

University of Iowa Hawkeye Poll – Methodology

Oct. 31, 2012

October 2012 poll of Iowa respondents

Sample: 320 Iowans, margin of error plus or minus 5.6%

The Hawkeye Poll was conducted by telephone with live callers from Oct. 18-27, 2012. The poll is conducted by the Hawkeye Poll Cooperative, comprised of UI faculty and students in the University of Iowa Department of Political Science. The faculty adviser for the poll is UI Associate Professor of Political Science Frederick Boehmke. The poll is a teaching, research, and service project of the UI Department of Political Science in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). CLAS, the Office of the Provost, and the Department of Political Science fund the poll.

The research team utilized the facilities of the Social Science Research Center, directed by UI Sociology Professor Kevin Leicht, to design the survey and conduct call sessions. The team programmed the survey for use with WinCATI, a questionnaire interface created by Sawtooth Technologies, and calls were made with the automatic dialing feature.

Respondent Identification: An initial attempt was made on answering the phone to reach the “youngest male who is 18 years or older.” Alternatively, a female age 18 or older was interviewed. All who stated they were over age 18 and willing to participate in the survey were included.

Likely Voters: The respondents were asked if they were planning on voting in the upcoming presidential election. Ninety-six percent of the respondents said that they were planning on voting in the election. Only 4 percent of the respondents said that they were not planning on voting in the 2012 election.

Sample: Respondents were drawn at random from a random sample of 4,000 residential phone numbers for Iowa. This list was purchased from an independent company.

To compensate for the prevalence of female respondents in past surveys, the interviewers screened potential respondents by gender, following procedures used by other major survey operations. They first asked to speak to the youngest male at home who was 18 years of age or older and a registered voter. If no male was present, the interviewer asked to speak with the oldest female at home who was 18 years of age or older and a registered voter.

The research team assigned disposition codes in accordance with the AAPOR’s definitions and coding scheme. Surveys were automatically marked complete; interviewers could not assign this disposition. For surveys that were broken off in the middle of call, interviewers immediately rescheduled a callback for later in the calling period. If an interviewer could not reach a potential respondent (no answer/answering machine/busy signal), callbacks were made up to five more times.

Interviewers: Students from four undergraduate courses in political science were trained to interview respondents in two hour sessions over the course of four days. These individuals participated in a training regimen where each was led screen by screen through the survey instrument and made practice calls. Additionally, the interviewers were educated in techniques to maximize respondent cooperation. Many of these interviewers had previous experience conducting phone surveys for the University of Iowa Political Science department. These interviewers completed 320 interviews over the course of the study. The average completed interview lasted 18 minutes.

Respondents were given the option of completing the survey online. One Iowa respondent completed the online version.

Weighting: The survey results are weighted according to gender and age.

Response Rate: We calculate response rate as the number of completed interviews divided by the total number of households contacted containing an eligible respondent. Interviewers reached 1,856 individuals. Of these contacts, 320 individuals participated in the survey, giving a response rate of 17.2 percent of those qualified. There were 1,504 refusals.

Media Contacts: Frederick Boehmke, Hawkeye Poll, 319-335-2342 (office), 716-866-9277 (cell), frederick-boehmke@uiowa.edu; Kelli Andresen, University News Services, 319-384-0070 (office), 319-330-9951 (cell), kelli-andresen@uiowa.edu; Emily Schilling, Hawkeye Poll, 319-759-0859 (cell), 319-335-3844 (office), emily-schilling@uiowa.edu

