



**November 20, 2009**

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## **I. Survey Methodology**

The Elon University Poll is conducted using a stratified random sample of households with telephones and wireless telephone numbers in the population of interest – in this case, citizens in North Carolina. The sample of telephone numbers for the survey is obtained from Survey Sampling International, LLC.

### ***Selection of Households***

To equalize the probability of telephone selection, sample telephone numbers are systematically stratified according to subpopulation strata (e.g., a zip code, a county, a state, etc.), which yields a sample from telephone exchanges in proportion to each exchange's share of telephone households in the population of interest. Estimates of telephone households in the population of interest are generally obtained from several databases. Samples of household telephone numbers are distributed across all eligible blocks of numbers in proportion to the density of listed households assigned in the population of interest according to a specified subpopulation stratum. Upon determining the projected (or preferred) sample size, a sampling interval is calculated by summing the number of listed residential numbers in each eligible block within the population of interest and dividing that sum by the number of sampling points assigned to the population. From a random start between zero and the sampling interval, blocks are systematically selected in proportion to the density of listed household "working blocks." A *block* (also known as a *bank*) is a set of contiguous numbers identified by the first two digits of the last four digits of a telephone number. A working block contains three or more working telephone numbers. Exchanges are assigned to a population on the basis of all eligible blocks in proportion to the density of working telephone households. Once each population's proportion of telephone households is determined, then a sampling interval, based on that proportion, is calculated and specific exchanges and numbers are randomly selected. The methodology for the wireless component of this study starts with the determining which area code-exchange combinations in North Carolina are included in the wireless or shared Telcordia types. Similar to the process for selecting household telephone numbers, wireless numbers involve a multi-step process in which blocks of numbers are determined for each area code-exchange combination in the Telcordia types. From a random start within the first sampling interval, a systematic  $n$ th selection of each block of numbers is performed and a two-digit random number between 00 and 99 is appended to each selected  $n$ th block stem. The intent is to provide a stratification that will yield a sample that is

representative both geographically and by large and small carrier. From these, a random sample is generated. Because exchanges and numbers are randomly selected by the computer, unlisted as well as listed household telephone numbers are included in the sample. Thus, the sample of telephone numbers generated for the population of interest constitutes a random sample of telephone households and wireless numbers of the population.

### ***Procedures Used for Conducting the Poll***

The survey was conducted Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, through Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, of 2009. During this time calls were made from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm EST. The Elon University Poll uses CATI system software (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) in the administration of surveys. For each working telephone number in the sample, several attempts were made to reach each number. Only individuals 18 years or older were interviewed; those reached at business or work numbers were not interviewed. For each number reached, one adult is generally selected based on whether s/he is the oldest or youngest adult. Interviews, which are conducted by live interviewers, are completed with adults from the target population as specified. Interviews for this survey were completed with 563 adults from North Carolina. For a sample size of 563, there is a 95 percent probability that our survey results are within plus or minus 4.2 percentage points (the margin of sampling error) of the actual population distribution for any given question. For sub-samples (a subgroup selected from the overall sample), the margin of error is higher depending on the size of the subsample. When we use a subsample, we identify these results as being from a subsample and provide the total number of respondents and margin of error for that subsample. In reporting our results, we note any use of a subsample where applicable. Because our surveys are based on probability sampling, there are a variety of factors that prevent these results from being perfect, complete depictions of the population; the foremost example is that of margin of sampling error (as noted above). With all probability samples, there are theoretical and practical difficulties estimating population characteristics (or parameters). Thus, while efforts are made to reduce or lessen such threats, sampling error as well as other sources of error – while not all inclusive, examples of other error effects are non-response rates, question order effects, question wording effects, etc. – are present in surveys derived from probability samples.

### ***Questions and Question Order***

The Elon University Poll provides the questions as worded and the order in which these questions are administered (to respondents). Conspicuous in reviewing some questions is the “bracketed” information. Information contained within brackets ( [ ] ) denotes response options as provided in the question; this bracketed information is rotated per question to ensure that respondents do not receive a set order of response options presented to them, which also maintains question construction integrity by avoiding respondent acquiescence based on question composition. Some questions used a probe maneuver to determine a

respondent's intensity of perspective. Probe techniques used in this questionnaire mainly consist of asking a respondent if their response is more intense than initially provided. For example, upon indicating whether s/he is satisfied or dissatisfied, we asked the respondent "would you say you are very 'satisfied'/'dissatisfied'". This technique is employed in some questions as opposed to specifying the full range of choices in the question. Though specifying the full range of options in questions is a commonly accepted practice in survey research, we sometimes prefer that the respondent determine whether their perspective is stronger or more intense for which the probe technique used. Another method for acquiring information from respondents is to ask an "open-ended" question. The open-ended question is a question for which no response options are provided, i.e., it is entirely up to the respondent to provide the response information.

### ***The Elon University Poll***

The Elon University Poll is conducted under the auspices of the Center for Public Opinion Polling (Hunter Bacot, Director & Mileah Kromer, Assistant Director), which is a constituent part of the Institute for Politics and Public Affairs (George Taylor, Director); both these organizations are housed in the department of political science at Elon University. These academic units are part of Elon College, the College of Arts and Sciences at Elon University. The Elon University administration, led by Dr. Leo Lambert, President of the university, fully support the Elon University Poll as part of its service commitment to state, regional, and national constituents. Dr. Hunter Bacot, a professor in the department of political science, directs the Elon University Poll. Elon University students administer the survey as part of the University's commitment to experiential learning where "students learn through doing."

## II. Survey Instrument and Percent Distributions by Question

Interviews were completed with 563 adults from households in the North Carolina. For a sample size of 563, there is a 95 percent probability that our survey results are within plus or minus 4.2 percentage points (the margin of sampling error) of the actual population distribution for any given question. Due to rounding, column totals may not equal 100 percent. Data are weighted to reflect the adult population in terms of age and race.

About the Codes appearing in Questions and Responses	
<b>Response Options not offered</b>	Response options are <u>not</u> offered to the person taking the survey (respondent), but are included in the question as asked (and usually denoted by brackets, [ ]). Response options are generally offered only for demographic questions (background characteristic, e.g., age, education, income, etc.).
<b>v = volunteered response</b>	Respondents volunteer response option. As response options are <u>not</u> offered to those taking the survey, some respondents offer or volunteer response options. Though not all volunteered options can be anticipated, the more common options are noted.
<b>p = probed response</b>	Respondents self-place in this option or category. A probe maneuver is used in questions to allow the respondent to indicate whether her/his response is more intense than initially provided for in the choices appearing in the question. For example, on probe questions the interviewer, upon a respondent indicating that she/he is satisfied (or dissatisfied), is instructed to ask him/her "Would you say you are "very satisfied"?"

**First, I would like to know what you think is the most important issue facing the state of North Carolina? (open ended)**

	Percent
ECONOMY	56.3
ENVIRONMENT	11.1
WAR	9.1
TAXES	3.3
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	1.7
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM	1.7
CRIME & DRUGS	1.3
HEALTH CARE	1.3
FAMILY VALUES & MORALS	0.9
OTHER	9.9
DON T KNOW	3.4
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

**Now, I'd like to ask you some question about the courts, judges, and the judicial process in North Carolina . . .**

**How familiar are you with the way judges in North Carolina are currently selected for their positions...are you [not at all familiar, somewhat familiar, or very familiar]?**

	Percent
NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR	42.9
SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR	47.2
VERY FAMILIAR	9.2
DON T KNOW (v)	.8
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

Regardless of how familiar you are with how judges are selected, I d like to know what you think is a good way to select judges...From the following options, tell me which one you prefer as a way to select judges in North Carolina...

- [-using non- partisan elections where candidates are not identified on the voting ballot as a member of a political party;
- having candidates for judge identified by some selection process and appointed by a statewide governing body; or
- using partisan elections where candidates are identified on the voting ballot as a member of a political party?]

	Percent
NON-PARTISAN ELECTIONS	35.7
A SELECTION PROCESS	19.7
PARTISAN ELECTIONS	38.1
DON T KNOW (v)	6.3
REFUSED (v)	.2
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

As you may be aware, judges in North Carolina are elected to office like other elected officials . . . Do you [agree or disagree] with this way of selecting judges in North Carolina?

	Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE (p)	12.1
DISAGREE	16.0
AGREE	47.2
STRONGLY AGREE (p)	21.3
DON T KNOW (v)	3.3
REFUSED (v)	.1
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

**In some states, judges are appointed to office . . . to select judges this way, an independent committee recommends a list of judges to the governor for appointment. . . the governor then appoints judges based on these recommendations. . . would you [support or oppose] selecting judges this way in North Carolina?**

	Percent
STRONGLY OPPOSE (p)	35.3
OPPOSE	32.7
SUPPORT	18.1
STRONGLY SUPPORT (p)	9.8
DON T KNOW (v)	4.1
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

**Would you [support or oppose] a state law that eliminated the election of judges by voters and allowed the governor of North Carolina to appoint judges based on recommendations by an independent committee?**

	Percent
STRONGLY OPPOSE (p)	43.7
OPPOSE	27.5
SUPPORT	19.2
STRONGLY SUPPORT (p)	6.3
DON T KNOW (v)	3.3
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

Now, I'd like to read you some ideas about choosing judges . . . for each one I read, please tell me whether you [agree or disagree] with it . . .

**. . . appointing judges is better than electing them?**

	Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE (p)	39.6
DISAGREE	35.8
AGREE	15.5
STRONGLY AGREE (p)	6.4
DON'T KNOW (v)	2.7
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

**. . . judges appointed by the governor are not held as responsible as those elected by the people?**

	Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE (p)	16.3
DISAGREE	26.6
AGREE	32.2
STRONGLY AGREE (p)	17.9
DON'T KNOW (v)	7.1
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0



**... judges should be concerned about the law, not about getting elected?**

	Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE (p)	.3
DISAGREE	2.4
AGREE	30.1
STRONGLY AGREE (p)	65.8
DON'T KNOW (v)	1.3
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

**... judges should be appointed by an independent commission, not the governor or state legislature?**

	Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE (p)	15.8
DISAGREE	24.9
AGREE	31.9
STRONGLY AGREE (p)	17.1
DON'T KNOW (v)	10.3
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

**... judges should not let party politics affect how they decide court cases?**

	Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE (p)	2.9
DISAGREE	2.9
AGREE	31.8
STRONGLY AGREE (p)	61.0
DON'T KNOW (v)	1.3
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

**Next, I'd like to know your opinion about taxes in North Carolina . . .**

**First, I'd like to know how fair do you think our current tax system is at the state level?**

**Would you say that it is [not fair at all, not too fair, fair, or very fair]?**

	Percent
NOT FAIR AT ALL	21.1
NOT TOO FAIR	27.3
FAIR	41.2
VERY FAIR	2.3
DON T KNOW (v)	7.7
REFUSED (v)	.3
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

**How fair do you think our current tax system is at the local level? Would you say that it is [not fair at all, not too fair, fair, or very fair]?**

	Percent
NOT FAIR AT ALL	17.9
NOT TOO FAIR	24.4
FAIR	48.2
VERY FAIR	3.0
DON T KNOW (v)	6.6
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

Now, I want to know how fair you think specific taxes are in North Carolina. I'm going to read you a list of taxes and I want you to rate these on a scale of 1 to 5, with [1 being not at all fair, 3 being neither fair or unfair, and 5 being very fair]

Please rate each one as I read it to you.

Taxes	Not At All Fair	Not Fair	Neither Fair or Unfair	Somewhat Fair	Very Fair	Don't Know (v)
Tobacco Tax	24.4	8.4	20.5	10.1	32.0	4.6
Retail Sales Tax	15.0	14.4	40.4	18.2	11.1	0.8
Local Property Tax	26.2	22.6	25.9	14.5	8.8	2.0
Corporate Income Tax	20.3	15.4	28.3	11.0	9.1	16.0
Local Retail Sales Tax	16.8	15.9	38.8	17.4	9.3	1.9
Alcoholic Beverage Tax	16.2	7.3	26.0	18.5	27.2	4.7
Gas Tax	44.6	19.4	17.3	10.1	7.5	1.0
Personal Income Tax	25.8	19.6	32.0	12.7	7.0	2.9
Motor Vehicle Tax	28.9	16.6	30.8	14.6	6.6	2.4
Estate Tax	28.0	17.7	29.5	9.9	4.7	10.1
Personal Income Tax on Corporate Dividends	21.1	12.6	29.9	9.7	8.1	18.7

Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)

Now, I'd like to change topics and ask you to rate the performance of some local elected officials and government services . . . to get started, I'd like for you to tell me how [satisfied or unsatisfied] you are with each of the following:

...the performance of your mayor?

	Percent
STRONGLY DISSATISFIED (p)	6.6
DISSATISFIED	11.5
SATISFIED	42.2
STRONGLY SATISFIED (p)	16.9
DON'T KNOW (v)	22.8
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

**...the performance of your city council?**

	Percent
STRONGLY DISSATISFIED (p)	9.4
DISSATISFIED	15.0
SATISFIED	48.5
STRONGLY SATISFIED (p)	8.2
DON'T KNOW (v)	18.9
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

**...the performance of your county commission?**

	Percent
STRONGLY DISSATISFIED (p)	6.9
DISSATISFIED	18.2
SATISFIED	53.2
STRONGLY SATISFIED (p)	5.3
DON'T KNOW (v)	16.4
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

**...the performance of your school board?**

	Percent
STRONGLY DISSATISFIED (p)	16.2
DISSATISFIED	20.5
SATISFIED	44.7
STRONGLY SATISFIED (p)	8.2
DON'T KNOW (v)	10.5
Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)	100.0

Next, I'd like to know your opinion about your community and government services . . . I'd like you to rate the quality of the following community characteristics or government services on a scale of 1 to 5, with [5 being very good and 1 being very bad,] please rate each one as I read it to you.

<b>Community Characteristic Government Service</b>	<b>Very Bad</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Neither Bad or Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Don't Know (v)</b>
Parks & Recreation	3.8	6.7	24.7	25.8	36.5	2.5
Police Department	6.3	4.6	25.2	30.9	30.6	2.4
County Court System	9.4	13.7	36.1	22.4	11.5	7.0
Public Schools	13.6	13.9	21.7	23.0	15.2	2.6
Shopping Opportunities Available	8.9	13.2	25.5	20.1	30.5	1.7
Economic Health of Community	19.4	20.8	32.3	17.7	8.2	1.7
Fire Department	1.7	3.2	11.3	32.6	48.8	2.5
Garbage Collection	4.4	6.4	15.3	27.2	36.9	9.7
Cable TV Service	19.2	14.2	26.8	15.7	15.1	9.0
Libraries	2.5	4.1	16.0	31.6	42.1	3.8
Property Tax Rates	26.4	20.4	30.0	11.6	6.9	4.8
Driver's License Office	20.4	13.3	23.3	20.8	18.7	3.5
Roads & Highways in the Community	10.8	21.0	36.4	19.4	12.3	0.2
Sheriff's Department	4.8	6.2	29.5	29.4	25.8	4.3
Road Maintenance and Repair	15.1	20.2	35.1	18.1	11.3	0.2
License Tag Office	12.4	14.1	29.6	20.3	18.2	5.4

Total (N=563, +/-4.2%)