



**BOWEN CENTER**

**FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**And the**

**Global Health Institute**

Hoosier Survey 2011

**THE HOOSIER SURVEY 2011**  
**The Bowen Center for Public Affairs**  
**Ball State University**  
**Executive Summary**

In the fourth annual Hoosier Survey conducted by the Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University, Indiana residents identified their top priorities for state government action in the upcoming year. For the third year in a row, respondents overwhelmingly (78%) believe job creation is the number one state priority. This figure has increased slightly over the last two years of polling. Improving government efficiency continues in second place (66%), again up slightly from last year and just ahead of improving schools (57%). Affordable health care was next (55%), a slight increase over last year (52%). Other priorities with diminishing support include reducing illegal immigration (45%) protecting the environment (37%, up from 32% last year), and improving public transportation (19%).

With property tax cuts now in place, Hoosiers were asked about their perceptions of local government services: whether they have worsened, stayed about the same, or improved. In all major areas, such as road maintenance, schools parks and recreation, sewage/water, and fire services, Hoosiers think the level of services has stayed about the same. As the property tax caps continue to impact local budgets, we will continue to track reactions to these services in future years.

We also asked about choosing between future service cuts versus tax increases. Majorities support higher taxes in two areas: fire services (56%) and schools (52%). Forty-nine percent were willing to pay higher taxes for police protection. Support for tax increases falls off, however, for roads, jails, and parks. For the past three years, the Hoosier Survey has shown that residents are willing to pay increased taxes if these are very carefully targeted to specific policy areas about which Hoosiers care.

We asked about school funding. Opinions about expanding the new voucher program to include greater availability for use in private/public charter schools are widely dispersed (34% approve, 37% oppose, 28% have not yet formed an opinion). Support for vouchers was highest in the central region of the state (42%) while a nearly equal percentage of residents in the northern and southern counties opposed extending vouchers (40% and 39% respectively). For households with children in public schools, we asked about their level of satisfaction with public education. Respondents are overwhelmingly pleased (very satisfied or somewhat satisfied) with their local public schools. The lowest level of satisfaction (although still high at 67%) was in Central Indiana, with satisfaction levels in northern and southern counties approaching 80%.

Steps to improve education reveal that Hoosiers strongly recommend more parental involvement in schools (43%), with higher teacher salaries (23%) and tying teacher salaries to test scores (16%) finishing second and third. Closing failing schools attracted the support of only 8% of our sample.

The state legislature will be considering a statewide ban on smoking in public places. Our survey found substantial support for this approach (56%) with the greatest support registering in southern counties (62%).

The legislature may also consider what has been called “right-to-work” legislation this session. Nearly half of our sample (48%) said they were undecided or did not have an opinion on this issue, indicating that this is not a settled issue in the minds of Hoosiers. Of those expressing an opinion, support and opposition were nearly identical with 27% supporting and 24% opposing. There was very little variation by region. Clearly, neither side on this issue has yet to close the sale.

The Tea Party movement, and more recently, the Occupy Wall Street Movement have received considerable attention in 2011. We asked Hoosiers if they were favorably or unfavorably disposed to these movements. More Hoosiers were familiar with the Tea Party than with Occupy Wall Street and more Hoosiers looked favorably upon the Tea Party (38%) than on the Occupy Movement (26%). We also found very little overlap in favorability toward both movements.

Governor Daniels enjoys a relatively high approval rating statewide at 52%, virtually unchanged from last year. He continues to garner the highest approval in central Indiana counties. Approval for the General Assembly dipped by ten percent over last year to 39% with southern counties awarding the highest approval rating at 43% (but still down from 57% last year).

This year, the Bowen Center for Public Affairs partnered with the Global Health Institute (GHI) at Ball State University to ask Hoosiers a series of questions about health care and health care reform legislation. Following up on last year’s study, Hoosier’s views of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) moved in a more unfavorable direction in 2011. In 2010, 48% of Hoosiers expressed an unfavorable view of the ACA compared with 51% in 2011. This increase in negative sentiment seems to have been generated from a reduction in the number of Hoosiers who reported having a mixed view of the ACA in 2010. While the percentage of Hoosiers with a favorable view of the act is similar to national figures, more Hoosiers express an unfavorable view. Despite this negative sentiment, Hoosiers overwhelmingly support key provisions of the act including making coverage more affordable, ensuring coverage for everyone, and providing coverage for individuals with pre-existing conditions. Public opinion for ensuring coverage for everyone is higher among Hoosiers who report NOT being insured, 88% compared to 84% of the insured Hoosiers.

GHI also polled on insurance status and the use of various types of medical facility for health care. While insured Hoosiers are more likely to visit a physician than the uninsured, more

insured residents reported having visited an Emergency Room for patient care in the last 12 months than the uninsured.

The Hoosier Survey was conducted by the Bowen Center for Public Affairs and the Global Health Institute in conjunction with Princeton Research Associates International of Princeton, NJ. The survey was conducted by telephone, both cell and landline, among a random sample of Hoosier adults over the age of 18 from November 14-27. Six hundred seven respondents completed the survey, yielding a margin of error of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points.

The following provides a more detailed analysis of these results with additional breakdowns by the three regions of the state. This information and more are available on the website of the Bowen Center for Public Affairs at [www.bsu.edu/bowencenter](http://www.bsu.edu/bowencenter). For additional information, contact:

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## HOOSIER SURVEY 2011

The Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University presents the fourth annual Hoosier Survey to provide Indiana policymakers with a measure of public opinion on current issues facing our state and nation. The nonpartisan survey does not ask respondents about particular candidates or campaigns. The results are delivered to every member of the Indiana General Assembly and top administration officials at the beginning of the calendar year so that lawmakers can gauge public views about issues they are likely to face in the coming session.

Major findings in the 2011 Hoosier Survey include:

- Job creation continues to be the number one priority for Hoosier residents with 78% of respondents saying legislators should put this item at the top of the legislative agenda.
- Hoosiers would be willing to pay more for some services like fire protection and schools but prefer cuts in service to tax hikes in other areas like jails, parks, and government operations.
- A majority of Hoosiers in all regions of the state support a statewide smoking ban in public places.
- Hoosiers are evenly divided on the issue of what has been called “right to work” legislation with a plurality expressing no opinion at this time.
- While a majority of Hoosiers have an unfavorable view of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), there is overwhelming support for some of its provisions including making coverage more affordable, ensuring coverage for everyone, and providing coverage for individuals with pre-existing conditions.
- While insured Hoosiers are more likely to visit a physician than the uninsured, more insured residents reported having visited an Emergency Room for patient care in the last 12 months than the uninsured.

The survey was conducted for the Bowen Center for Public Affairs by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI) from November 14-27, 2011. PSRAI surveyed 607 Hoosier adults, chosen randomly, yielding a margin of sampling error of  $\pm 4.4\%$ .

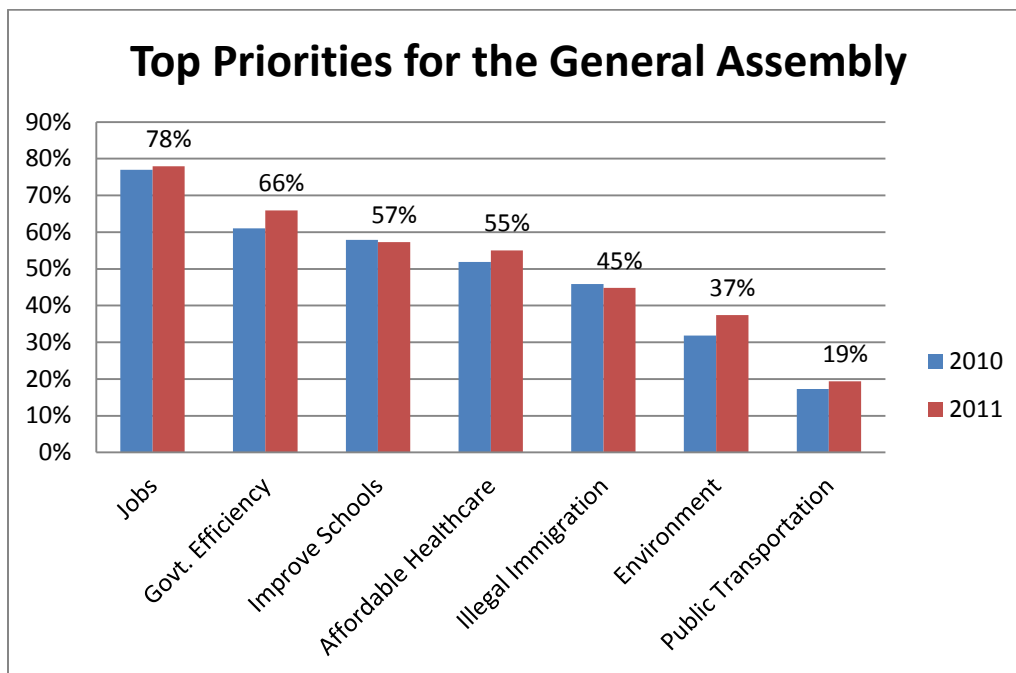
In addition to providing results for the state as a whole, some findings are also broken down by the three major regions of the state: Northern, Central, and Southern. The maps below illustrate the counties in each region.



## Major Findings

### Policy Priorities for the State

For the third year in a row, job creation is the top concern of Hoosiers with 78% saying the state needs to do more to bring jobs to the state even though a slight majority of Hoosiers (51%) are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the record the state has built in creating jobs. Other top priorities include making government run more efficiently (66%), improving schools (57%), and making healthcare more affordable (55%). The rank order of priorities remains much the same as last year, indicating recurring themes in the political landscape.

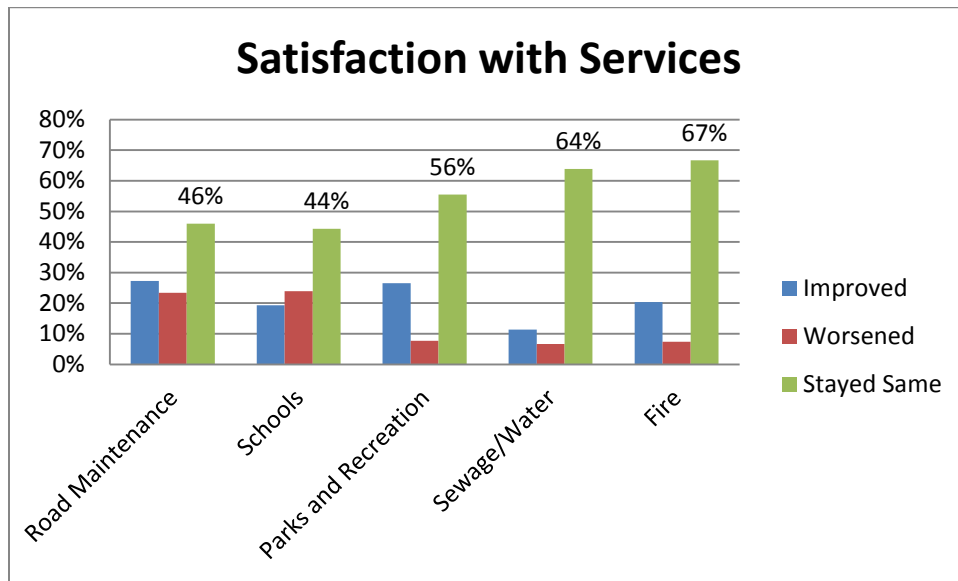


### Assessing Government Services

Since the approval of constitutional property caps, many local governments have found it necessary to freeze or make cuts in spending for local government services. How have Hoosiers reacted? Do they perceive these services to have worsened, stayed about the same, or perhaps even improved despite the caps?

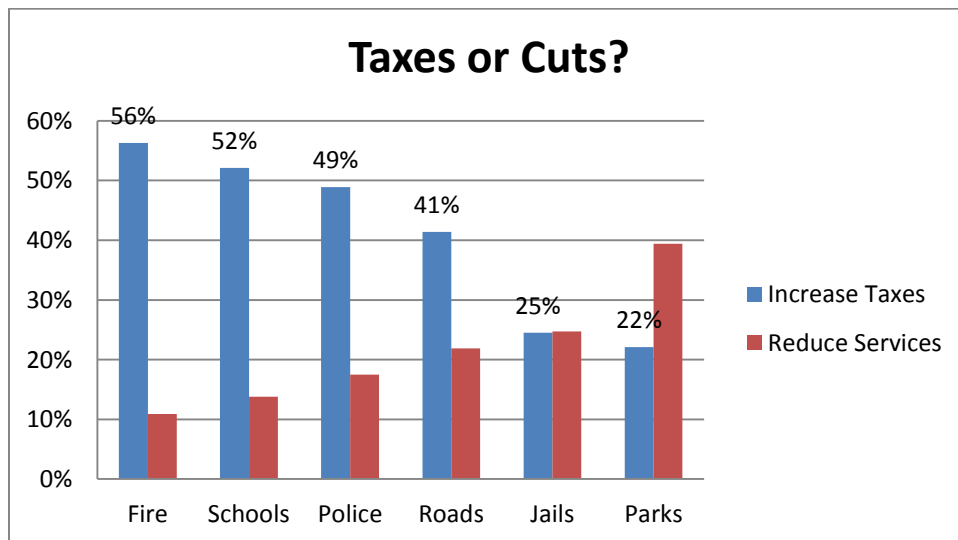
As with last year, Hoosiers have not noticed a substantial difference in service delivery in the areas of road maintenance, schools, parks and recreation, sewage and water treatment, or fire safety. Slight differences in perception of road and school quality were reported among central Indiana residents as opposed to their northern and southern county neighbors. Thirty-two percent of Central county respondents reported improved road conditions as opposed to 26% in northern counties and 21% in the south. Slightly more central county residents believed schools have gotten worse (27%) than residents

in the north (21%) or the south (24%). Regional differences in quality assessment among the remaining service areas were negligible.



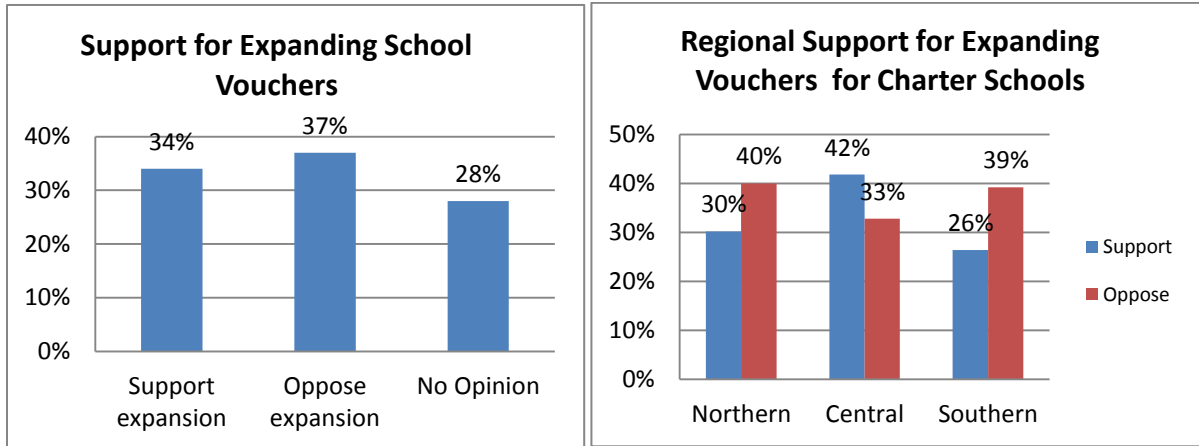
### Support for Future Cuts or Tax Increases

We questioned Hoosiers about their choices for future service cuts versus tax increases. Majorities told us they would support higher taxes in two areas: fire protection and schools. Nearly half would support tax increases for police protection while only between twenty and forty percent would approve higher taxes for roads, jails, and parks.

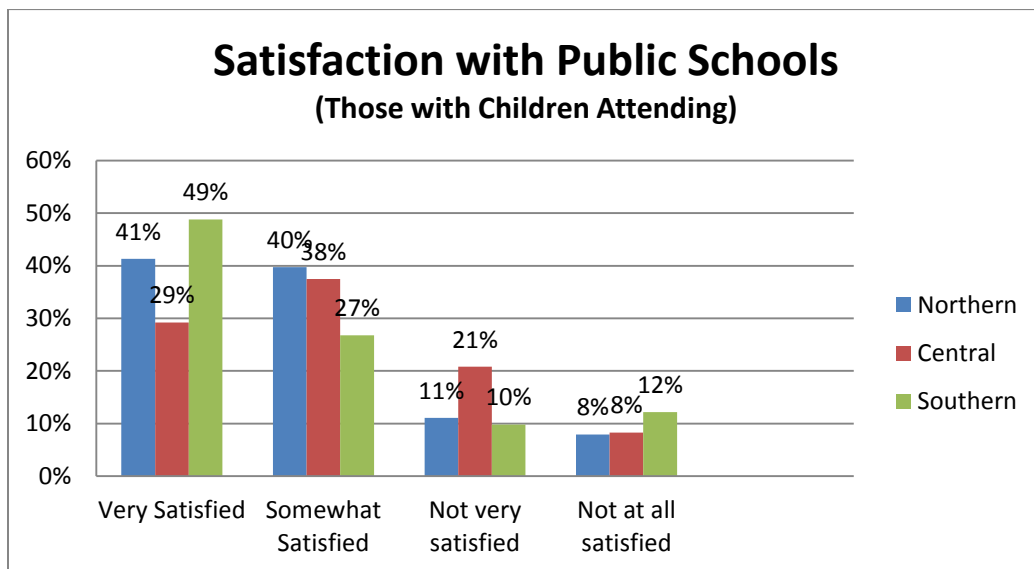


## Schools

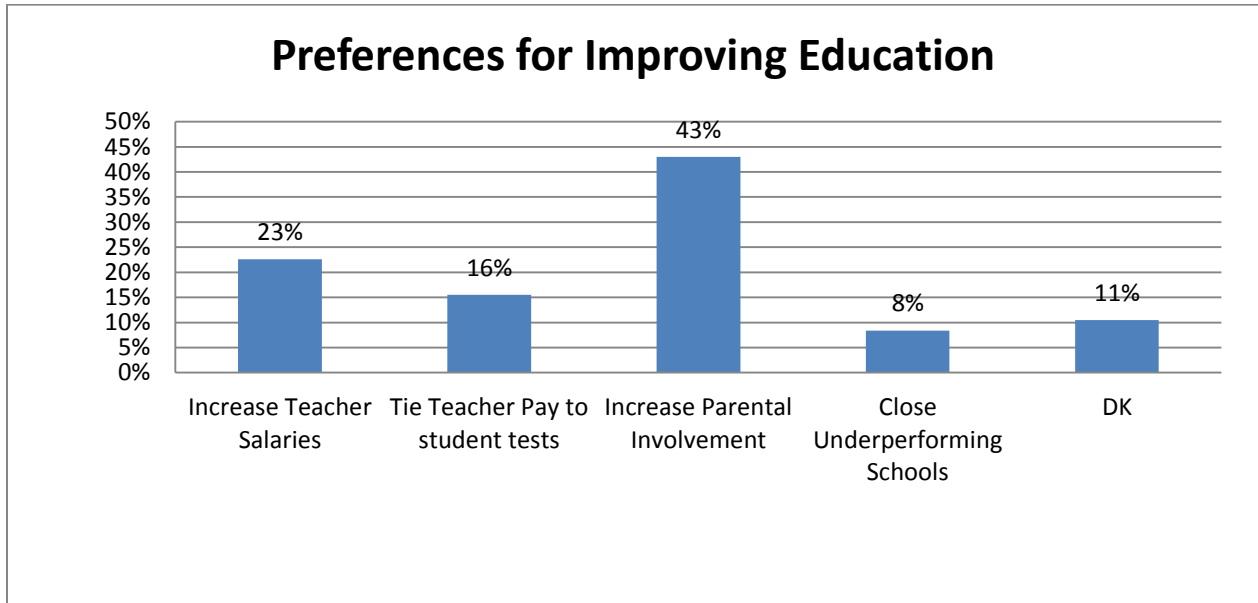
Legislation passed in the 2011 session permitted the use of a limited number of individual vouchers to be used for private/charter schools. We asked Hoosiers if they supported or opposed expanding the use of these vouchers. Overall, 34% approved the expanded use of vouchers while 37% opposed their expansion. However, 28% said they had no opinion. This dispersal of opinion indicates Hoosiers have not yet made up their minds about the future of vouchers in the state. Support for vouchers was strongest in the central counties (42% in central counties as opposed to 30% in the north and 26% in the south).



Next, we asked those respondents with children in public school grades K through 12 in the school year that ended in May (about one quarter of our sample) how satisfied they were with the quality of education their children were receiving. Results were overwhelmingly positive with 75% of the overall sample being very or somewhat satisfied. Satisfaction was strongest in the northern counties (81%) and southern counties (85%), while satisfaction in the central counties dipped to 67%.

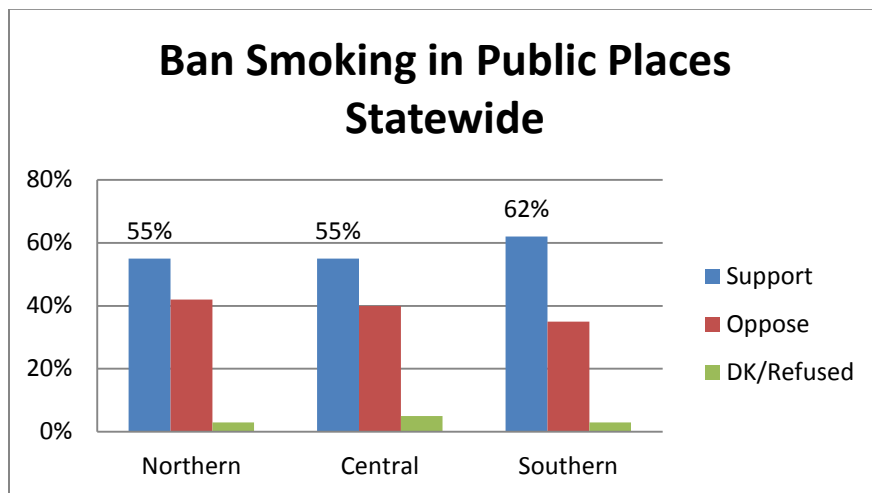


Finally, we asked all respondents their priorities for improving public education. As with last year, Hoosiers' first choice is to improve parental involvement with the schools (43%). Increasing teacher salaries ranked second at 23% followed by tying teacher salaries to student test scores (16%). Only 8% preferred closing failing schools. Rank ordering was consistent across the state. A slightly higher percentage of Hoosiers in the southern counties favored tying teacher salaries to student performance (20%) than respondents in either central or northern counties (14%).



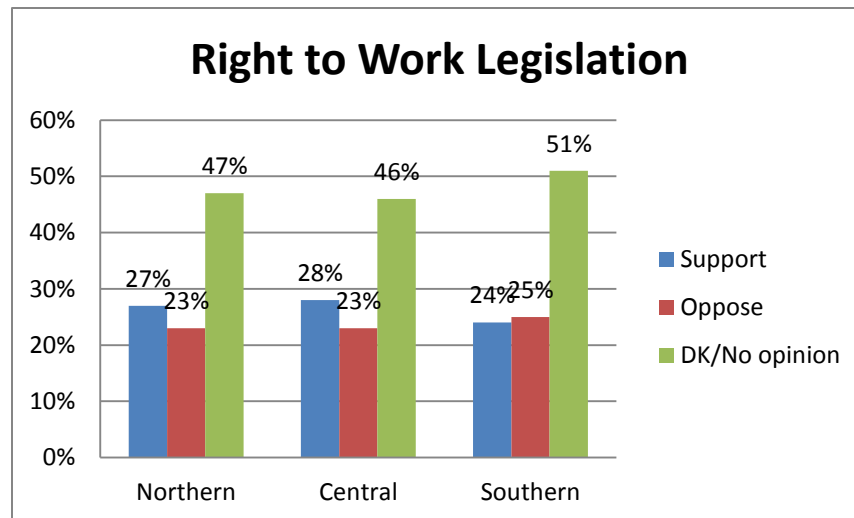
## Statewide Smoking Ban

Leaders in the General Assembly have indicated they are prepared to entertain legislation to ban smoking in public places throughout the state. We asked Hoosiers if they supported or opposed such a ban. Support for such a ban was strong throughout the state (56%) with the greatest support resonating in the southern counties (62%). Both the northern and central counties showed 55% support.



## Right to Work

The Republican leadership has indicated they will consider what has been called “right-to-work” legislation this session. Last session, consideration of similar legislation was a major factor in the Democratic walkout in the House of Representatives. We asked Hoosiers their views on this type of legislation. With nearly half (48%) undecided or not having an opinion, this is not a settled issue in the minds of Hoosiers. Of those expressing an opinion, support and opposition were nearly identical with 27% supporting and 24% opposing (within the margin of error for the survey). There was very little variation by region. Clearly, neither side on this issue has yet to close the sale.



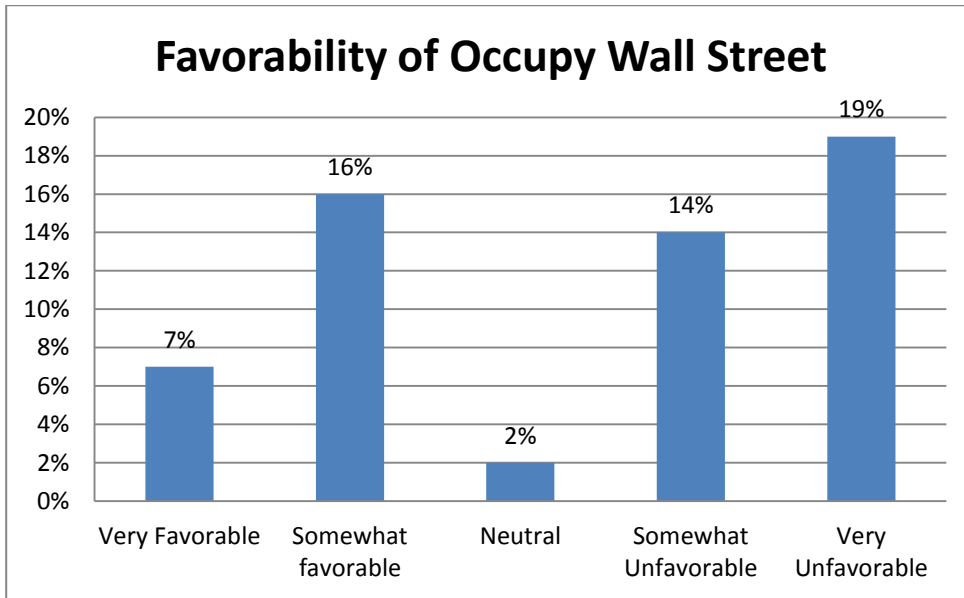
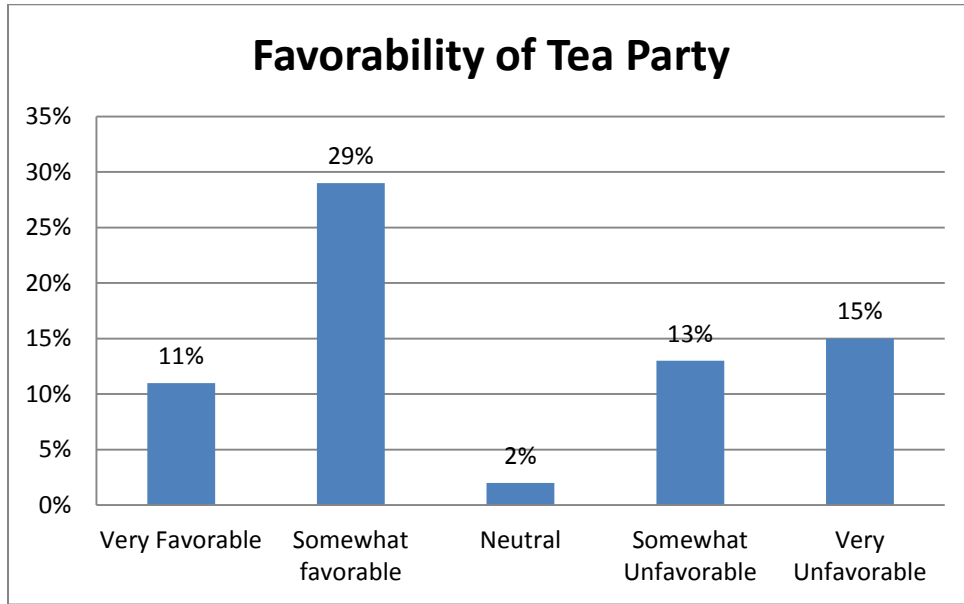
## Hoosiers' Perceptions of Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street

Given the wide notoriety of the national Tea Party Movement and, more recently, the Occupy Wall Street Movement, we asked Hoosiers their opinions about these movements. Overall, 77% of Hoosiers have heard of the Tea Party as opposed to 62% who expressed familiarity with Occupy Wall Street. Of those familiar with the Tea Party, 40% expressed a very favorable or somewhat favorable view. A smaller percentage (28%) held a somewhat or very unfavorable view. Hoosier opinion of the Tea Party has marginally improved over last year's survey. The strongest support comes from Republicans in the central counties. The Tea Party enjoys favorable ratings of 50% or above across all education levels except among those without a high school degree where favorability dips to just 24%. Surprisingly, strongest support is among the young with 72% of those between 18 and 24 expressing a favorable opinion.

With regard to those who had heard about Occupy Wall Street, 23% expressed a very or somewhat favorable view, while 33% had a somewhat or very unfavorable view. Residents of the southern counties were much less likely to express a very favorable opinion (7%) than their counterparts in the northern and central counties (13%). The Occupy Movement holds strongest support among Democrats (61%) and those with less than a high school education (50%).

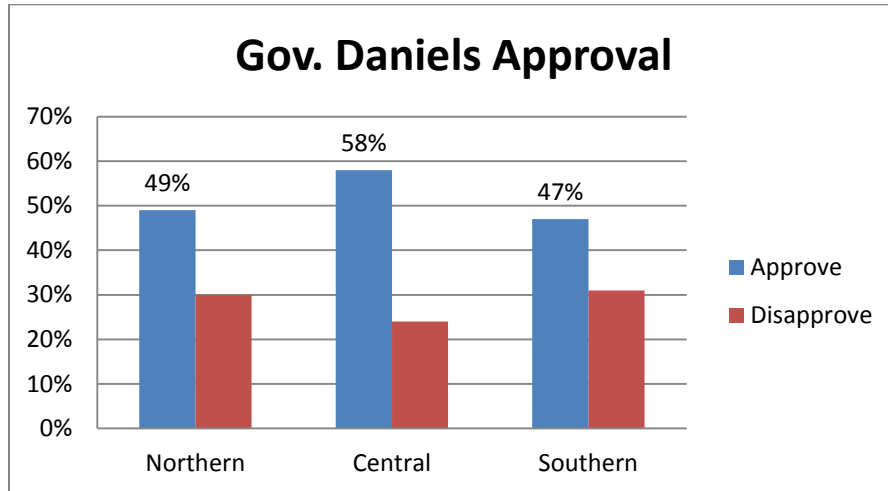
While some commentators have speculated that a large number of people identify with both movements as a sign of discontent with the political system, our analysis shows very little crossover in favorability (13%). However, 34% express disapproval with both movements, reflecting previous

academic findings indicating many Midwesterners are reluctant to support groups that engage in public demonstrations.

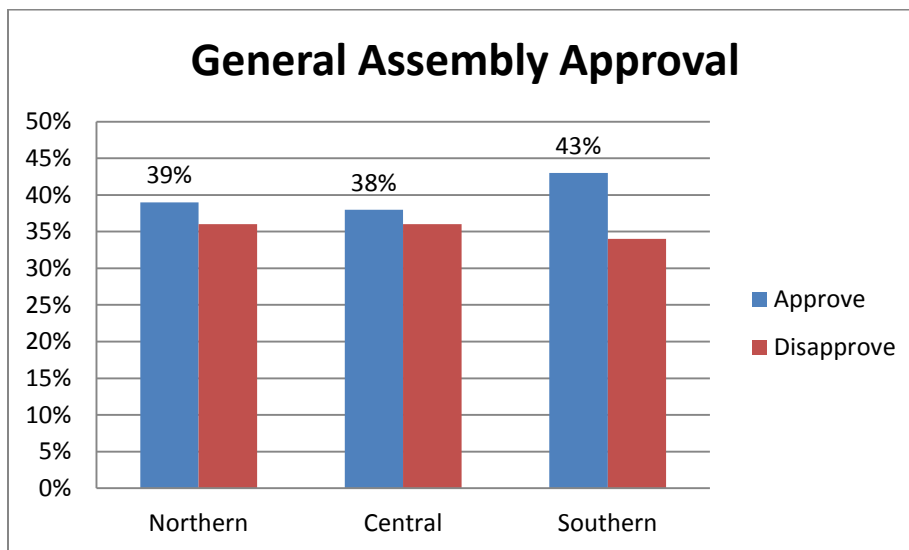


## Approval Ratings

Governor Daniels maintains majority support among all Hoosiers, but his support is strongest in the central part of the state with 58% approval as opposed to 49% in the northern counties and 47% in the southern counties. Overall, his approval stands at 52%.



The overall rating for the General Assembly dipped for the second year in a row, from 49% in 2010 to 39% in 2011. The dip was steepest in the southern counties going from 57% approval in 2010 to just 43% in 2011. Nevertheless, approval was still strongest in the southern counties.

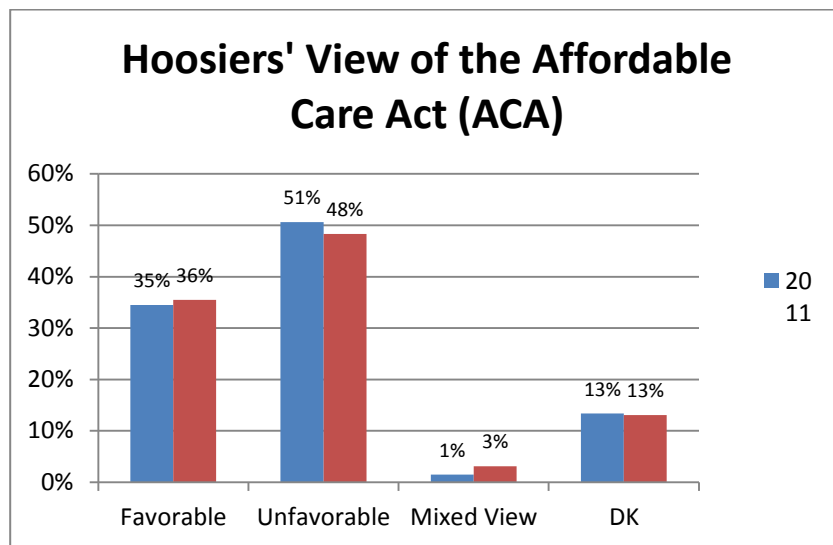




# Global Health Institute

## HOOSIERS' VIEWS ON HEALTH CARE REFORM AND ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

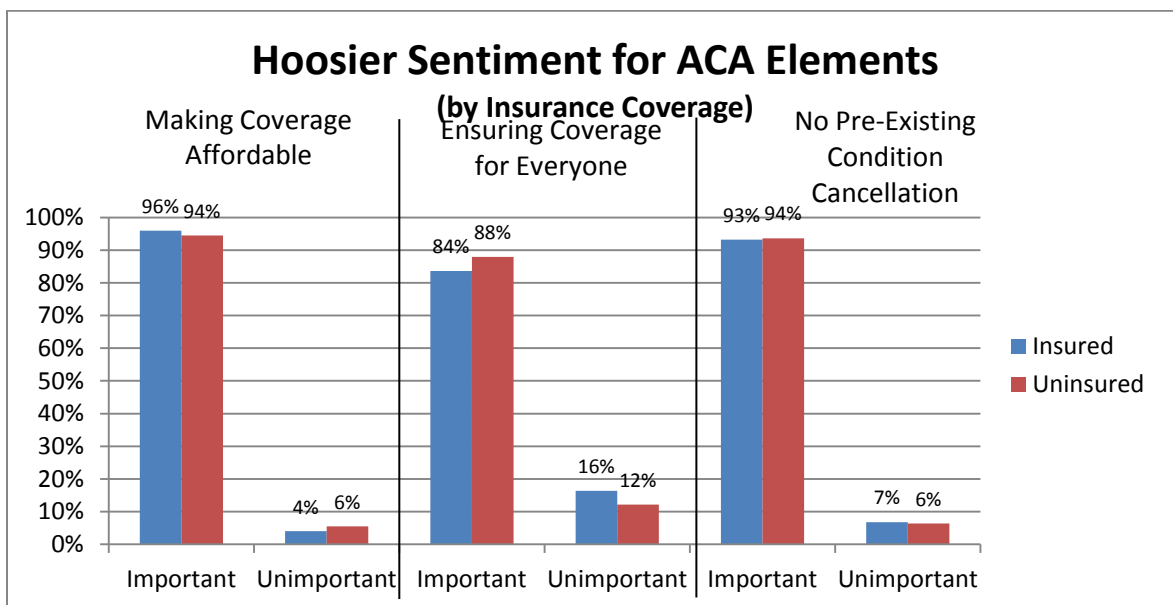
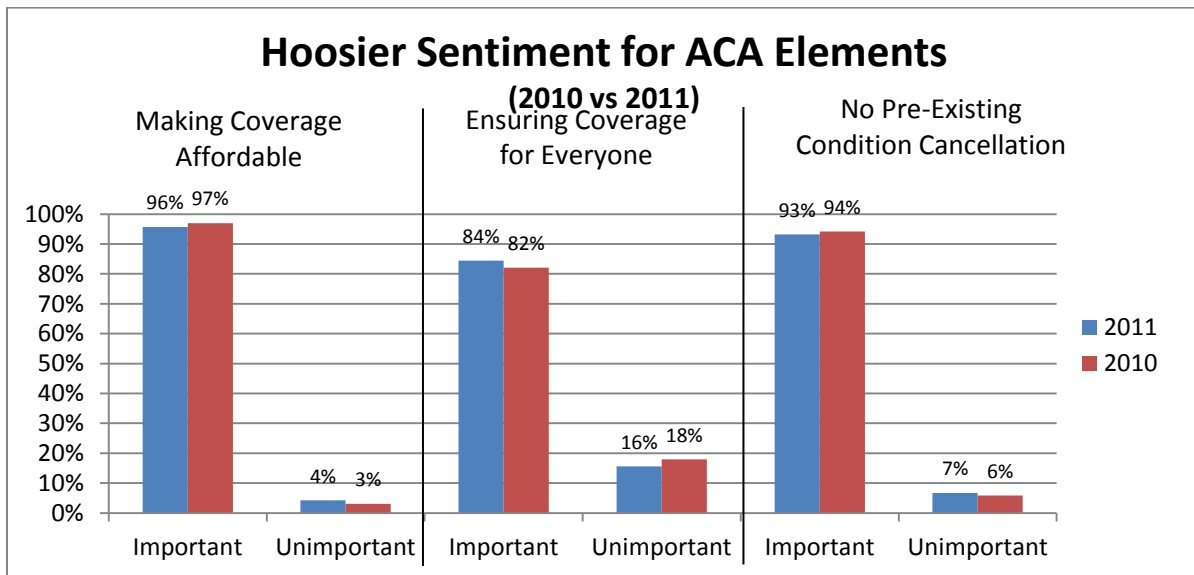
The 2010 Hoosier Survey polled Hoosiers' on their views of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). In 2011 we offered the same polling questions to compare Hoosiers' views of the ACA in 2010 and 2011. Hoosier's views of the ACA moved in a more unfavorable direction in 2011. In 2010, 48% of Hoosiers expressed an unfavorable view of the ACA compared with 51% in 2011. This increase in negative sentiment seems to have been generated from a reduction in the number of Hoosiers who reported having a mixed view of the ACA in 2010. The percentage of those reporting a having a "mixed view" of the ACA fell from 3% to 1%. There was no statistically significant difference between 2010 and 2011.



An interesting comparison can be made between the 2011 Hoosier Survey and a national-level study. The Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) conducted a survey of national attitudes towards the ACA during the same time frame, November 2011, as the 2011 Hoosier Survey. The KFF survey found 44% of Americans have an unfavorable view of the law. This is lower than the 51% of Hoosiers who reported having an unfavorable view of the ACA. Interestingly, the percentage of Hoosiers reporting a favorable view of the ACA (35%) is similar to the national-level of 37%. An additional interesting point to note, as reported by the KFF, the KFF survey reveals that public opinion of the ACA may be a proxy for more general disillusionment with the state of the country and Washington politics.<sup>i</sup>

## HOOSIERS CONSIDER MANY OF THE INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS OF THE ACA IMPORTANT

The 2010 Hoosier survey reported that making coverage affordable, ensuring coverage for everyone and mandating that pre-existing conditions be accepted by all insurance companies were considered important by 97%, 82% and 94% of Hoosiers, respectively. We included the same questions in the 2011 survey to see if there was any change in Hoosiers' views on these elements of the ACA between 2010 and 2011. While, there are small changes in the percentage of Hoosiers reporting that these elements were important these changes were not statistically significant. In both 2010 and 2011, these three elements remain important to Hoosiers. The importance of ensuring coverage for everyone receives the lowest while still very strong support, 8 in 10 Hoosiers find this element important.



## **AFFORDABILITY IS VIEWED AS IMPORTANT BY THE LARGEST PERCENTAGE OF HOOSIERS**

As described in both 2010 and 2011, making insurance coverage affordable is viewed as important by more than 9 out of 10 Hoosiers. Given that the importance of affordable coverage may be viewed differently by Hoosiers based on their health insurance status, insured vs. uninsured, we separated these two groups. Again, we found no statistically significant differences between the insured and uninsured.

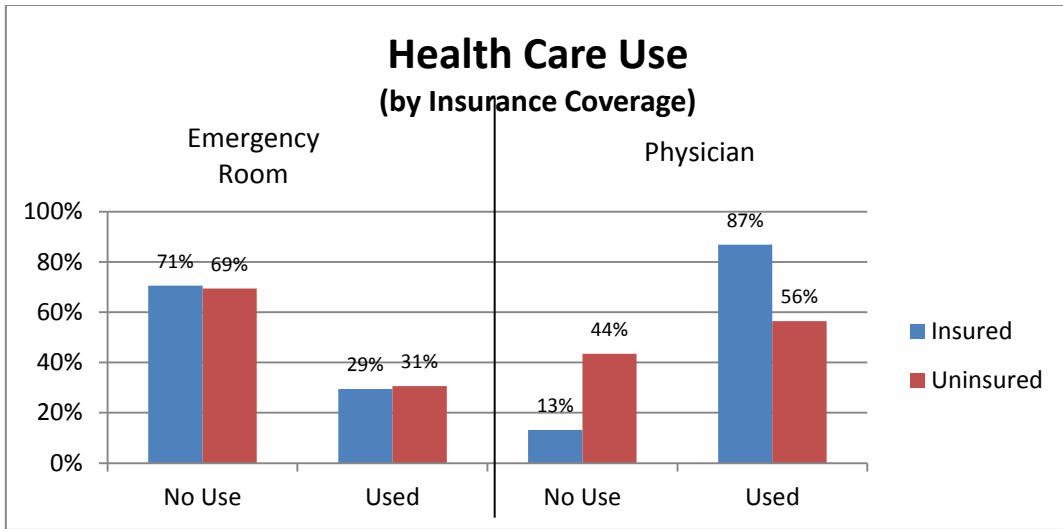
The same comparison was made regarding Hoosiers' views on pre-existing condition exclusions. When we compared the opinions of Hoosiers based on their insurance status, insured vs. uninsured, we found no statistically significant differences. Ninety-three percent of Hoosiers report that not allowing an insurance company to exclude an individual from insurance coverage based on a pre-existing condition is important.

## **PUBLIC OPINION FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF ENSURING COVERAGE FOR EVERYONE VARIES BY INSURANCE STATUS**

Finally, the next element to receive overwhelming Hoosier support is "ensuring insurance coverage for everyone". Between 2010 and 2011 support for this element of the ACA has increased from 82% to 84%. Using the current 2011 Hoosier Survey we are able to use information on Hoosiers' health insurance status, insured and uninsured, to determine if this has an impact on public opinion. Public opinion for ensuring coverage for everyone is higher among Hoosiers who report NOT being insured, 88% compared to 84% of the insured Hoosiers.

## **A LARGER PERCENTAGE OF INSURED HOOSIERS REPORT USING AN ER AND VISITING A PHYSICIAN**

In addition to understanding public opinion, the 2011 Hoosier Survey polls on the Hoosiers on their health care utilization. The 2011 Hoosier Survey includes questions on Hoosiers use of/need for preventive screenings, physician visits, hospital stays (inpatient and outpatient), and emergency room use for medical care. The most interesting results are regarding the emergency room use. To determine emergency room (ER) use, we asked Hoosiers to answer the following question: In the past 12 months, how many times have you, yourself, gone to an emergency room for medical treatment? Interestingly, more *insured* Hoosiers, 31%, report using the ER for medical treatment in the last 12 months compared 29% of uninsured Hoosiers. Since ER use is not necessary planned and, in general, is a more expensive point-of-access to the health-care system, we polled Hoosiers on their use of a less expensive health care service, physician visit, in the past 12 months. Insured Hoosiers are more likely to use a physician compared to uninsured Hoosiers. Of the Hoosiers polled, 87% of insured Hoosiers report visiting a physician in the last 12 months compared to 56% of Hoosiers who are not insured.



<sup>i</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Public Opinion on Health Care Issues, November 2011.