



# 2018 Illinois Poll of Registered Voters ages 25+: Opinions on Current State Fiscal Problems

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Illinois

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## **Acknowledgments**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2018, a bipartisan Illinois budget agreement was signed into law. While the budget agreement provided a positive step forward for Illinois taxpayers, a good deal of uncertainty continues. As Illinois prepares for a gubernatorial election this November, candidates for Governor and the state legislature face deep fiscal challenges to restoring the state's financial health. These challenges include a current general funds bill backlog of \$7.5 billion (an increase of about \$1.4 billion since the fielding of this survey), over \$600 million in late payment interest penalties, over \$130 billion in unfunded public pension obligations and a \$1.2 billion deficit within the state's current fiscal year budget.<sup>1</sup> Data from this recent poll show that Illinois registered voters are angry about the state's current deficits and want their Governor to make long-term fiscal health a priority for Illinois now and in 2019.

### Some key findings from this survey include:

- Two-thirds (65%) of Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older rate their anger about Illinois' current fiscal situation as a '4' or a '5' on a scale of one to five ('5' meaning *extremely angry*). While at least sixty-two percent of Republican, Democrat, and Independent voters rate their anger as a '4' or a '5', Republican voters are significantly more likely than Democrat voters to express these levels of anger.
- Most (84%) of Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older 'agree' (strongly or somewhat) that the Governor and state legislature need to make addressing the state's billions of dollars in unpaid bills, unpaid additional interest, and unfunded pension obligations a top priority in 2019. A notable two-thirds (65%) say they 'strongly agree'. With at least 63 percent of voters across political parties, Republican, Democrat, and Independent voters alike say they 'strongly agree' that the state's critical debts need to be a top priority in 2019.
- Most (73%) of Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older have heard someone they know talk about leaving Illinois to live elsewhere and half (49%) have personally considered relocating. Top reasons for moving elsewhere include *lower taxes, lower cost-of-living, and better run state and local governments*.
- Nearly six in ten (59%) Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older 'support' a *change in the tax structure from a flat-tax structure to a graduated one* as a way to help solve the state's fiscal problems, with more Democrat than Republican or Independent voters supporting this change.
- Most (70%) 'oppose' taxing retirement income as a way to help solve the state's fiscal problems. While at least two-thirds of all registered voters across political parties oppose this proposal, Republican voters are significantly more likely than Democrats to 'oppose' *applying a state income tax to all retirement income* as a way to solve the state's fiscal problems.

AARP commissioned Alan Newman Research (ANR) to field this poll among registered voters ages 25 and older in Illinois in July 2018 on behalf of the AARP state office in Illinois. This survey gauged the opinions of registered voters residing in Illinois on the state economy, the state budget, the recently passed a budget agreement, and potential proposals to resolve the state's long-term financial problems. ANR completed a total of 1,202 telephone interviews (600 via landline and 602 via cell phone) yielding a maximum statistical error of  $\pm 2.8\%$  at the 95% level of confidence. Data are weighted by age and gender according to the February 2018 Illinois state voter database statistics (see full methodology on page 13 of this report).<sup>2</sup> Percentages reported in this summary may differ by one percent or less due to rounding of the exact numbers in a cell. Likewise, the percentages of some questions may exceed 100% due to rounding or multiple response question formats.

<sup>1</sup> Please go to <https://illinoiscomptroller.gov/financial-data/debt-transparency-reports-dtr/>

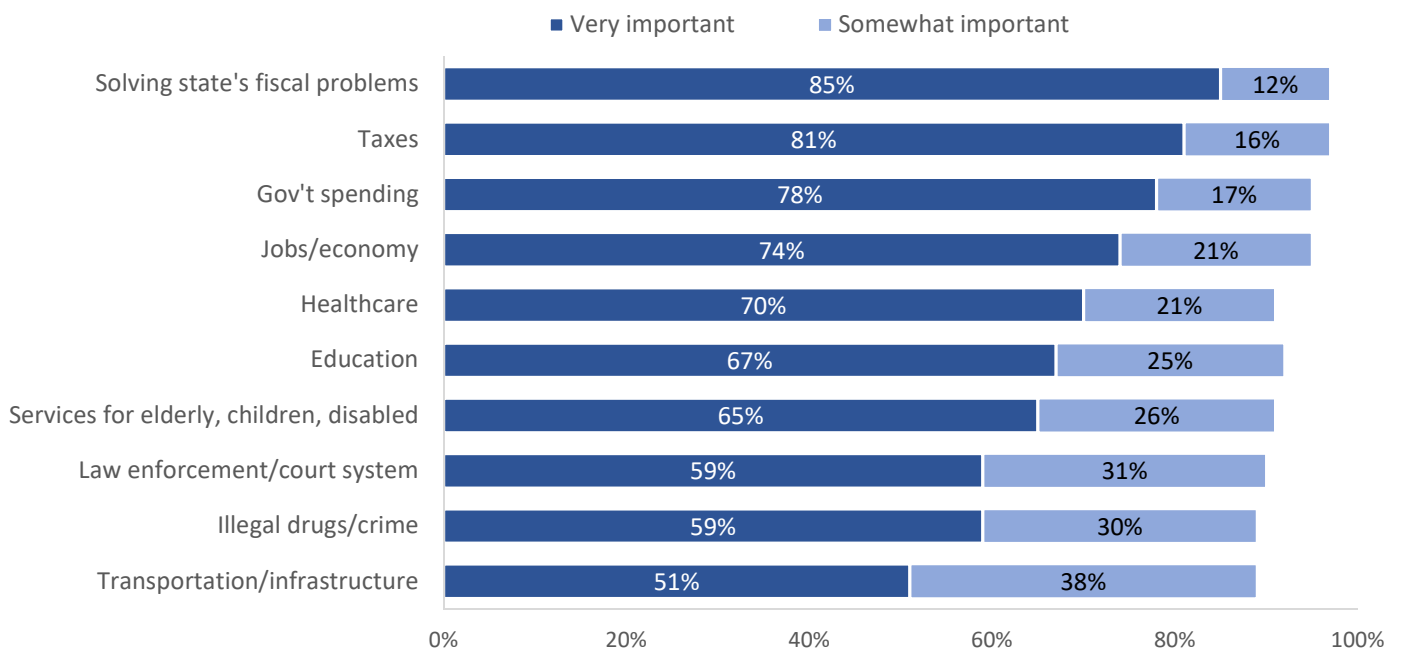
<sup>2</sup> Political party demographic differences are statistically significant by  $p < .01$  or  $p < .$  Please contact the author of this report for more information on the data and cross-tabulation of survey questions and other demographic variables.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### ILLINOIS' FISCAL PROBLEMS ARE TOP IMPORTANT ISSUES REGISTERED VOTERS WANT ADDRESSED

With a current state budget deficit of \$1.2 billion, the state's fiscal problems are well known among registered voters in the state.<sup>3</sup> In fact, among a select list of possible state issues, most Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older indicate the *state's fiscal problems* as the top 'very important' issue for the Governor and state legislature to address. *Taxes, government spending, and jobs and the economy* are viewed as 'very important' issues by about three-quarters or more of registered voters, followed by health care, education, and services for the elderly, children and disabled. At least half view law enforcement and the court system, illegal crime and drugs, and infrastructure as 'very important' issues for the Governor and state legislature to address.

**Level of Importance:  
Select Issues Facing Governor and Legislature in Illinois**  
(n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)



#### Top Four Issues Viewed as Very Important by the Majority of Illinois Registered Voters in Each Political Party Group

While at least eight in ten Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older in each political party group view the top four issues as *very important*, some statistically significant differences are noted:

- Republican voters are significantly more likely than Democrat voters to view the *state's fiscal problems* (Republicans: 90%; Democrats: 82%; Independents: 87%) and more likely than both Democrat and Independent voter to view *taxes* as 'very important' issues for the Governor and legislature to address (Republicans: 85%; Democrats: 78%; Independents: 78%).
- Republican *and* Independent voters are significantly more likely than Democrat voters to view *state government spending* as a 'very important' issue (Republicans: 85%; Democrats: 72%; Independents: 82%).
- *Jobs and the economy* is a 'very important' issue among Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike (Republicans: 74%; Democrats: 77%; Independents: 71%).

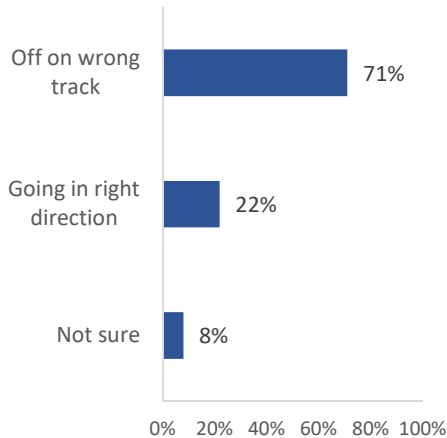
<sup>3</sup> Please see State of Illinois General Obligation Refunding Bonds report, p. 11

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/capitalmarkets/RecentBondSales/State%20of%20Illinois,%20General%20Obligation%20Refunding%20Bonds,%20Series%20of%20September%202018AB%20-%20Preliminary%20Official%20Statement.pdf#search=recent%20bond%20sales%20august%202018>

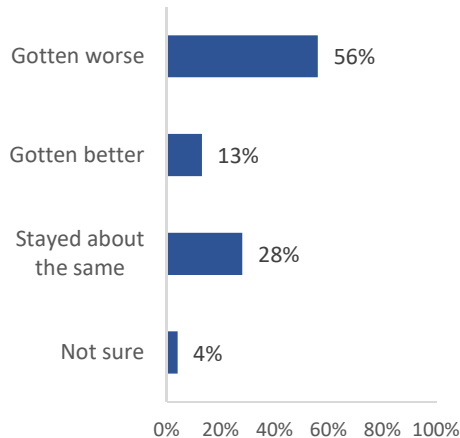
## ILLINOIS IS (STILL) ON THE WRONG TRACK

A recent statewide poll conducted by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute found that 84 percent of voters felt the state was off track and heading in the wrong direction.<sup>4</sup> A similar sentiment emerges in this survey: nearly three-quarters of all Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older think that Illinois is *off on the wrong track*, and over half think the state's economy has *gotten worse* since 2015. Additionally, few voters think their personal economic situation has *gotten better* with 78 percent saying their situation has *worsened* or *stayed the same*.

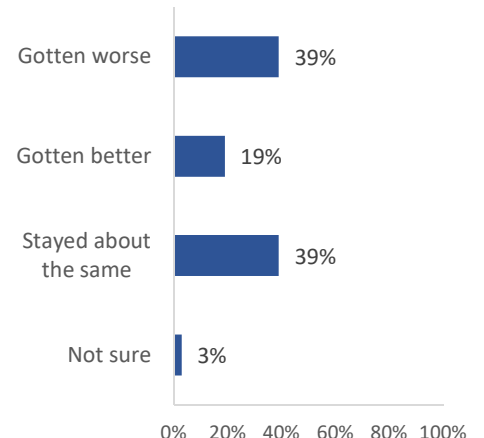
**General Direction of Things In Illinois**  
(n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)



**State of Illinois Economy Since 2015**  
(n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)



**Personal Economic Situation Since 2015**  
(n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)



### Republican, Democrat, and Independent Voters Equally Believe Things in Illinois Are *Off on The Wrong Track*

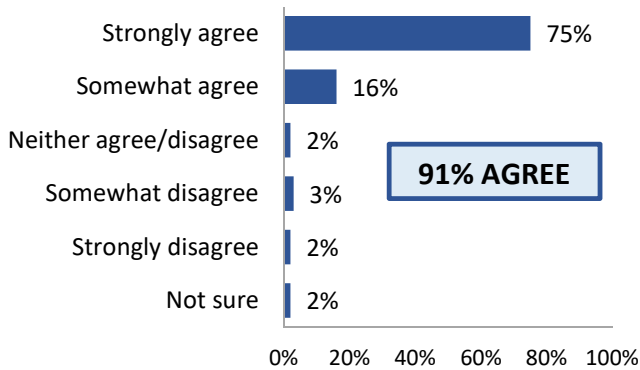
Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older are consistent across party affiliation and income groups in their view that things in the state have *gotten off on the wrong track* (Republicans: 70%; Democrats: 70%; Independents: 74%). However, Democrat voters are significantly more likely than Republican voters in Illinois to think that *the state economy has grown worse* in the past few years since 2015 (Republicans: 51%; Democrats: 61%; Independents: 53%) and that their *personal economic situation has grown worse* as well. (Republicans: 33%; Democrats: 43%; Independents: 39%).

<sup>4</sup> Paul Simon Public Policy Institute, Southern Illinois University, *Illinois Voters are Not Happy with the Direction of the State: Not Much Influenced by the Recent Tax Cuts* (March 2018) <https://paulsimoninstitute.siu.edu/common/documents/opinion-polling/simon-institute-poll/2018/3-5-18-simon-poll-Illinois-Voters-Not-Happy-Direction-of-the-State.pdf>

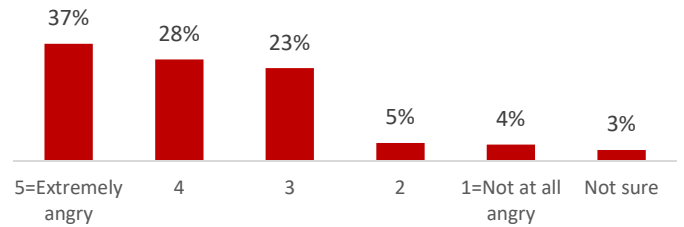
## REGISTERED VOTERS AGREE ILLINOIS HAS SERIOUS FISCAL PROBLEMS – AND THEY’RE ANGRY ABOUT IT

In fact, most (75%) Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older say they ‘strongly agree’ that the state has serious financial problems, and many are angry about the state’s current financial situation. When asked to rate their anger about this on a scale of one to five, with five being extremely angry, two-thirds (65%) rate their anger a ‘4’ or a ‘5’.

**Level of Agreement:**  
**Illinois Has Serious Fiscal Problems**  
(n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)



**Level of Anger:**  
**About State of Illinois’ Current Fiscal Situation**  
(n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)



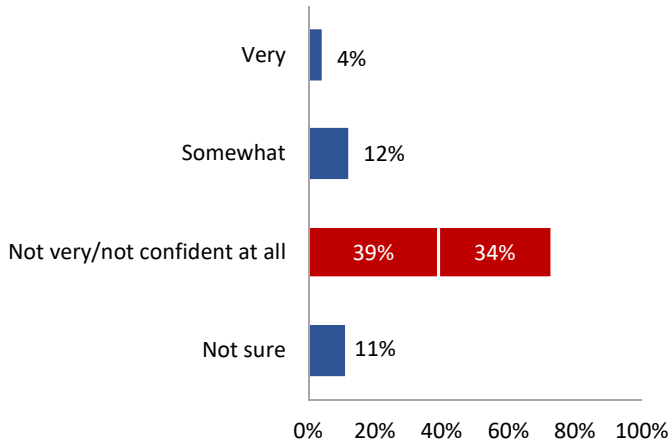
### Majority of Illinois Registered Voters in Each Party Strongly Agree the State Has Serious Fiscal Problems

Even though the majority of registered voters in Illinois ages 25 and older across party lines ‘strongly agree’ the state has serious financial problems, those who identify Republican are significantly more likely than Democrat voters to say they ‘strongly agree’ (Republicans: 81%; Democrats: 70%; Independents: 77%). Republican registered voters are also significantly more likely than Democrats to rate their anger as a ‘4’ or a ‘5’ (Republicans: 71%; Democrats: 62%; Independents: 64%).

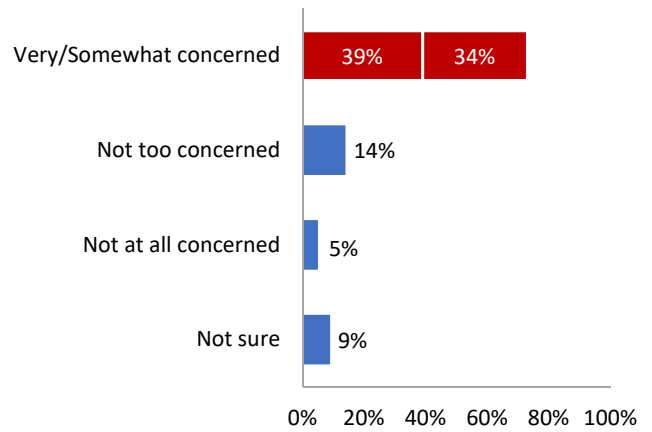
**REGISTERED VOTERS HAVE LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN AND HIGH CONCERNS ABOUT STATE BUDGET AGREEMENT**

In June of this year, a bi-partisan Illinois budget agreement was signed into law. While a significant event, registered voters in the state are wary of its impact on the state’s fiscal situation. Data from this survey show that most are not confident at all (73%) that the recent budget agreement will reduce the state’s fiscal problems and most are concerned (73%) that it could negatively influence their personal economic circumstances over the next few years.

**Level of Confidence:**  
**2018 State Budget Agreement Will Reduce Fiscal Problems**  
 (n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)



**Level of Concern:**  
**2018 State Budget Will Impact Personal Finances**  
 (n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)



**Low Confidence and High Concern Among The Majority of Registered Voters in Each Political Party Group**

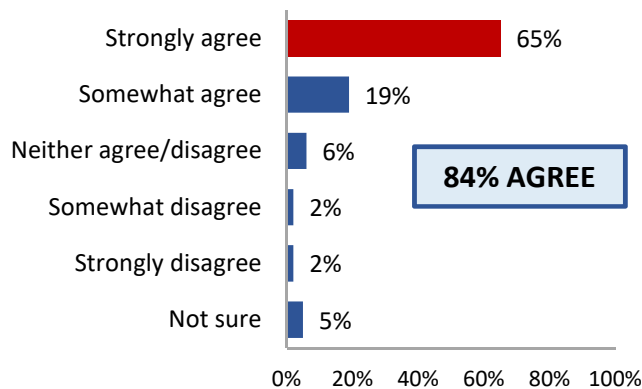
Slightly more Republican than Democrat registered voters in Illinois age 25 and older express low confidence (not very or not confident at all) in the ability of the recent state budget agreement to reduce any fiscal problems (Republicans: 77%; Democrats: 70%; Independents: 74%). And, voters are consistent across party lines in their level of high concern (very or somewhat) that the state budget agreement could negatively impact their own personal economic circumstances over the next few years (Republicans: 74%; Democrats: 75%; Independents: 71%).



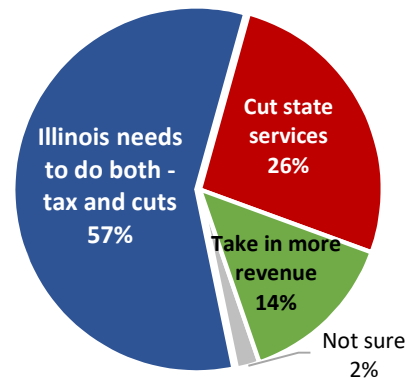
## STATE FISCAL PROBLEMS NEED TO BE A TOP PRIORITY FOR GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE IN 2019

Nearly two-thirds of Illinois registered voters report that they ‘strongly agree’ that the Governor and state legislature need to make addressing Illinois’ financial problems a top priority in 2019. Solving this issue will require the Governor and state legislature to consider many options and proposals. Among them will likely be cuts to some essential state services and programs as well as revenue proposals involving tax increases. Data from this survey show that well over half of all registered voters think ‘Illinois needs to do both – raise revenue and make cuts’. Still, just over one in four feel the problem can only be fixed by cutting state services and programs and about one in seven feel it can only be fixed by taking in more revenue through tax increases.

**Level of Agreement:  
Governor of Illinois and State Legislature Need to  
Make Addressing Major Expenses Top Priority in 2019**  
(n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)



**How Illinois Registered Voters Think  
State Fiscal Problems Can be Fixed**  
(n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)



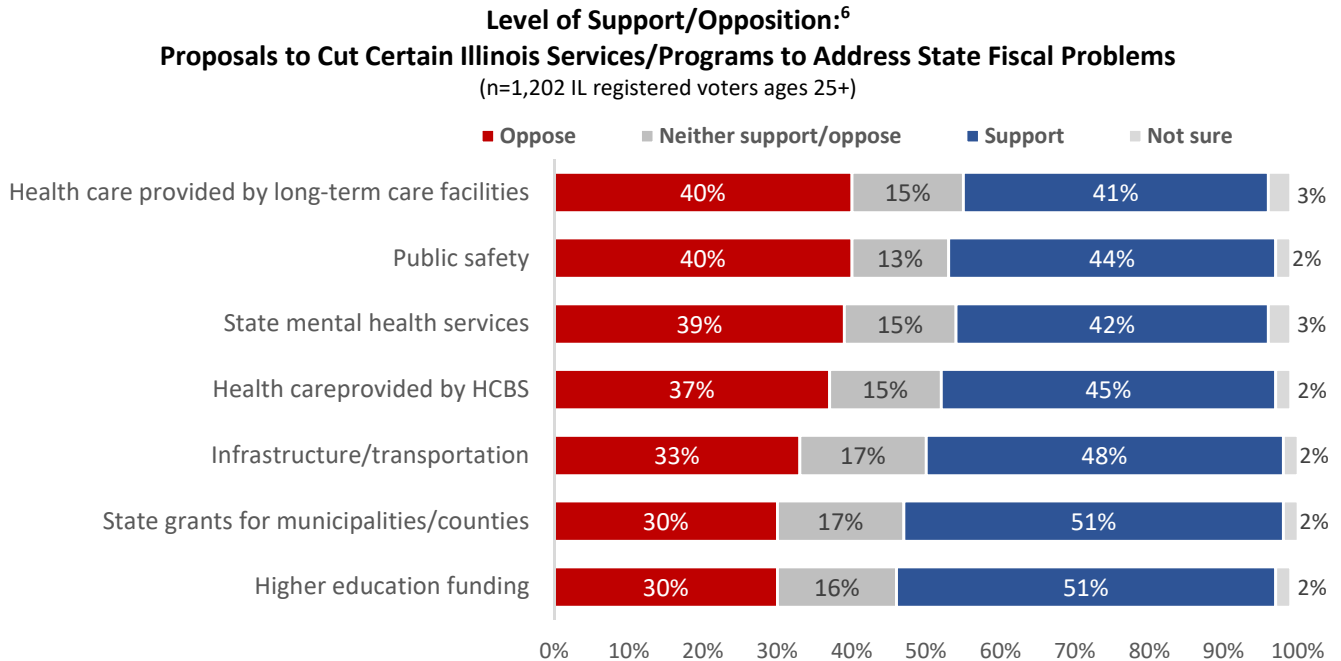
### Across Political Parties, Registered Voters in Illinois ‘Strongly Agree’ State’s Expenses Need to Be a Priority in 2019

With nearly two-thirds of registered Republican, Democrat, and Independent voters indicating they ‘strongly agree’ that the Governor and state legislature should make the state’s critical expenses a top priority in 2019, there are no significant differences between political parties (Republicans: 67%; Democrats: 65%; Independents: 63%). When it comes to how the state might solve its fiscal problems, Democrat voters are more likely than Republican or Independents to believe that Illinois needs to *both* cut services and raise revenue in order to fix the state’s fiscal problems (Republicans: 52%; Democrats: 64%; Independents: 54%).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Political party differences cannot be described here with respect to *cutting services* or *raising revenue* as the number of respondents in each party category is too small – less than 100 respondents in each cell.

## WHAT CUTS TO STATE SERVICES WILL REGISTERED VOTERS TOLERATE TO FIX ILLINOIS' FISCAL PROBLEMS?

Overall, Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older are tentative about potential state services or programs that could be cut to address the state's fiscal problems. When asked to consider seven areas where cuts could be made, voters are most **opposed** to cutting services in the following four areas: *health care services provided at long-term care (LTC) facilities, public safety services such as fire and police protection, state mental health services and health care services provided at home and community based services (HCBS)*. Still, roughly half indicate **support** for cuts to state services such as *infrastructure/transportation services, state grants for municipalities or counties for community programs, and higher education funding*. For each proposal, about one in six say they neither support or oppose.



### Registered Voters in Illinois Do Not Differ by Party in their Opposition or Support to Many Cost Cutting Proposals

Republicans, Democrats, and Independent registered voters in Illinois ages 25 and older are equally likely to be **opposed** to proposals of cutting *state health care services provided through long-term care services, public safety services, grants to municipalities/counties for community programs, and transportation and infrastructure* as ways to solve the Illinois' fiscal problems. On the other hand, registered voters also show no differences across party lines with respect to **support** for cutting *state health care services provided through long-term care services, mental health services, higher education grants, and transportation and infrastructure*.

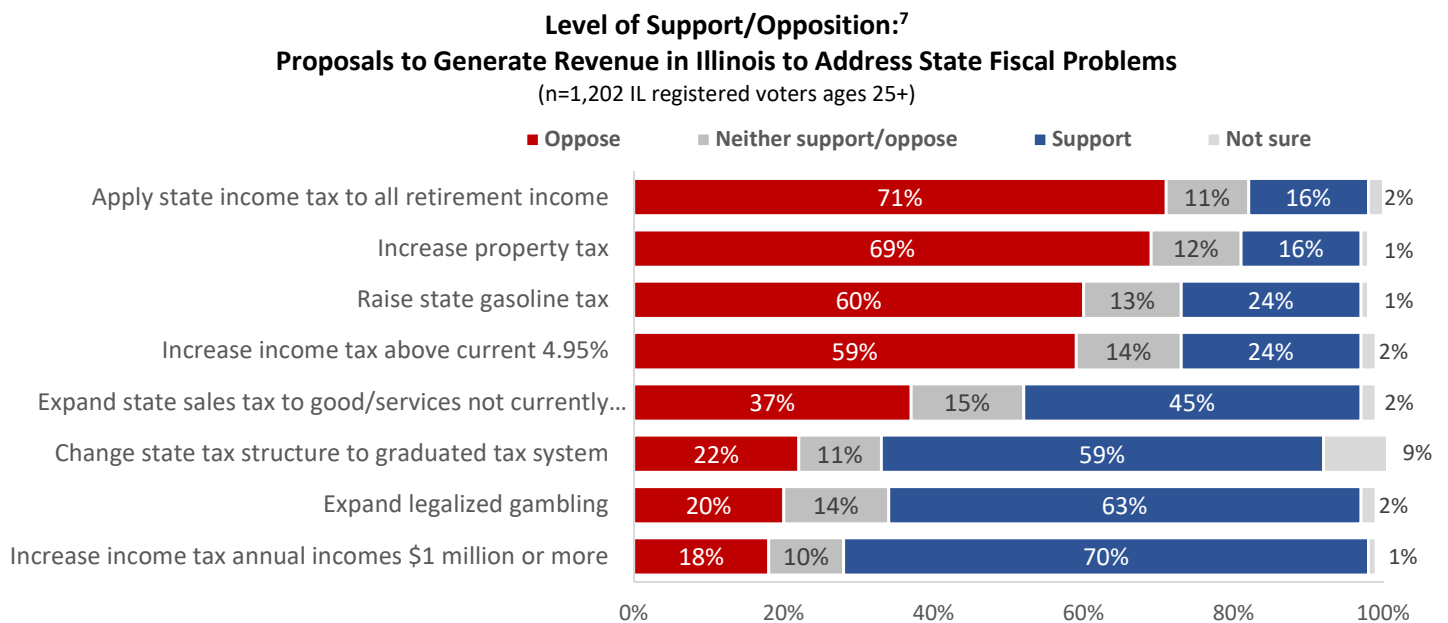
The disparity between political parties is apparent when it comes to **opposing** proposals to cut *health care services provided through home and community-based services* — Democrats and Independents are more likely than Republicans to oppose cuts to this area to help solve the state's fiscal problems. Democrats and Independent registered voters are significantly more likely than Republican registered voters to oppose cutting *mental health services* while Democrat voters are more likely than Republicans to oppose cutting *higher education funding*.

Democrat voters in Illinois ages 25 and older are significantly more likely than Independent voters to indicate **support** for cutting *public safety services such as fire and police protections*. Republican voters are significantly more likely than Independent voters to support cutting *grants for municipalities and counties to pay for senior centers, libraries, and parks and recreation services* (See Table 1 in Appendix A).

<sup>6</sup> Percent 'support' is the combined percent of respondents who 'strongly support' and 'somewhat' support; Percent 'oppose' is the combined percent of respondents who say 'strongly oppose' or 'somewhat oppose' See Question 15 a-g in annotated survey.

## WHICH REVENUE PROPOSALS WILL REGISTERED VOTERS TOLERATE TO FIX ILLINOIS' FISCAL PROBLEMS?

Data from this survey shows that Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older are more definitive in their support or opposition to revenue enhancing proposals than to service-cutting proposals as ways for the Governor and state legislature to address the state's fiscal problems. At least three in five voters **oppose** *taxing retirement income, increasing property taxes, raising the gasoline tax, and increasing the state income tax above the current rate of 4.95 percent* as ways to solve the state's fiscal problems. Voters are somewhat divided about *expanding the state sales tax to include consumer services not currently taxed such as hair salons or dry cleaning services*. But, nearly three out of five Illinois registered voters indicate **support** for a *change in the tax structure from a flat-tax structure to a graduated one, expanding legalized gambling, and increasing the income tax on annual incomes of one million dollars or more*. As seen in their opinions regarding possible cuts to certain state services, a notable number of voters indicate neither support nor opposition to each of the possible ways to raise revenue tested in the survey.



### Political Party Makes a Difference among Registered Voters in Illinois Around Revenue Generating Proposals

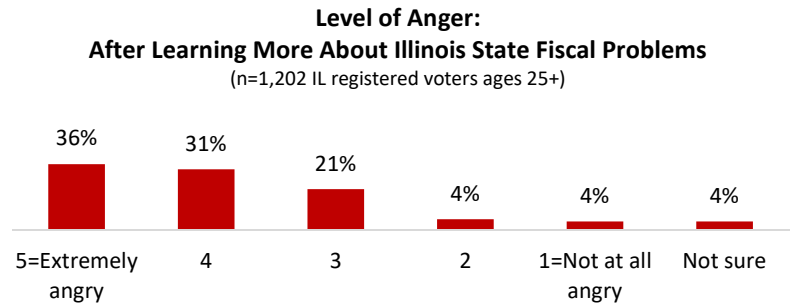
At least half of all Republican, Democrat, and Independent registered voters in Illinois ages 25 and older indicate **opposition** to four key revenue enhancing proposals that could negatively affect their own personal economic circumstances. Data from this survey show that Republican registered voters are significantly more likely than Democrats or Independents to oppose *raising the gasoline tax* but significantly more likely than Democrats to oppose *applying state income tax to all retirement income*. Both Republican and Independent voters are more likely than Democrats to oppose *increasing property taxes*, and to oppose *increasing income taxes above the current rate of 4.95%*.

Across party lines, at least half of registered voters in Illinois in each political party group show **support** for revenue proposals that probably will not affect most of them personally. Democrat voters are more likely than either Republican or Independent voters to support *an increased state tax on all personal income of \$1 million or more per year* and a *change to the current state tax structure from a flat-tax to a graduated income tax structure*. Republican and Democrat registered voters are significantly more likely than those who say they are Independent voters to support *expanding the consumer sales tax to include services currently not taxed such as hair salons or dry cleaning services*. Registered voters in Illinois across party lines are equally likely to support *expanding legalized gambling* as a way to raise revenue to help solve the state fiscal problems (See Table 2 in Appendix A).

<sup>7</sup> Percent 'support' is the combined percent of respondents who 'strongly support' and 'somewhat' support; Percent 'oppose' is the combined percent of respondents who say 'strongly oppose' or 'somewhat oppose' See Question 16 a-g in annotated survey.

## STILL ANGRY AFTER LEARNING MORE ABOUT STATE FISCAL PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Since responding to an initial question asking to rate their anger about Illinois’ fiscal problems, respondents were subsequently asked a number of contextual questions about the issue. To broadly gauge the impact of learning more about the issue through the survey questions, respondents were asked to rate their level of anger again about the state’s financial problems. Indeed, though not statistically significant, registered voter’s ‘anger’ as rated a combined ‘5’ or ‘4’ rose 2 percentage points (from 65% to 67%).



### At Least Six in Ten Illinois Registered Voters in Each Party Are Still Angry *After* Learning More About Fiscal Problems

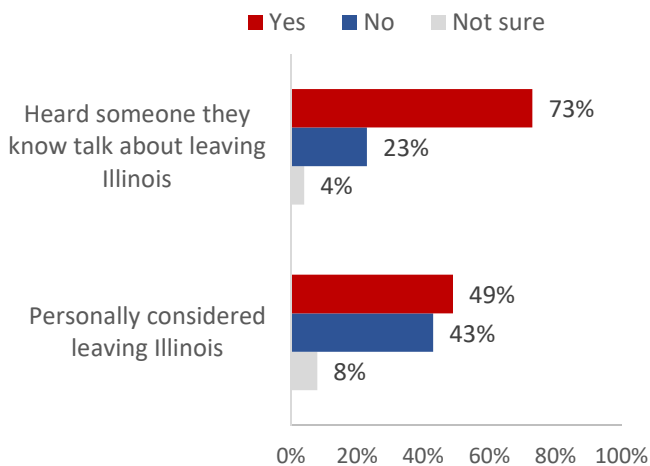
While respondents show a 2 percent increase in their combined rating of anger as a ‘5’ or a ‘4’ after a series of questions about Illinois’ fiscal problems and possible ways to solve them, political party differences show the same trend as before. Significantly more Republican registered voters than Democrats or Independents express high levels of anger about the states fiscals problems (Republicans: 75%; Democrats: 63%; Independents: 62%).

## Illinois State or Local Government Among the Top Reasons For Registered Voters To Leave The State

Between July 1, 2016, and July 1, 2017, Illinois had the largest numeric population decline, losing 33,703 people, marking the fourth consecutive year of population loss in the state.<sup>8</sup> While the cause of this decline has many and varied expert theories and facts to explain it, data from this survey show that most Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older have heard someone they know talk about leaving Illinois to live elsewhere and half have personally considered leaving. Among those registered voters who have personally considered moving to another state, at least eight in ten say their reasons to relocate are lower taxes, a lower overall cost of living, and a better run state government.

### Heard Of Someone/Personally Considered Leaving Illinois

(n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)



### Reasons for Moving From Illinois To Reside in Another State<sup>9</sup>

(n=585 IL registered voters ages 25+ who personally considered relocating from IL)

Reason	Yes	No
<b>Lower taxes</b>	<b>88%</b>	9%
<b>Lower overall cost of living</b>	<b>84%</b>	14%
<b>Better run state or local government</b>	<b>80%</b>	14%
Better weather or climate	59%	36%
A safer community/lower crime rate	53%	41%
Better job opportunities	50%	42%
Family reasons	30%	65%
Health or health care reasons	29%	65%
Higher education opportunities	24%	67%
Primary or secondary schools	18%	73%
Other reason (specify)	8%	86%

<sup>8</sup> Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017, 2017 Population Estimates

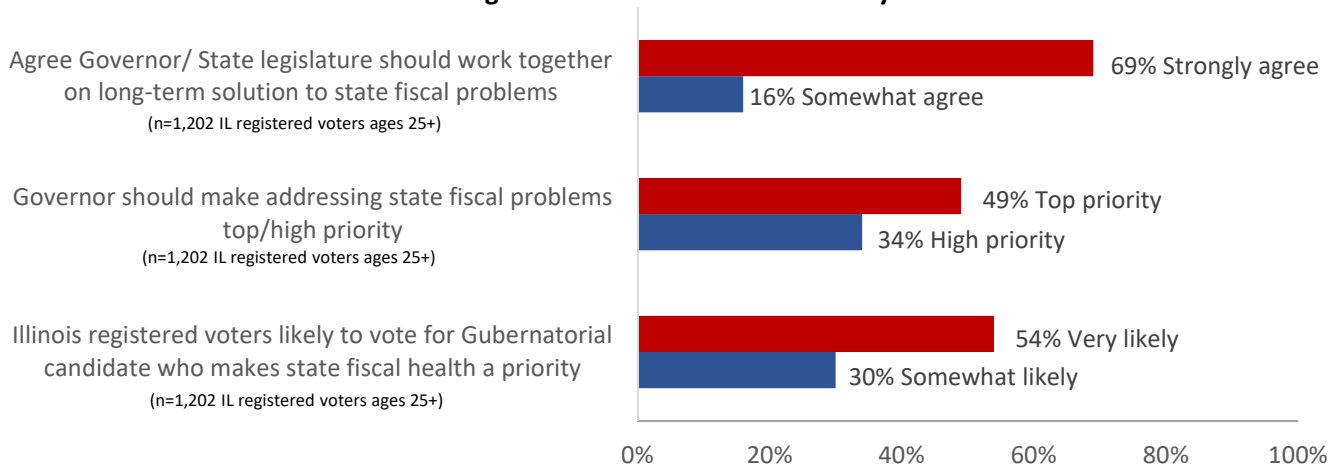
<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkml>

<sup>9</sup> not sure and refused are not shown in this graphic so the percent who say yes or no for each item will not equal 100% - See Q2A in annotated survey

## ILLINOIS GOVERNOR AND STATE LEGISLATURE MUST SWIFTLY APPROVE A LONG-TERM FISCAL SOLUTION

This year, 2018, is an important election year in Illinois in which the state government leaders will need to work together and find compromise to approve a comprehensive long-term solution to the state’s fiscal problems. Nearly all Illinois registered voters ages 25 and older ‘agree’ that the Governor and legislature should work together to establish economic stability in the state and most voters think restoring the state’s fiscal health should be a top or high priority for the Governor of Illinois. Most voters say they are ‘likely’ to vote for a gubernatorial candidate who makes Illinois’ current and long-term fiscal health a priority.

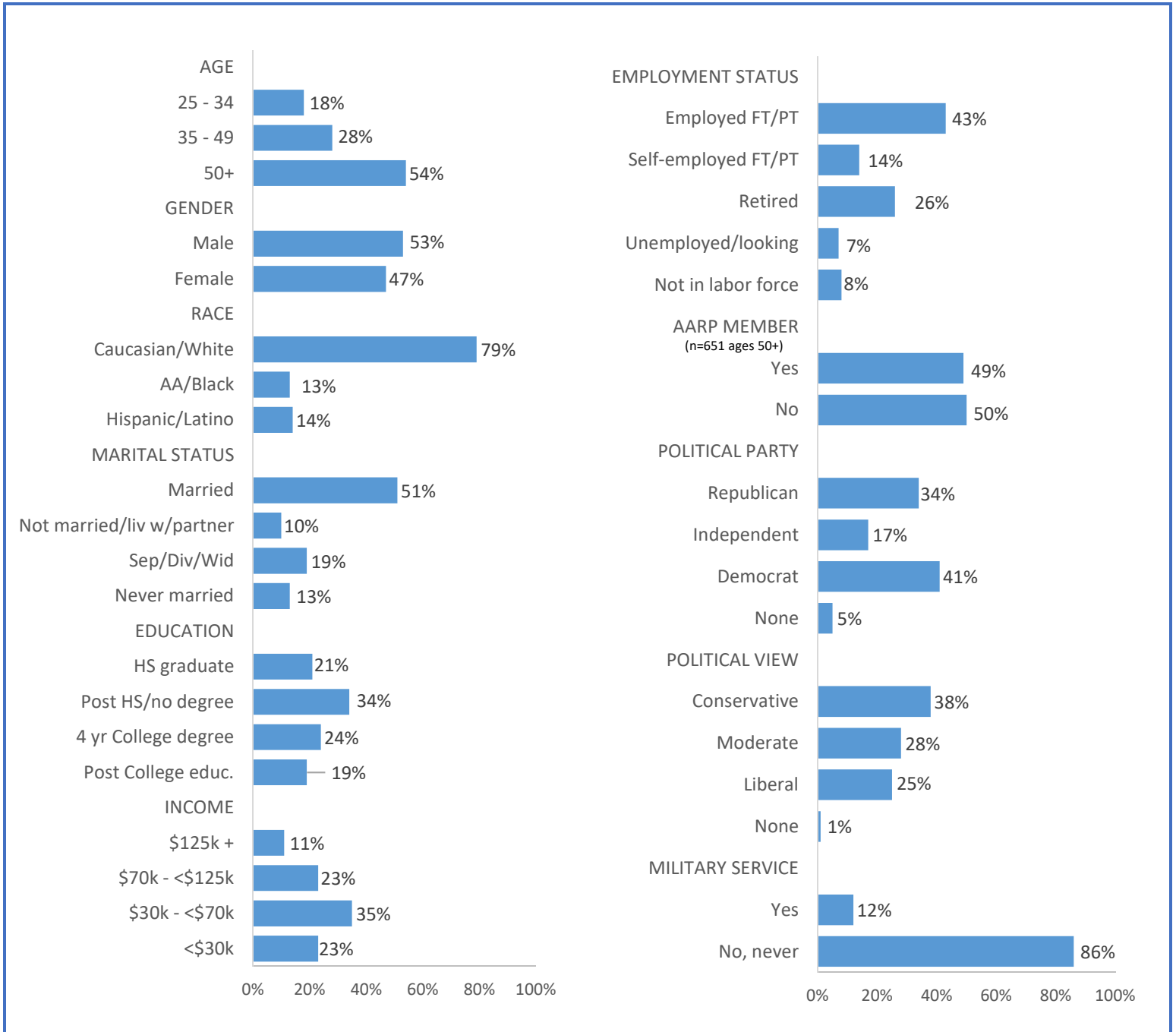
### Registered Voters in Illinois Want Governor and State Legislature to Focus on Restoring State’s Fiscal Health – And They’ll Vote For It



#### At Least Half of all Illinois Registered Voters in Each Party say they are Very Likely to Vote For Governor in 2018

Republican registered voters in Illinois ages 25 and older are more likely than Democrat voters to ‘strongly agree’ that the Governor and state legislature should work together on a long-term solution to the state fiscal problems (Republicans: 75%; Democrats: 65%; Independents: 69%). Republican voters are also more likely than Democrats to believe the Governor should give ‘top priority’ to addressing the state’s fiscal problems (Republicans: 54%; Democrats: 47%; Independents: 48%). Democrat registered voters in Illinois are slightly more likely than Independent voters to say they are ‘very likely’ to vote for a gubernatorial candidate who makes the state’s fiscal health a priority (Republicans: 55%; Democrats: 58%; Independents: 49%).

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS: ILLINOIS REGISTERED VOTERS AGES 25+



## Appendix A

**Table 1.**

Possible Cuts to State Services to Address Illinois Fiscal Problems (n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)	SUPPORT			OPPOSE		
	POLITICAL PARTY			POLITICAL PARTY		
	REPUB (n=405)	DEM (n=486)	INDEP (n=204)	REPUB (n=405)	DEM (n=486)	INDEP (n=204)
Health care services via Long-term care	43%	43%	35%	36%	42%	44%
Public Safety services like fire and police	43%	48%	39%	42%	38%	42%
State mental health services	40%	44%	39%	34%	42%	46%
Health care services via HCBS	49%	44%	39%	30%	42%	41%
Infrastructure and transportation services	51%	49%	42%	31%	32%	37%
State grants for municipalities/counties	55%	50%	46%	26%	31%	32%
Higher education funding	54%	49%	50%	26%	34%	31%

\*tests of statistical significance at p<.01 and p<.05

**Table 2.**

Possible Ways to Raise Revenue to Address Illinois Fiscal Problems (n=1,202 IL registered voters ages 25+)	OPPOSE			SUPPORT		
	POLITICAL PARTY			POLITICAL PARTY		
	REPUB (n=405)	DEM (n=486)	INDEP (n=204)	REPUB (n=405)	DEM (n=486)	INDEP (n=204)
Apply state income tax to all retirement income	75%	66%	72%	15%	20%	13%
Increase property tax	76%	62%	71%	14%	22%	10%
Increase state income tax rate above current 4.95%	68%	50%	62%	20%	30%	21%
Raise state gasoline tax	66%	54%	55%	23%	27%	25%
Expand state sales tax to currently non-taxed services	40%	31%	40%	47%	50%	37%
Change to graduated income tax structure	30%	12%	26%	52%	68%	54%
Expand legalized gambling	21%	16%	27%	66%	65%	59%
Increase income tax on annual incomes of \$1 million or more	28%	9%	19%	60%	81%	67%

\*tests of statistical significance at p<.01 and p<.05

## METHODOLOGY

In July 2018, AARP engaged Alan Newman Research (ANR) to conduct a quantitative research study among registered voters in Illinois. Topics included the Illinois state economy, opinions regarding the state budget and fiscal situation, the recently passed balanced budget agreement, and opinions regarding proposed ways to resolve Illinois state fiscal issues for the long-term. ANR completed a total of 1,202 telephone interviews (600 via landline telephones and 602 via cell phone). Respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

- Age 25+
- Current resident of Illinois
- Current registered voter in Illinois

Both landline and cell phone sampling were used for this research. A total of 26,700 records were utilized. The total sample of 1,202 respondents yields a maximum statistical error of  $\pm 2.8\%$  at the 95% level of confidence. (This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results obtained in the sample would be within  $\pm 2.8$  percentage points of the results obtained had everyone in the population been interviewed.) The survey was launched on July 19, 2018 and closed on July 30, 2018.

Percentages reported in this summary may differ by one percent or less due to rounding of the exact numbers in a cell. Likewise, the percentages of some questions may exceed 100% due to rounding or multiple response question formats. Statistical tests have been performed to determine whether observed differences are statistically significant. All data have been weighted by age and gender according to February 2018 Illinois state voter database statistics. Additional weights for political party have also been provided, according to geographic distribution and Illinois statewide voter rolls.

FINAL CALL DISPOSITION REPORT	
FULL COMPLETES	1202
SCHEDULED_CALLBACKS	3296
CALLBACK_NON_SPECIFIC	5156
SOFT REFUSAL	1251
HARD REFUSAL	135
TERMINATED_EARLY	36
GOVERNMENT_BUSINESS	112
LANGUAGE_DEAF	57
SCREENED_OUT	76
OVER_QUOTA	0
NON_WORKING_NUMBERS	3316
BUSYS_UNCONFIRMED	0
BUSYS_CONFIRMED_HH	232
NO_ANSWERS_UNCONFIRMED	0
NO_ANSWERS_CONFIRMED_HH	3154
ANSWERING_MACHINE_SERVICE_UNCONFIRMED	0
ANSWERING_MACHINE_SERVICE_CONFIRMED_HH	8634
PRIVACY MANAGER	25
FAX	18
TOTAL	26700

FINAL PRODUCTION SUMMARY	
NUMBER OF FULL COMPLETES	1202
TOTAL NUMBERS RELEASED	26700
COOPERATION RATE (COOP3)	47.3%
REFUSAL RATE (REF3)	7.0%
RESPONSE RATE (RR3) <sup>10</sup>	5.3%

<sup>10</sup> This response rate formula (RR3) requires the calculation of 'e' which is the proportion of cases of unknown eligibility that are estimated to actually be eligible. The following formula was used to determine 'e':  $e = \text{Complete} + \text{Terminate Early} + \text{Confirmed Household No Answer, Busy, and Answering Machine} + \text{Callbacks} + \text{Language Barrier} / \text{Complete} + \text{Terminate Early} + \text{Confirmed Household No Answer, Busy, and Answering Machine} + \text{Callbacks} + \text{Language Barrier} + \text{Government/Business} + \text{Non-Working} + \text{Screened Out} + \text{Over Quota}$ .



## ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE

### 2018 ILLINOIS POLL OF REGISTERED VOTERS AGES 25+: OPINIONS ON CURRENT STATE FISCAL PROBLEMS

**Market: Statewide Illinois**

**Screening Criteria: Age 25+, current resident of Illinois, registered voter in Illinois**

**Cell phone/landline mix**

**19 minutes**

**n=1,200, Margin of statistical error = ± 2.8%**

*\*\*All data have been weighted by age and gender according to February 2018 Illinois state voter database statistics\*\**

S1. What is your age?

%	n=1202
0	Under 25
18	25-34
18	35-44
19	45-54
20	55-64
19	65-74
6	75-84
1	85+
0	Refused

S2. Are you registered to vote in the state of Illinois?

%	n=1202
100	Yes
0	No
0	Not sure
0	Would rather not say/ refused

S3. How often would you say you vote in state and local elections (for Governor, congressional representatives, Mayors)? Would you say you always vote in state and local elections, nearly always vote, sometimes vote, seldom vote, or have never voted in a state or local election?

%	n=1202
49	Always
28	Nearly always
13	Sometimes
5	Seldom
3	Never
1	Not sure
1	Would rather not say/ refused

S4. And did you vote in the 2014 gubernatorial election for Governor of Illinois?

%	n=1202
78	Yes, voted
17	No, did not vote
4	Not sure
2	Would rather not say/ refused

S5. How likely are you to vote in this year's election for governor of Illinois? Will you definitely vote, probably vote, probably not vote, or definitely not vote?

%	n=1202
72	Definitely will vote
18	Probably will vote
4	Probably will not vote
1	Definitely will not vote
3	Not sure
1	Would rather not say/ refused

Q1. There has been a lot of talk in the news recently about people leaving Illinois to live elsewhere. In the past year, have you...?

n=1202	Yes %	No %	Not sure %	Refused %
Q1_A. Heard someone you know talk about leaving Illinois	73	23	4	<1
Q1_B. Personally considered leaving Illinois	49	43	8	1

Q2. [IF Q1\_B=Yes, ASK] Which of the following best describes your reason for moving from Illinois and residing in another state? Is it for...?

n=585	Yes %	No %	Not sure %	Refused %
Q2_A. Better job opportunities	50	42	7	1
Q2_B. Better weather or climate	59	36	5	0
Q2_C. Lower taxes	88	9	3	0
Q2_D. Primary or secondary schools	18	73	8	1
Q2_E. Higher education opportunities	24	67	9	1
Q2_F. Health or health care reasons	29	65	6	<1
Q2_G. A safer community or lower crime rate	53	41	6	1
Q2_H. Family reasons – be with or live closer to other family members	30	65	5	<1
Q2_I. Better run state or local government	80	14	6	<1
Q2_J. Lower overall cost of living	84	14	2	<1
Q2_K. Other reason (specify)	8	86	6	<1

Q3. Now I'm going to read a list of some issues facing the Governor and legislature in Illinois. After I read each, please tell me if you think that issue is very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not at all important for the governor and legislature to address.

Q3\_A. Solving the state's fiscal or financial problems

%	n=1202
85	Very important
12	Somewhat important
1	Not that important
1	Not at all important
1	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q3\_B. Jobs and the economy

%	n=1202
74	Very important
21	Somewhat important
3	Not that important
1	Not at all important
1	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q3\_C. Education

%	n=1202
67	Very important
25	Somewhat important
5	Not that important
2	Not at all important
1	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q3\_D. Healthcare

%	n=1202
70	Very important
21	Somewhat important
6	Not that important
2	Not at all important
1	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q3\_E. Law enforcement and court system

%	n=1202
59	Very important
31	Somewhat important
8	Not that important
1	Not at all important
1	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q3\_F. Illegal drugs and crime

%	n=1202
59	Very important
30	Somewhat important
7	Not that important
2	Not at all important
1	Not sure
1	Refused

Q3\_G. Government spending (IF ASKED STATE OR FEDERAL, SAY 'STATE')

%	n=1202
78	Very important
17	Somewhat important
3	Not that important
<1	Not at all important
1	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q3\_H. Taxes

%	n=1202
81	Very important
16	Somewhat important
2	Not that important
1	Not at all important
1	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q3\_I. Essential services for the elderly, children, people with disabilities, low-income families

%	n=1202
65	Very important
26	Somewhat important
6	Not that important
1	Not at all important
1	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q3\_J. Transportation and infrastructure like public transit, highways, bridges, railways, and harbors

%	n=1202
51	Very important
38	Somewhat important
9	Not that important
2	Not at all important
1	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q3\_K. Other issue [Volunteered – specify]

%	n=269
67	Very important
12	Somewhat important
2	Not that important
4	Not at all important
12	Not sure
4	Refused

Q4. Do you feel that things in Illinois are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten off on the wrong track? And do you feel strongly about that or not?

%	n=1202
5	Going in right direction – yes, strongly
16	Going in right direction – no, not strongly
59	Off on wrong track – yes, strongly
12	Off on wrong track – no, not strongly
8	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q5. In the past 3 years, or since 2015, do you think **the Illinois state economy** has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same as it is now?

%	n=1202
13	Gotten better
56	Gotten worse
28	Stayed about the same
4	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q6. In the past 3 years, or since 2015, do you think **your personal economic situation** has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same as it is now?

%	n=1202
19	Gotten better
39	Gotten worse
39	Stayed about the same
3	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q7. Do you agree or disagree that Illinois has serious fiscal (or financial) problems? Is that strongly or somewhat?

%	n=1202
75	Strongly agree
16	Somewhat agree
3	Somewhat disagree
2	Strongly disagree
2	Neither agree or disagree
2	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q8. On a scale of 1 to 5, where one means that you are not at all angry and five means that you are extremely angry, how angry are you about the state of Illinois' current fiscal situation?

%	n=1202
4	1 – Not at all angry
5	2
23	3
28	4
37	5 – Extremely angry
3	Not sure
1	Refused

Q9. In June this year, the state of Illinois passed a balanced budget agreement. Before this survey, how much, if anything, have you heard about the state’s new balanced budget agreement? Would you say you’ve heard a lot, some, a little, or nothing at all?

%	n=1202
9	A lot
24	Some
36	A little
27	Nothing at all
4	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q10. Based on what you know about the current state fiscal situation, how confident are you that Illinois’ recent budget agreement for fiscal year 2019 will reduce the state’s fiscal problems?

%	n=1202
4	Very confident
12	Somewhat confident
39	Not very confident
34	Not confident at all
11	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q11. Based on what you know about the current state fiscal situation, how concerned are you that the state’s recent budget agreement for 2019 could negatively impact **your personal economic circumstances** over the next few years? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

%	n=1202
34	Very concerned
39	Somewhat concerned
14	Not too concerned
5	Not at all concerned
9	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q13. With a budget agreement in place, Illinois will continue to face over \$6.6 billion in unpaid bills to state agencies with \$700 million additional interest for late payments that provide essential services to children, seniors, and people living with disabilities—\$400 million in back-pay to state employees, and over \$138 billion in long-term unfunded pension obligations. Do you agree or disagree that the Governor and state legislature should make addressing these expenses a top priority in 2019? And do you strongly or somewhat [agree/disagree]?<sup>11</sup>

%	n=1202
65	Strongly agree
19	Somewhat agree
6	Neither agree/ disagree
2	Somewhat disagree
2	Strongly disagree
5	Not sure
1	Refused

Q14. As the Governor and legislature work to address these long-term fiscal problems, which statement best represents your view?

%	n=1202
14	The problem can only be fixed by taking in more revenue, such as a tax increase
26	The problem can only be fixed by cutting state services and programs
57	Illinois needs to do both – raise revenue and make cuts
2	Not sure
1	Refused

Q15. One approach to addressing Illinois’ long-term fiscal problems is to make significant cuts to certain state services and programs. After I read some proposals, please tell me if you support or oppose the state cutting that service to address the state’s fiscal issues. Let’s begin: Do you support or oppose the state cutting...? *Is that strongly or somewhat?*

Q15\_A. Health care services provided at home and in the community

%	n=1202
26	Strongly support
19	Somewhat support
15	Neither support/ opposed
14	Somewhat oppose
23	Strongly oppose
2	Not sure
1	Refused

<sup>11</sup> At the time of this survey, the Stat of Illinois Comptroller reported an estimated general funds bill backlog of about \$6.6 billion. This site updates daily. See <https://illinoiscomptroller.gov/financial-data/debt-transparency-reports-dtr/>



Q15\_B. Health care services provided in long term care facilities

%	n=1202
24	Strongly support
17	Somewhat support
15	Neither support/ opposed
16	Somewhat oppose
24	Strongly oppose
3	Not sure
1	Refused

Q15\_C. State mental health services

%	n=1202
24	Strongly support
18	Somewhat support
15	Neither support/ opposed
15	Somewhat oppose
24	Strongly oppose
3	Not sure
1	Refused

Q15\_D. Higher education funding

%	n=1202
27	Strongly support
24	Somewhat support
16	Neither support/ opposed
12	Somewhat oppose
18	Strongly oppose
2	Not sure
1	Refused

Q15\_E. Public safety such as fire and police protection, courts, and jails

%	n=1202
25	Strongly support
20	Somewhat support
13	Neither support/ opposed
15	Somewhat oppose
25	Strongly oppose
2	Not sure
1	Refused

Q15\_F. State grants for municipalities and counties to pay for senior centers, libraries, parks, and recreation

%	n=1202
24	Strongly support
26	Somewhat support
17	Neither support/ opposed
16	Somewhat oppose
14	Strongly oppose
2	Not sure
1	Refused

Q15\_G. Transportation and infrastructure like public transit, highways, bridges, railways, and harbors

%	n=1202
21	Strongly support
27	Somewhat support
17	Neither support/ opposed
16	Somewhat oppose
17	Strongly oppose
2	Not sure
1	Refused

Q16. Another approach to addressing the state's long-term fiscal problems is to increase revenue. After I read some of these proposals, please tell me if you support or oppose that way of raising revenue to address the state's fiscal issues. *Is that strongly or somewhat?*

Q16\_A. Expand state sales tax to consumer services currently not taxed, like dry cleaning or hair salon services

%	n=1202
20	Strongly support
25	Somewhat support
15	Neither support/ opposed
13	Somewhat oppose
23	Strongly oppose
2	Not sure
1	Refused

Q16\_B. Raise the state gasoline tax

%	n=1202
9	Strongly support
15	Somewhat support
13	Neither support/ opposed
16	Somewhat oppose
44	Strongly oppose
1	Not sure
2	Refused

Q16\_C. Increase the state tax on all income above \$1 million per year

%	n=1202
53	Strongly support
17	Somewhat support
10	Neither support/ opposed
5	Somewhat oppose
13	Strongly oppose
1	Not sure
1	Refused

Q16\_D. Expand legalized gambling in Illinois

%	n=1202
38	Strongly support
25	Somewhat support
14	Neither support/ opposed
8	Somewhat oppose
13	Strongly oppose
2	Not sure
1	Refused

Q16\_E. Apply a state income tax to all retirement income like pensions and Social Security

%	n=1202
9	Strongly support
7	Somewhat support
11	Neither support/ opposed
11	Somewhat oppose
59	Strongly oppose
2	Not sure
1	Refused

Q16\_F. Increase property taxes

%	n=1202
7	Strongly support
9	Somewhat support
12	Neither support/ opposed
17	Somewhat oppose
53	Strongly oppose
1	Not sure
2	Refused

Q16\_G. Increase income taxes above the current 4.95% rate

%	n=1202
10	Strongly support
14	Somewhat support
14	Neither support/ opposed
14	Somewhat oppose
46	Strongly oppose
2	Not sure
1	Refused

Q17. Another proposal to raise revenue to address the state's fiscal problems is to change the Illinois Constitution to create a graduated income tax structure. Currently Illinois' tax rate system is called a flat-rate tax system where everyone, regardless of their household income, pays the same income tax rate. Changing to a graduated income tax structure would mean that tax rates would be lower for low-income taxpayers and higher for upper-income taxpayers. Do you support or oppose Illinois changing to a graduated income tax structure? Is that strongly or somewhat?

%	n=1202
35	Strongly support
23	Somewhat support
11	Neither support/ opposed
8	Somewhat oppose
14	Strongly oppose
9	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q18. Now that you've had some time to think about the state's current and long-term fiscal issues, I'd like to ask you again: on a scale of 1 to 5, where one means that you are not at all angry and five means that you are extremely angry, how angry are you about the state of Illinois' current fiscal situation?

%	n=1202
4	1 – Not at all angry
4	2
21	3
31	4
36	5 – Extremely angry
4	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q19. Do you agree or disagree that the state legislature and the Governor should work together as quickly as possible to find compromise and approve a comprehensive long-term solution to Illinois' fiscal problems? And do you strongly or somewhat agree/disagree?

%	n=1202
69	Strongly agree
16	Somewhat agree
3	Neither agree or disagree
5	Somewhat disagree
3	Strongly disagree
3	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q20. How much of a priority should the Governor of Illinois give to addressing these fiscal problems until a comprehensive plan is in place to restore Illinois' fiscal health for the long-term? Should it be a top priority, high priority, medium priority, low priority, or no priority at all for the Governor?

%	n=1202
49	Top priority
34	High priority
10	Medium priority
2	Low priority
1	No priority at all
4	Not sure
<1	Refused

Q21. How likely are you to vote for a candidate for Governor who makes Illinois' current and long-term fiscal health a top priority?

%	n=1202
54	Very likely
30	Somewhat likely
4	Not very likely
3	Not at all likely
9	Not sure
1	Refused

D1. What is your current marital status?

%	n=1202
51	Married
10	Not married, living with partner
2	Separated
11	Divorced
6	Widowed
18	Never married
<1	Not sure
1	Refused

D2. What is your current gender identity? Would you say male, female, or transgender or another type of gender you'd like to mention?

%	n=1202
53	Female
47	Male
<1	Transgender
<1	Other type mentioned (specify)
0	Not sure
<1	Refused

D3. Do you consider yourself to be...?

%	n=1202
93	Heterosexual or straight
1	Lesbian
2	Bisexual
2	Gay
<1	Something else – can you specify? (not required)
2	Prefer not to say/ refused

D4. [IF AGE 50+, ASK] Are you (or your spouse/ partner) a member of AARP (formerly known as the American Association of Retired Persons)?

%	n=651
49	Yes
50	No
1	Not sure
<1	Refused

D5. What is the highest level of education that you completed?

%	n=1202
2	0-12 grade (no diploma)
21	High school graduate (or equivalent)
18	Post-high school education (no degree)
16	2-year college degree
24	4-year college degree
4	Post-graduate study (no degree)
15	Graduate or professional degree
<1	Not sure
<1	Refused

D6. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? Are you...?

%	n=1202
10	Self-employed full-time
5	Self-employed part-time
34	Employed full-time
9	Employed part-time
26	Retired and not working at all
7	Unemployed and looking for work
8	Or are you not in the labor force for other reasons
<1	Not sure
1	Refused

D7. Are you of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin or descent?

%	n=1202
14	Yes
85	No
<1	Not sure
1	Refused

D8. What is your race?

%	n=1202
79	White or Caucasian
13	Black or African American
2	Asian
1	American Indian or Alaska Native
0	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
4	Other (specify)
1	Not sure
1	Refused

D9. Which political party do you tend to identify with? Would you say Independent, Republican, Democrat, or none of these?

%	n=1202
41	Democrat
34	Republican
17	Independent
5	None of these
2	Don't know
2	Refused

D10. How would you characterize your political views?

%	n=1202
14	Very conservative
24	Somewhat conservative
28	Moderate
15	Somewhat liberal
10	Very liberal
1	None of the above/something else (specify)
6	Not sure/ don't know
2	Refused

D11. Do you currently or have you ever served in the United States military?

%	n=1202
1	Yes, currently serve
11	Yes, served in past
86	No, never served
1	Don't know
1	Refused



D12. We realize income is a private matter and so rather than ask you anything specific about your income, I'd like you to please stop me when I get to the category that includes your household's income before taxes in 2017. Was it...?

%	n=1202
5	Less than \$10,000
8	\$10,000 to less than \$20,000
10	\$20,000 to less than \$30,000
9	\$30,000 to less than \$40,000
9	\$40,000 to less than \$50,000
8	\$50,000 to less than \$60,000
8	\$60,000 to less than \$70,000
6	\$70,000 to less than \$80,000
5	\$80,000 to less than \$90,000
5	\$90,000 to less than \$100,000
7	\$100,000 to less than \$125,000
4	\$125,000 to less than \$150,000
3	\$150,000 to less than \$200,000
3	\$200,000 or more
2	Don't know/ not sure
8	Refused

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members and offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also works for individuals in the marketplace by sparking new solutions and allowing carefully chosen, high-quality products and services to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the nation's largest circulation publications, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.



For more information on this issue in Illinois, contact Ryan Gruenenfelder at 217-747-8885 or [RGruenenfelder@aarp.org](mailto:RGruenenfelder@aarp.org). For more information on the methodology or the survey, contact Jennifer Sauer at 202-434-6207 or [jsauer@aarp.org](mailto:jsauer@aarp.org). View this summary at [www.aarp.org/illinoisbudgetpoll](http://www.aarp.org/illinoisbudgetpoll) and other AARP research at <http://aarp.org/research>.