure of attention. This enables researchers to connect the individual's involvement with the content, the product and the people using the product.

**Contact Information:**

Michael Climek  
Public Policy Research Lab  
T 225-578-7499  
mclimek@lsu.edu, [www.survey.lsu.edu](http://www.survey.lsu.edu)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BY REPORT SECTION

### Social Issues

Relative to national public opinion polls, Louisiana residents are less supportive of same sex marriage, legalization of marijuana for personal use, and a ban on assault weapons.

- Louisiana residents remain opposed to same sex marriage but express greater support for civil unions.
  - 39 percent of Louisiana residents supported same sex marriage while 56 percent were opposed.
  - 47 percent of Louisiana residents supported same sex civil unions while 49 percent were opposed.
- Louisiana residents are generally opposed to the legalization of marijuana for personal use.
  - 56 percent of Louisiana residents were opposed to the legalization of marijuana for personal use, while 42 percent supported legalization.
- Louisiana residents are opposed a ban on assault weapons.
  - 57 percent opposed a ban on assault weapons while 41 percent supported a ban.
    - For reference only 46 percent of Louisiana resident report that they personally own a gun.

When it comes to issues of climate change, residents believe climate change has probably been happening but are divided on whether it is the result of human activity.

- 67 percent of residents said climate change has probably been happening, while 29 percent said climate change has probably not been happening.
- 48 percent said human activity was the cause of global warming while 46 percent said other factors were the primary cause.

### *Survey Methodology*

*About the Survey:* The 2013 Louisiana Survey includes a traditional landline telephone survey combined with a survey of Louisiana cell phone users. The results presented here have been weighted to reflect current population demographics as reflected in the most recent available Census data. The combined survey includes 930 respondents including 574 respondents selected from landline telephone numbers via random-digit dialing and 356 respondents selected from available cell phone blocks. Interviews were conducted from February 8 to March 17, 2013. The overall survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.6 percentage points. The response rate for the landline portion of the survey was 21 percent, meaning that 21 percent of calls to eligible households resulted in a completed interview. The response rate for the cell phone survey was 12 percent. Response rates for surveys have been consistently declining over the past several decades and these response rates are within the range of what has been reported by national survey organizations such as Pew Center for the People and the Press and Gallup.

In Table 1, we present the basic demographics for the population and the weighted sample. As part of the analysis, we examined crosstabs on age, race, education, income, and partisan affiliation on each of the substantive questions included in the report, but present only the crosstabs that are statistically significant and substantively interesting. A full set of crosstabs is available on request.

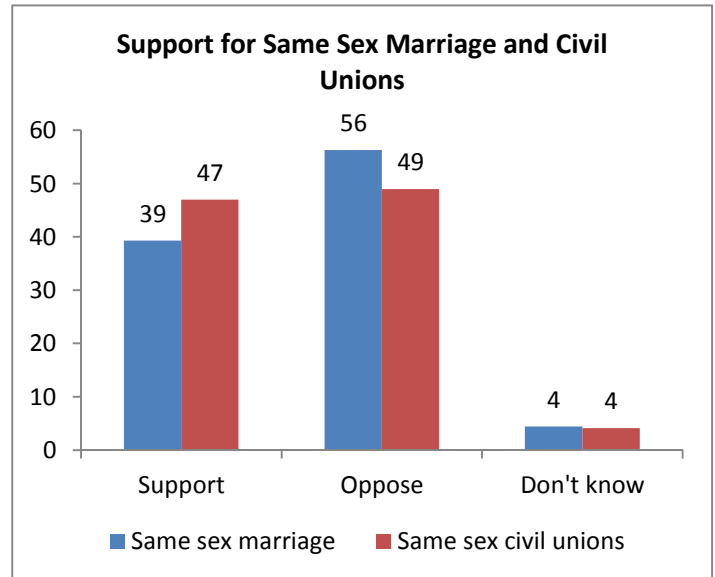
Table 1: Comparison of Census Population Estimates and Louisiana Survey Weighted Survey Sample Estimates

	<b>Census Population Estimate</b>	<b>Louisiana Survey 2013 Weighted Sample Estimate</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	48.3	46.8
Female	51.7	53.2
<b>Race</b>		
White	62.8	63.6
Black	30.0	29.1
Other	7.2	7.3
<b>Age</b>		
18-24	14.0	11.4
25-34	18.2	17.7
35-44	16.7	17.2
44-54	19.0	19.3
55-64	15.8	16.7
65 and older	16.3	17.7
<b>Education</b>		
Less than High School	18.6	16.3
High School	34.0	33.4
Some College	23.3	24.8
College	24.1	25.5
<b>Income</b>		
Less than \$10,000	10.4	12.4
\$10,000 - \$19,999	14.1	10.8
\$20,000 - \$29,999	12.2	11.6
\$30,000 - \$39,999	10.9	13.6
\$40,000-49,999	9.5	10.9
\$50,000 - \$74,999	17.2	16.6
\$75,000 - \$99,999	10.7	10.7
\$100,000-\$199,999	12.3	11.3
\$200,000 or more	2.7	2.1

## CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIAL ISSUES

*Same Sex Marriage and Civil Unions.* Increasingly national polls show majorities supporting gay rights, including same sex marriage. A CBS News polls conducted from March 20-24, for example, found that 53 percent of adults believed same sex marriage should be legal, including 73 percent of younger adults, 18-29. On this issue, Louisiana residents lag behind the larger national trend, remaining opposed to same sex marriage by a 56-39 margin.

Louisiana residents are also opposed to civil unions though the margin is much smaller, 49-47, and within the margin of error for the overall survey.



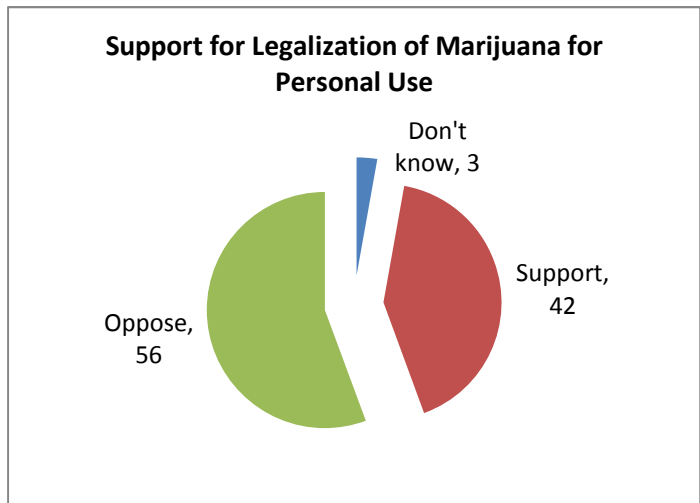
A similar collection of nationwide polls (combined and analyzed by The Williams Institute in 2012) reported support numbers for same sex marriage by state. According to their 2012 data, 31 percent of Louisiana residents supported same sex marriage<sup>1</sup>. As our data was collected in 2013, our 39 percent support number could be considered an increase over time.

Issues of same sex marriage divide the state by region, age, and party. It is perhaps not surprising that New Orleans is most supportive of same sex marriage (58 percent) while Southwest Louisiana (29 percent) and North Louisiana (32 percent) are less supportive. Nor is it surprising that younger residents, 18-34, show stronger support (54 percent) than older residents, 65 and older (26 percent). Self-identified strong Republicans show the greatest opposition – only 17 percent support while 80 percent are opposed. On the other end of the partisan aisle, strong Democrats are split evenly – 48 percent support same sex marriage and 48 percent are opposed. Interestingly, Independents show the greatest support for same sex marriage (50 percent).

We see similar patterns for civil unions. Support is highest in New Orleans (64 percent), among and younger respondents (58 percent). Interestingly, when it comes to partisan affiliation, support for civil unions appears to be stronger among weak partisans and independents; with support ranging from 54 percent for Independents to 69 percent for independents leaning toward the Democratic Party.

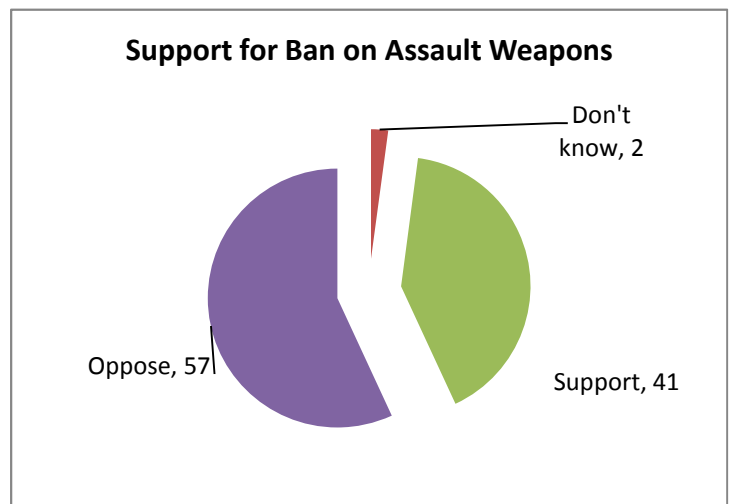
<sup>1</sup> <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Flores-Barclay-Public-Support-Marriage-By-State-Apr-2013.pdf>

*Legalization of Marijuana:* National polls have similarly reported an increasing liberalization of opinion around the legalization of marijuana. Most recent polls show opinion nearly evenly divided between support for legalization and opposition. A USA Today/Gallup Poll conducted in November 2012 found 48 percent favored legalizing marijuana while 50 percent were opposed. As a result of this liberalization, several states (e.g., Colorado) have liberalized their marijuana laws making marijuana legal for personal use.

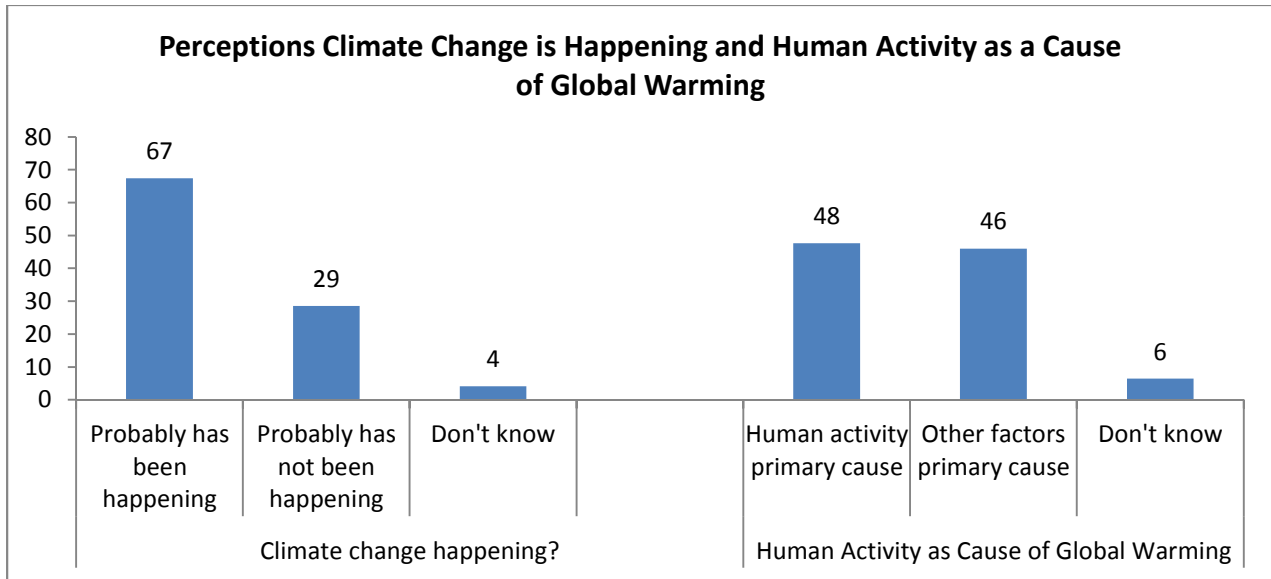


According to the 2013 Louisiana Survey, Louisiana residents remain opposed to legalization for personal use. Forty-two percent of residents supported making marijuana legal for personal use while 56 percent are opposed and 3 percent are undecided. Younger respondents are generally more supportive of legalizations. Fifty-two percent of respondents, 18-34, support legalization compared to 25 percent of respondents 65 and older. Curiously, while men are split on the question (50 support legalization and 49 percent opposed), women are overwhelmingly opposed (35 percent support versus 62 percent opposed). Strong Democrats are more in support of Legalization for personal use (50 percent) than Strong Republicans (32 percent).

*Ban on Assault Weapons:* Louisiana residents also differ from national averages in terms of support for banning assault style weapons. A Fox News Poll conducted in March 2013 found 51 percent supported “banning assault rifles and semi-automatic weapons.” Louisiana residents, in contrast, opposed a ban on assault weapons by fairly wide margin: 57 percent – 41 percent. This number is particularly interesting as only 46 percent of Louisiana residents report that they own a gun. Seventy-five percent of strong Republicans are opposed to banning assault weapons while 45 percent of strong Democrats are opposed. Differences across race, income, education, and gender are not significant.







*Climate Change:* More than two-thirds of Louisiana residents (67 percent) say climate change is happening, while 29 percent say it probably not happening and 4 percent did not know. A Duke University poll conducted in January 2013 found 50 percent of Americans said climate change was definitely occurring while 34 percent said it was probably occurring.

Louisiana residents are more divided on the question of whether human activity is the cause of the change with 48 percent saying human activity is the primary cause and 46 percent identifying other factors. Women (76 percent) are more likely than men (58 percent) to say that climate change is probably happening. Perceptions that climate change is probably happening are relatively high (60 percent or greater) across all partisan groupings with the exception of strong Republicans. Even strong Republicans, however, generally agree (50 percent) that climate change is probably happening.

In terms of the cause of climate change, the most important differences are rooted in education. Sixty-three percent of college educated respondents say climate change is due to human activity compared to 39 percent of residents with less than a high school education and 41 percent of high school graduates.

# THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT & FREQUENCIES

*About the Survey:* The 2013 Louisiana Survey includes a traditional landline telephone survey combined with a survey of Louisiana cell phone users. The results presented here have been weighted to reflect current population demographics as reflected in the most recent available Census data. The combined survey includes 930 respondents including 574 respondents selected from landline telephone numbers via random-digit dialing and 356 respondents selected from available cell phone blocks. Interviews were conducted from February 8 to March 17, 2013. The overall survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.6 percentage points. The response rate for the landline portion of the survey was 21 percent, meaning that 21 percent of calls to eligible households resulted in a completed interview. The response rate for the cell phone survey was 12 percent. Response rates for surveys have been consistently declining over the past several decades and these response rates are within the range of what has been reported by national survey organizations such as Pew Center for the People and the Press and Gallup.

Please note the percentages are weighted to closely mimic current census figures. As a result the core amount of respondents choosing an answer will not match the weighted percentage number.

1. Would you support or oppose a law allowing same-sex couples to be legally married in Louisiana?

Same sex marriage	%	N
Don't know	4.4	39
Support	39.3	310
Oppose	56.3	562
Total	100	911

2. Would you support or oppose a law allowing same-sex couples to form civil unions in Louisiana?

Same sex civil unions	%	N
Don't know	4.1	43
Support	47	427
Oppose	49	449
Total	100	919

3. Would you support or oppose legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use?

Marijuana for personal use	%	N
Don't know	2.8	22
Support	41.6	322
Oppose	55.6	584
Total	100	928

4. Would you support or oppose a state-wide ban on the sale of assault weapons?

Ban on assault weapons	%	N
Don't know	2.1	22
Support	41	384
Oppose	56.9	519
Total	100	925

5. What is your personal opinion? Do you think that the world's temperature probably has been going up over the past 100 years, or do you think this probably has not been happening?

Climate change happening?	%	N
Don't know	4.1	47
Probably has been happening	67.4	615
Probably has not been happening	28.6	261
Total	100	923

6. Do you think that this rise in global temperature is primarily the result of human activity or primarily the result of other factors?

Human Activity as Cause of Global Warming	%	N
Don't know	6.4	41
Human activity primary cause	47.6	303
Other factors primary cause	46	270
Total	100	614

7. Partisan ID: Generally speaking do you consider yourself a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or what? Would you consider yourself a strong or a not so strong (answer to previous question)\_\_\_\_\_? [Separate Question for those saying Independent to the first Question: Would you say, you lean to the Democratic Party or Republican Party, or would you say you don't lean to either party?]

Partisan Identification	%	N
Strong Democrat	24.3	213
Democrat	11.2	104
Leans Democratic	4.6	39
Independent	25.2	192
Leans Republican	7.8	81
Republican	7.7	96
Strong Republican	19.2	187
Total	100	912

8. When it comes to politics, would you say are:

Political Ideology	%	N
Very Liberal	3.1	28
Liberal	8.7	72
Somewhat Liberal	9.2	80
Moderate	25.6	224
Somewhat Conservative	17.7	155
Conservative	17.2	182
Very Conservative	13.4	142
Don't Know	5.2	36

9. In what year were you born?

Age in Categories	%	N
18-24	11.4	45
25-34	17.7	106
35-44	17.2	128
45-54	19.3	163
55-64	16.7	220
65 and older	17.7	268
Total	100	930

10. Do you own your own home, pay rent, or something else?

Own home, pay rent or something else?	%	N
Don't know	0.2	2
Own home	63.3	687
Pay rent	21.3	153
Something else	15.2	83

Total	100	925
-------	-----	-----

11. And do any children under the age of 18 currently reside in your household?

Children under 18 in household	%	N
Don't know	0.1	1
Yes	42.1	299
No	57.8	626
Total	100	926

12. Do any of these children attend a public school in Louisiana?

Attend Public School	%	N
Don't know	0.8	1
Yes	79.9	220
No	19.3	78
Total	100	299

13. Do any of these children attend a private school in Louisiana?

Attend Private School	%	N
Yes	11.1	52
No	88.9	247
Total	100	299

14. Which of the following categories best describes your level of education?

Education	%	N
Less than high school	16.3	72
High school	33.4	199
Some college	24.8	312
College grad	25.5	344
Total	100	927

15. What is your current marital status?

marital status	%	N
Don't know	0.1	1
married	50.1	523

single	28.5	183
Divorced	10.7	100
Separated	3.1	22
Widowed	7.5	98
Total	100	927

16. And what is your zip code?

Recoded as Region	%	N
Baton Rouge	16.6	151
North Louisiana	25.8	304
Southwest Louisiana	22.4	193
New Orleans	22.9	141
Northshore and surrounding parishes	12.3	141
Total	100	930

17. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

Ethnicity	%	N
Yes	4.8	30
No	95.2	893

18. Which of the following best describes you? Are you White, African-American, Asian, or something else?

Race	%	N
White/Caucasian	63.6	643
Black/African-American	29.1	229
Other	7.4	49
Total	100	921

19. Is your religious preference Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Agnostic, Atheists, or something else?

Religion	%	N
Don't know	0.2	2
Christian	81.3	774
Jewish	0.5	3
Muslim	0.3	3
Agnostic	2.1	17
Atheist	2.2	13
Something else	13.5	113

Total	100	925
-------	-----	-----

20. Do you generally consider yourself Protestant, Catholic, nondenominational, or something else?

Denomination	%	N
Don't Know	0.8	3
Protestant	21.4	219
Catholic	30.7	245
Nondenominational	14.9	108
Something else	32.1	198
Total	100	773

21. Do you generally consider yourself an evangelical or born again?

Born Again?	%	N
Don't know	5.4	36
Yes	50.4	401
No	44.2	333
Total	100	770

22. How often do you attend services at a church, synagogue, mosque, or other place of worship?...Never, once a year, a few times a year, once a month, about twice a month, once a week or more often

Religious Attendance	%	N
Don't Know	0.1	1
Never	13.8	111
Once a year	2.5	21
A few times a year	18.1	143
Once a month	5.6	54
About twice a month	10	86
Once a week or more	49.9	509
Total	100	925

23. Are you currently employed full-time, employed part-time, retired, unemployed and looking for work, or not employed and not looking for work?

work status	%	N
Don't know	0.6	2

Employed full time	48	423
Employed part time	10.5	73
Retired	21	280
Unemployed and looking	7.4	53
Unemployed and not looking	6.5	51
Disability (volunteered)	6	45
Total	100	927

24. We would like to know what your household income was last year before taxes. This information will remain strictly confidential and will only be used for statistical purposes. Please stop me when I get to the category that includes your household income.

Household Income	%	N
Less than \$10,000	12.4	74
\$10,000 - \$19,999	10.8	92
\$20,000 - \$29,999	11.6	92
\$30,000 - \$39,999	13.6	115
\$40,000-49,999	10.9	117
\$50,000 - \$74,999	16.6	162
\$75,000 - \$99,999	10.7	124
\$100,000 or more	13.4	154
Total	100	930

25. And finally- Are you a gun owner?

Gun Owner	%	N
Don't know	0.3	4
Yes	46.1	457
No	53.6	450
Total	100	911