



Survey of New Hampshire Likely Voters Oct. 14 – 25, 2022

N = 600 New Hampshire Likely Voters

The sample has an adjusted margin of error +/-5.1%

See <http://uml.edu/polls> for full questionnaire/topline results and detailed methodology disclosure.

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Do you have a question about this poll? If so, tweet @UML_CPO and we'll get back to you.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Hassan holds apparent lead over Bolduc

"The New Hampshire U.S. Senate race was supposed to be a tough road for Maggie Hassan, who barely won in 2016 over a tough Republican opponent. Six years later, she seems firmly in control of the race. New Hampshire voters, famously independent are set to re-elect a sitting Democratic senator in what would normally be a very bad year for Democrats, said Associate Professor John Cluverius, director of survey research at the Center for Public Opinion.

At first glance, the ground looks tough for an incumbent Democrat in New Hampshire. President Joe Biden's approval rating is underwater with 46% of respondents approving of the job he is doing as president and 54% disapproving. In line with their disapproval of the president, more than two-thirds (69%) of respondents say things in the country have gotten pretty seriously off track and only 31% say that things in the country are headed in the right direction.

Nonetheless, Democratic Sen. Maggie Hassan holds an apparent lead over Republican retired Army Brigadier General Don Bolduc, 51% to 41%. Libertarian technology executive Jeremy Kauffman has the support of 3% of respondents in the Center's poll. Less than .5% of respondents said they plan to vote for another candidate and 5% were undecided.

Hassan leads with Democrats and Independents, while Bolduc leads with Republicans. The sharpest contrast between the two candidates is on education. Among respondents without a college degree, Bolduc leads by 6 percentage points, 48% to 42%, while among those with a college degree, Hassan leads by 31 percentage points, 63% to 32%. A spate of negative ads has

driven up Bolduc's unfavorables as 51% of respondents view him unfavorably compared to 34% who view him favorably. Those with no opinion stand at 13% of respondents and, impressively for a challenger, only 1% have never heard of him. Conversely, Hassan's favorables are much stronger. Half (50%) of likely voters view her favorably, while 44% view her unfavorably. Those with no opinion of her measure 6% and <.5% have never heard of her.

2. Republican Sununu leads, Republicans on track for state senate supermajority

"In the latest Center for Public Opinion poll, roughly one of every eight New Hampshire voters will be splitting their tickets between the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate and the Republican candidate for governor," said Cluverius. "New Hampshire voters frequently elect presidents, senators, and governors of opposite parties simultaneously, and this year is no different."

Incumbent Republican Gov. Chris Sununu leads his opponent, Democratic state Sen. Tom Sherman, 51% to 35%. Libertarian activist Kelly Haldorson won the support of 5% of respondents and Libertarian organizational consultant and self-described "compulsive knitter" Karlyn Borysenko received 2%. Those voting for another candidate accounted for 5% and 2% were undecided.

Sununu's strength comes from his popularity with the state's voters. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of Granite State respondents said they approved of the job Sununu is doing as governor and his favorability margin is +17 percentage points compared to Sherman's +12. Most troubling for Sherman is the high number of respondents who say they have no opinion of him (26%) or have never heard of him (16%). These are tough numbers for a challenger in the closing weeks of an election.

Consequently, Sununu does better in the latest UMass Lowell poll than Sherman among self-identified Independents – and across all income categories. The sharpest demographic contrast in the governor's race is on education, where Sununu's margin is +37 percentage points (61% to Sherman's 24%) among respondents without a four-year college degree. However, Sununu's margin among voters with a four-year degree is -10 points (39% to Sherman's 49%)

Respondents were also asked who they plan to vote for in their local state senate race – a close campaign. Nearly half (49%), said they would choose a Republican candidate and 45% said they would select a Democrat; 1% said they would select another candidate and 5% were undecided. After redistricting in the state, New Hampshire Republicans could win a supermajority in the state senate if these numbers hold.

3. Granite Staters face an inflation winter

"As the nights get longer and the weather gets colder, voters in the Granite State are both more affected by rising prices and more pessimistic about the future than their Massachusetts neighbors. In a textbook election, this situation would

drive voters away from incumbents, but this year, New Hampshire voters are standing by the politicians they have,” said Cluverius.

New Hampshire residents are facing the effects of rising prices head on. One-third of respondents (33%) in the sample said they had trouble paying for basic expenses in the last month compared to 67% who say that they had not. The numbers are even more stark among lower-income residents: 55% of respondents who earn less than \$50,000 per year say they have had trouble paying regular expenses in the last month compared to 24% of those earning more than \$100,000 per year. There is also a substantial age gap on these effects. Almost half of (47%) respondents aged 18-44 say they have had trouble paying basic monthly expenses while 25% of respondents aged 45-plus say the same.

Though National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecasters are predicting a milder winter in the northeast than normal, respondents in the poll are pessimistic about what the future of the economy holds. More than half (57%) of voters expect it will be harder to meet regular expenses in six months’ time compared to 7% who say it will be easier and 35% who say it will be about the same. Voters across the political spectrum share a lack of optimism: 10% of self-identified Democrats expect meeting monthly expenses to get easier along with 3% of Independents and 5% of Republicans.

New Hampshire residents blame politicians for the rising cost of regular monthly necessities. Nearly six in ten (58%), of respondents say rising prices are definitely (33%) or mostly (25%) the fault of politicians, while 41% say that these conditions are mostly (33%) or definitely (8%) due to circumstances beyond their control.

4. Worrying Trends for Democracy

“In the Center’s final 2016 New Hampshire poll, 77% of respondents said it was very or somewhat important that the loser of a presidential election accept the results and concede to the winner. Six years later, there are extremely worrying trends, with large swaths of the electorate unable to see the plain facts of electoral wins and losses. A sizable minority of Democrats and supermajority of Republicans in New Hampshire are divorced from reality,” said Cluverius.

Democratic stability depends on trust in government and trust in government remains low in New Hampshire. One in five (20%) likely voters said they can trust the federal government to do what’s right just about always (4%) or most of the time (16%). That leaves 80% who largely distrust the government, with 43% saying they trust the federal government some of the time and 37% saying they trust it hardly ever. This lack of trust makes it difficult to build consensus around basic facts, most notably, election outcomes.

New Hampshire voters were asked about the results of the last two presidential elections¹ and 80% of respondents said Donald Trump definitely (56%) or probably (24%) won the 2016 presidential election, while 21% said Hillary Clinton definitely (11%) or probably (10%) won. However, the numbers change substantially when broken down by party: 37% of self-identified Democrats said they believe Hillary Clinton definitely (19%) or probably (18%) won the 2016 presidential election. Even more concerning are the poll results from a similar question about the 2020 election. Slightly less than two-thirds (64%) of respondents say Joe Biden definitely (51%) or probably (13%) won the 2020 presidential election. However, 68% of Republicans say Donald Trump definitely (39%) or probably (29%) won the 2020 presidential election. Election denial for 2020 is high, but somewhat less so, among self-described independents: 40% of whom say Trump definitely (25%) or probably (15%) won the 2020 election.

5. Other Notable Findings

- On the issue of abortion, 77% of respondents in the poll said there should be a right to abortion in every state in the United States, including 98% of Democrats, 71% of independents and 59% of Republicans. A majority of Granite Staters (52%) said they or someone they know has had an abortion.
- In a hypothetical matchup between Donald Trump and Joe Biden for the 2024 presidential election, 49% of respondents said they would vote for Joe Biden, while 43% said they would vote for Donald Trump, 5% said they would vote for another candidate and 3% were undecided.
- In the midst of swirling divorce rumors² and a shambolic start to the 2022-2023 NFL season, New Hampshire voters were asked if they thought Tom Brady should have played the 2022 season or just stayed out of the game. The results showed 39% of respondents said he should have played football for the 2022-2023 season (28% definitely, 21% probably), while 61% say that he should have just stayed out of the game (24% definitely, 37% probably). Even football is not immune from partisanship: 46% of Republicans say Brady should have continued to play, compared to 33% of Independents and 35% of Democrats.

¹ The 2016 presidential election was won by Donald Trump, and the 2020 presidential election was won by Joe Biden.

² Field was completed before Mr. Brady and Ms. Bündchen announced their divorce on October 28, 2022.