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Arkansas Poll Finds Economy Still Top Concern for Arkansas Voters

The annual Arkansas Poll, now in its 24th year, also finds a majority of voters support abortion rights under certain circumstances.

Social Media Post: New @UARK Arkansas Poll finds economy remains top concern for majority of Arkansans, increased support for abortion rights under certain circumstances @Blair_Center

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. – The 24th annual Arkansas Poll, released today, found voters continue to be most concerned about the economy, politics and drugs, which were two of the top three concerns from 2021 (drugs supplanted healthcare as the third most important issue). However, concerns about the economy are significantly higher than they were in the previous two years.

The 2022 poll also addressed approval ratings for public figures, as well as positions on current issues, such as ballot issues for this election cycle, gun control and climate change.

Several questions related to abortion were also included. Additional questions addressed political party affiliation and ideology, life in Arkansas and opinions about female politicians.

While two of the top concerns of Arkansas voters were unchanged from the previous year, the acuity of concern increased for both issues. Concerns about the economy jumped 17 points – from 22% in 2021 to 39% in 2022. The number of people concerned about politics/politicians nearly doubled as well, jumping from 10% in 2021 to 19% this year.

Reflecting those concerns, the Arkansas Poll saw a 5-point increase from last year in the number of respondents who felt Arkansas was going in the wrong direction, and a 19-point increase in the number of people who felt they were doing worse financially compared to last year.

“Economic and political uncertainty are crowding out other concerns this year,” said Janine Parry, director of the Arkansas Poll and professor of political science at the University of Arkansas. “While that’s somewhat in keeping with reality, those big jumps highlight how national events distort local perceptions. Here in Arkansas — which is what the question asks about — most signs point to economic growth and political stability. But in our hyper-nationalized environment, that gets overlooked.”

Other notable one-year shifts were related to questions about abortion:

Do you favor laws that would make it more difficult for a woman to get an abortion, favor laws that would make it easier to get an abortion, or should no change be made to existing law?

More Difficult: 29% (down 9 points from 2021)

Easier: 33% (up 15 points)

Same: 28% (down 1 point)

Do you think abortions should be legal/illegal under any circumstances, or legal only under certain circumstance?

Illegal: 14% (down 12 points from 2021)

Depends: 58% (up 7 points)

Legal: 21% (up 5 points)

Don't know: 7% (no change)

Additionally, 74% indicated they think abortion should be legal when the pregnancy is no longer viable or will not develop into a live birth. When asked if there was a chance of a serious defect in the baby, 54% indicated they thought an abortion should be legal. Fully 78% indicated they thought an abortion should be legal when the mother's life was endangered and 71% thought it should be legal when her health was in danger. Finally, 70% said they thought it should not be illegal to drive to another state to get an abortion.

"In overturning *Roe v. Wade* earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court again permitted individual states to restrict, or even prohibit, legal abortion," Parry commented. "In Arkansas, that meant a host of laws that were essentially hypothetical suddenly went into effect, including a ban on the procedure unless it is necessary to save the pregnant woman's life."

"Research long has shown that most people's views are far more nuanced than political rhetoric captures," Parry continued, "and that's what we see here. Only 1 in 6 Arkansans supports wholesale prohibition, with strong majorities supporting additional exceptions for circumstances like fetal anomalies, rape (including incest), and threats to the woman's physical health."

The poll was conducted through 801 telephone interviews with randomly selected adult Arkansans between Oct. 13 and Oct. 31. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percent.

The full 2022 Arkansas Poll Summary Report, protocols and historic outcomes can be found at the [Arkansas Poll web page](#).

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RELATED WEB SITES (as many as needed):

[The Arkansas Poll] – <https://fulbright.uark.edu/departments/political-science/partners/arkansas-poll.php>

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