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Sept. 13, 2012

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In Illinois, Obama Leads Romney; Quinn's Job Approval Gets Better

Despite all the state's troubles, Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn's poll numbers have improved in the last year, according to a new poll of the state's voters released Friday by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The same survey also shows President Barack Obama holding a comfortable lead over Republican Mitt Romney in his bid for re-election, though not by the same margin with which he won the state in 2008.

The poll of 1,261 registered voters was taken September 4 - 10 and has a margin for error of 2.77 percentage points. It shows:

- There are 42.2 percent who approve of Quinn's performance, while 49.1 percent disapprove. A year ago, only 35.5 percent approved and 56.4 percent disapproved, according to a poll taken in October, 2011 by the Institute. Quinn's approval rating is highest in the Chicago suburbs and lowest downstate.
- President Obama is supported for re-election by 47.1 percent of registered voters. Romney captures 33.8 percent. There are 16 percent undecided and 3.1 percent for someone else. While that 13-point lead is a comfortable margin for the president and makes it likely Illinois is a safe state for him, that margin is less than the 24.9 percentage-point margin by which he won when he beat John McCain, 61.8 percent to 36.9 percent, in the state four years ago. It is also noteworthy that Obama's support in Illinois has dropped below 50 percent.
- Key to President Obama's lead may be his positive job approval ratings (55.6 percent approve either strongly or somewhat) and favorability ratings (53.7 percent view him either very or somewhat favorably). By contrast, not quite four in ten (38.7 percent) of respondents view Gov. Romney very or somewhat favorably.
- Illinois voters' perception of the direction of the country is improving but remains sour. They are still pessimistic about the direction of the state.

There are 41.6 percent who say the country is headed in the right direction and 49.8 percent who say it's going in the wrong direction. A year ago, 19.2 percent said the country was headed in the right direction, while 71.4 percent said it was headed the wrong way.

Also in 2011, 74.5 percent said the state was headed in the wrong direction and only 14.9 percent said it was headed in the right direction. Today, 69.9 percent say it's going in the wrong direction and 19.6 percent say it's going in the right direction.

“The big surprise in this poll is that Gov. Quinn’s popularity is actually getting better,” said David Yepsen, director of the Institute. “The state’s problems are headline news just about every day and people aren’t in a good mood about the state but they do feel better about the way Quinn is handling his job.”

“Still, his poll numbers remain underwater because more people disapprove of the job he’s doing than approve of it,” Yepsen said.

In the city of Chicago, 47.5 percent approve of the job he’s doing while 37.9 percent disapprove. In the suburbs, 50.3 percent approve and 43.7 percent disapprove while downstate, only 25.5 percent approve and 65.1 percent disapprove.

Methodology :

The 2012 Simon Poll interviewed 1,261 registered voters across Illinois. It has a margin for error of plus or minus 2.77 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that if we were to conduct the survey 100 times, in 95 of those instances the results would vary by no more than plus or minus 2.77 points from the results obtained here. The margin for error will be larger for demographic, geographic and response subgroups.

Live telephone interviews were conducted by Customer Research International of San Marcos, Texas. Cell phone interviews were included as well as land-line interviews. A Spanish language version of the questionnaire and a Spanish-speaking interviewer were made available. Customer Research International reports no Illinois political clients. The survey was paid for with non-tax dollars from the Institute’s endowment fund.

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1. First we would like to know what you think about the direction of the United States of America. Generally speaking, do you think things in our country are going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction?

Right direction	41.6%
Wrong direction	49.8%
Other/Don't know	8.6%

2. And what about the direction of the State of Illinois? Generally speaking, are things in Illinois going in the right direction, or are they off track and heading in the wrong direction?

Right direction	19.6%
Wrong direction	69.9%
Other/Don't know	10.5%

3. As you know, the US Presidential election will be held this coming November 6th. If the election were held today, who would you vote for, the Democrat, Barack Obama, the Republican, Mitt Romney, or someone else?

Vote Obama	45.8%
Lean Obama	1.3%
Undecided	8.9%
Lean Romney	4.9%
Vote Romney	28.9%
Someone else	3.1%
Other/Don't know	7.1%

4. Regarding Barack Obama, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of him?

Very unfavorable	24.0%
Somewhat unfavorable	13.5%
Neither	6.3%
Somewhat favorable	25.4%
Very favorable	28.3%
Other/Don't know	2.5%

5. Regarding Mitt Romney, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of him?

Very unfavorable	25.8%
Somewhat unfavorable	20.6%
Neither	10.1%
Somewhat favorable	26.1%
Very favorable	12.6%
Other/Don't know	4.8%

6. Now I would like for you to tell me how Governor Pat Quinn is doing his job. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job Governor Quinn is doing?

Strongly disapprove	27.0%
Somewhat disapprove	22.0%
Neither	2.9%
Somewhat approve	36.1%
Strongly approve	6.1%
Other/Don't know	5.9%

7. Next I would like you to tell me how President Barack Obama is doing his job. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job President Obama is doing?

Strongly disapprove	29.7%
Somewhat disapprove	10.5%
Neither	2.1%
Somewhat approve	27.4%
Strongly approve	28.2%
Other/Don't know	2.1%