In the interest of accountability for polls and pollsters, we try to catalog the Arkansas Poll’s track record. While it is not our primary aim to be in the election prediction business, the ArkPoll team has tested – directly or indirectly – 35 statewide elections; we’ve blown five.

An interesting pattern emerges in the table presented below: generally, the lower the profile (“salience”) the item and/or the more buried the details in the ballot title, the more likely we are to be off/wrong and by wide margins. A particularly good (or bad) example is Initiated Act 1 of 2008. The explanation for that flip is multi-parted but, chiefly, opponents effectively made it a referendum on gays and lesbians only whereas we asked about the referendum’s actual language: “cohabitating couples.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Measure/Election | ArkPoll[[1]](#footnote-1) | Election | Diff.[[2]](#footnote-2) | Diff.[[3]](#footnote-3) | Right? |
|  |  | Y | N | Y | N |  |  |  |
| 2016 | Trump vote |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 51 | 31 | 61 | 34 |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 59 | 36 |  |  | -2 | 23/27 | Y |
| 2016 | Boozman vote |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 47 | 29 | 60 | 36 |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 61 | 38 |  |  | 1 | 23/22 | Y |
| 2014 | Cotton vote |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 49 | 36 | 57 | 39 |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 57 | 43 |  |  | 0 | 14/18 | Y |
| 2014 | Hutchinson vote |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 50 | 39 | 55 | 41 |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 56 | 44 |  |  | 1 | 12/14 | Y |
| 2014 | Minimum wage hike |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 69 | 24 | 66 | 34 |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 74 | 26 |  |  | 8 | 48/32 | Y |
| 2014 | Alcohol sales statewide |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 41 | 51 | 43 | 57 |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 45 | 55 |  |  | 2 | 10/14 | Y |
| 2014 | Ethics/term limits extension |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 27 | 59 | 53 | 48 |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 32 | 68 |  |  | -21 | -36/5 | N |
| 2012 | Romney vote | 53 | 34 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 58 | 31 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 64 | 34 | 61 | 35 | 3 | 30/26 | Y |
| 2012 | Highway sales tax | 51 | 44 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 53 | 42 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 56 | 44 | 58 | 42 | -2 | 12/16 | Y |
| 2012 | Medical Marijuana | 44 | 52 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 43 | 53 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 45 | 55 | 49 | 51 | -4 | 10/2 | Y |
| 2011 | Road bonds | 63 | 28 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 65 | 26 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 71 | 29 | 81 | 19 | 10 | 42/62 | Y |
| 2010 | Boozman vote | 48 | 36 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* | 54 | 35 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *Very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 61 | 39 | 58 | 37 | 3 | 22/21 | Y |
| 2008 | Act 1: adoption and fostering by cohabitators | 38 | 55 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 37 | 55 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only**(minus dk/refused)* | 41 | 59 | 57 | 43 | -16 | -18/14 | N |
|  | Amendment 3: lottery | 64 | 33 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 63 | 34 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only**(minus dk/refused)* | 65 | 35 | 63 | 37 | 2 | 30/26 | Y |
|  | McCain vote | 49 | 36 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 51 | 36 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only**(minus dk/refused)* | 60 | 41 | 59 | 39 | 1 | 19/20 | Y |
| 2006 | Beebe vote | 49 | 36 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 51 | 38 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only**(minus dk/refused)* | 58 | 43 | 56 | 41 | 2 | 15/15 | Y |
|  | Question 1: college bonds | 72 | 20 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 72 | 21 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only**(minus dk/refused)* | 78 | 22 | 69 | 31 | 9 | 56/68 | Y |
|  | Ref A. 1: bingo, raffles | 67 | 27 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 68 | 28 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only**(minus dk/refused)* | 71 | 29 | 69 | 31 | 2 | 41/38 | Y |
| 2004 | A1: extend term limits | 27 | 66 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 27 | 68 | 30 | 70 | -3 | -41/-40 | Y |
|  | A2: development bonds | 76 | 15 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 76 | 15 | 64 | 36 | 12 | 61/28 | Y |
|  | A3: restrict marriage | 75 | 22 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 77 | 21 | 75 | 25 | 2 | 56/50 | Y |
|  | Raise school millage | 59 | 33 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 59 | 34 | 30 | 70 | 29 | 25/-40 | N |
|  | Lincoln approval | 55 | 19 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 57 | 21 | 56 | 44 | 1 | 36/12 | Y |
|  | Bush vote | 47 | 40 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 50 | 41 | 54 | 45 | 4 | 9/9 |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* *(minus dk/refused)* | 53 | 44 | 54 | 45 | -1 | 9/9 | Y |
| 2002 | A1: Secret ballot | 90 | 6 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 91 | 6 | 57 | 43 | 34 | 85/14 | Y |
|  | A2: Executive reform | 60 | 31 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 60 | 32 | 45 | 55 | 15 | 28/-10 | N |
|  | A3: Drop sales tax on groceries and medicines | 39 | 57 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 38 | 59 | 39 | 61 | -1 | -21/-22 | Y |
|  | Increase animal cruelty penalties | 65 | 30 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 63 | 33 | 38 | 62 | 25 | 30/-24 | N |
|  | Hutchinson approval | 46 | 29 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 49 | 33 | 46 | 54 | 3 | 16/8 | Y |
|  | Huckabee approval | 50 | 35 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *very likely voters only* | 50 | 40 | 53 | 47 | -3 | 10/6 | Y |
| 2000 | A1: Redevel’mt districts | 65 | 23 | 54 | 46 | 11 | 42/8 | Y |
|  | A2: Property tax credit | 65 | 28 | 63 | 37 | 2 | 37/26 | Y |
|  | A3: Judicial reform | 46 | 34 | 56 | 44 | -10 | 12/12 | Y |
|  | Tobacco settlement | 71 | 20 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *intended voters only* | 75 | 21 | 64 | 36 | 11 | 54/28 | Y |
|  | State lottery/casinos | 46 | 49 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *intended voters only* | 44 | 53 | 36 | 64 | 8 | -9/-28 | Y |
|  | Bush favorable | 48 | 40 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | *intended voters only* | 49 | 40 | 51 | 46 | -2 | 9/5 | Y |

1. Note that, unless otherwise noted, the sum of the first two columns fall short of 100% because of “don’t know/refused” responses. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ArkPoll (% voting yes or for candidate named) – Election (% voting yes or for candidate named) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ArkPoll margin /Actual margin [↑](#footnote-ref-3)