

The 2005 Report on the
ILLINOIS
Policy Survey



METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a telephone survey of the Illinois adult population, aged 18 and older. Interviewers at the Public Opinion Laboratory at Northern Illinois University completed 1309 Interviews in November of 2004 through December of 2004. Interviews were conducted and responses recorded using a computer assisted telephone interview system.

The *Illinois Policy Survey* uses a disproportionately stratified sample, divided into six geographical areas: Chicago, the balance of Cook County, five collar counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will), the rest of Northern Illinois, Central Illinois and Southern Illinois. Sample sizes in the geographical areas ranged from 201 to 242.

A two-stage sampling strategy was used. For the first stage, telephone numbers were drawn with a known probability of selection within regions. Both listed and unlisted numbers were included in the sample at this stage. The second stage of sampling was carried out when an interviewer reached an eligible household. An eligible household was a non-institutional residence in Illinois which was the home of at least one adult 18 years of age or older. After reaching an adult informant in a household, interviewers gave a brief explanation of the survey and the purpose of the selection process. The household member to be interviewed was randomly selected from among the adults who were at home.

Data were weighted to adjust for disproportionality in the sampling. Unequal probabilities of selection at each stage of sampling were accounted for in the initial weight. A post-stratification adjustment to the initial weight was calculated by using a six by two by six groupings of age groups by sex, by region using current population estimates from EASI data. The weighted sample was adjusted back to the original sample size for analysis.

The sampling and weighting procedures were designed to provide a representative sample of the adult population of Illinois that is accessible by telephone. This year's survey was conducted in both English and Spanish. Thirty-seven of the final interviews were conducted in Spanish. The conservative 95% confidence interval for a sample of 1309 individuals is plus or minus 3%. This means there is a 95% likelihood the population percentages will fall within 3 percentage points of estimates based on the sample percentage. Confidence intervals for subgroups of the sample will be larger, and will vary with the size of the subgroup.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Public Opinion Laboratory of Northern Illinois University conducted the telephone interviewing under the direction of Brian Brim, manager of the telephone center. Many thanks to the POL interviewers who spent over 1100 hours talking to the people of Illinois and recording their conversations. Thanks also to Bob Gleeson, Carol Zar, John Lewis, Marilyn McConachie, Charlie Cappell, and Bryce Bauerband for advice on this year's survey topics.



**THE 2005 REPORT ON THE
ILLINOIS POLICY SURVEY**

MICHAEL T. PEDDLE
Center for Governmental Studies
Northern Illinois University

BARBARA BURRELL
Public Opinion Laboratory
Northern Illinois University

with the assistance of
ANDREW J. SCHOTT
Public Opinion Laboratory
Northern Illinois University

NIU Center for
Governmental Studies
NIU Outreach

Robert E. Gleeson
Director

Carol B. Zar
Assistant Director

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INTRODUCTION

Now in its twenty-first year, the *Illinois Policy Survey* is a continuing program in the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University. It is designed to provide citizens and state leaders with systematic and representative information on public attitudes, values and expectations with respect to the performance of elected officials and policy issues facing Illinois.

The *Illinois Policy Survey* is usually conducted in the Fall of every year. The sampling frame for this survey is all residences with telephones in Illinois. A disproportionate sampling strategy is used to achieve an approximately equal number of respondents in each of six geographical areas of Illinois. Telephone interviews with one thousand three hundred nine men and women 18 years of age or older were conducted in November 2004 through December 2004. Since surveys question only a small proportion of the population, estimates based on survey data have a confidence interval based on the sample size. The 95% confidence interval for a sample of 1309 individuals is plus or minus 3 percent. This means there is a 95 percent likelihood that the population value falls within 3 percentage points of the sample percentage. The confidence interval for subgroups will be larger, and will vary with the size of the subgroup. Surveys of this kind may be subject to sources of error besides sampling error. For example, survey results may be influenced by events taking place while the survey is in the field, by question wording, or question order. In addition, people who were willing to participate may not reflect the views of individuals who were not at home or refused to be interviewed.

The *Illinois Policy Survey* has been conducted annually since 1984. Core questions asked every year are supplemented by questions of topical interest. Researchers, media, public agencies, and public interest groups can sponsor questions on the survey. Further information regarding this study is available by writing the Center for Governmental Studies, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115, or by phoning 815-753-0942. This report can also be found on the World Wide Web at www.cgsniu.org.

MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

Education Returns to Forefront

Each year, the *Illinois Policy Survey* asks respondents what they consider to be the most important problem facing the state. From 1995-2001, responses identified education as the most important problem, but in the 2002 and 2003 surveys, concerns about state spending and the state budget eclipsed education concerns as the most important problem facing Illinois. In 2004, education returns to the top of the most important problem list.

Figure 1 offers a perspective on the proportion of respondents who have identified certain major issues as the most important problem in Illinois since 1991. **Table 1** includes all issues mentioned by at least five percent of the respondents in each of the last three surveys.

Economic concerns have had special prominence in the last three *Illinois Policy Surveys*, with problems that can be characterized as economic concerns mentioned as the most important problem in Illinois by about half of the respondents. **Figure 2** illustrates the concern with economic issues, with 2004 showing a slight decrease in economic concerns.

Budgetary and economic concerns are often better understood by asking respondents whether state spending for different major program areas should be increased, decreased, or remain the same. **Figure 3** on the next page, presents the results from the 2004 and 2003 surveys, identifying the proportion of respondents who said that state government should increase spending for that particular program area. This year's respondents expressed sentiments similar to those of our 2003 respondents, with a majority supporting increases in state spending for public schools, medical care, public health, higher education, job training for the unemployed, and assistance for low income families. Support for increases in spending for public schools, medical care, assistance for low income families, and higher education remain significantly higher than the average support levels

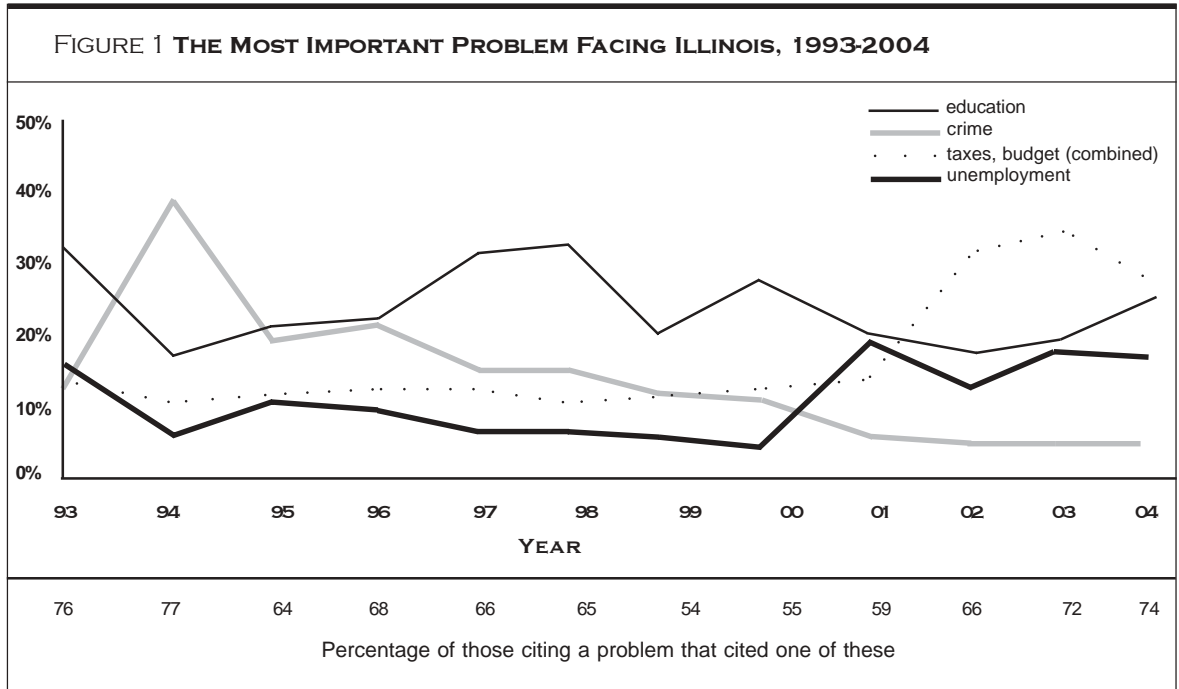
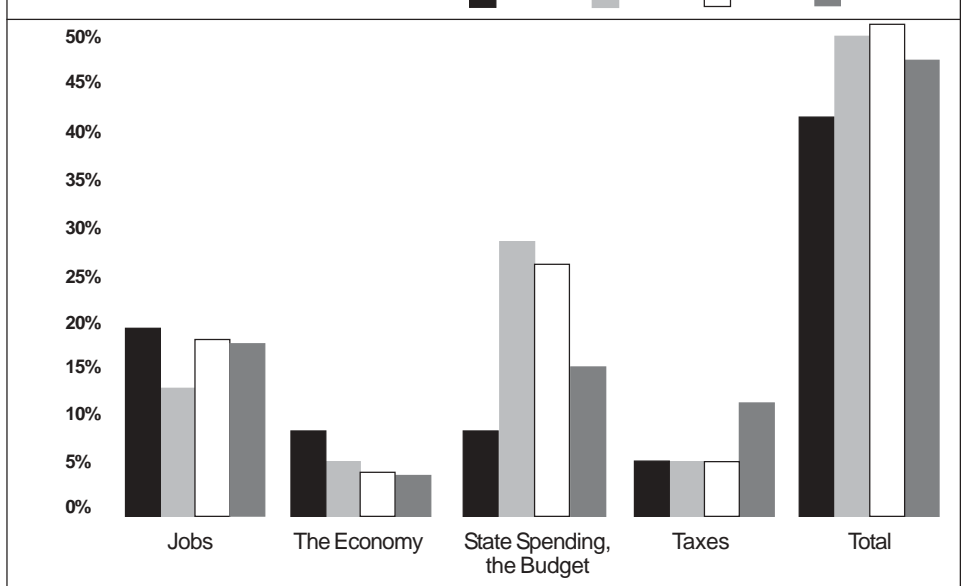


TABLE 1 THE TOP ISSUES THIS YEAR VS. 2002 AND 2003

	2002	2003	2004
Education	19 %	17 %	25 %
Jobs, Unemployment	18	12	17
State Budget	26	28	15
Health Care	10	3	11
Taxes	5	5	11
Crime	N/A	N/A	6
Traffic/Roads	N/A	N/A	5
Government	5	11	3
Corruption	5	N/A	2

FIGURE 2 ECONOMIC CONCERNS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS



PRIORITIES FOR STATE SPENDING

Support for Public Education Remains High

seen in the early to mid-1990s. Support for increased spending on assistance for low income families, higher education, public health, and prisons grew in 2004 as compared with last year's survey.

Support for increases in state spending differs not only by the program area, but also by the characteristics of the respondent. As one can see from **Table 2**, respondents from Chicago generally expressed greater support for increases in spending with respondents from Southern Illinois and Northern Illinois generally expressing the lowest levels of support.

Other differences by respondent characteristics are also notable. Party affiliation mattered, with Republicans much less likely to support spending increases. Respondents under the age of 25 were the most likely to support state spending increases in all areas except job training for the unemployed, while respondents 65 years of age or older were less likely than other groups to favor spending increases for public schools, aid for low income families, and higher education. Interestingly, respondents aged 65 or older were less likely than most other groups to favor increases in state spending for medical care programs but more likely than all but one other age group to support increases in spending for public health (including Medicaid).

Men were less likely to support spending increases than were women. While college graduates were less likely to support spending increases than were groups with less education, respondents who reported having attended but not graduated from college or vocational school expressed the highest levels of support for increased spending. Support for increased spending on public schools was generally independent of educational attainment.

In general, support for increased state spending on each of the program areas declined as the income category of the respondent increased, but support for increased spending on public schools remained high in all income categories.

In general, Black or African American respondents were more willing than other respondents to support increases in state spending, as were Latino or Hispanic respondents.

FIGURE 3 SUPPORT FOR INCREASES IN STATE SPENDING: 2004 COMPARED TO 2003

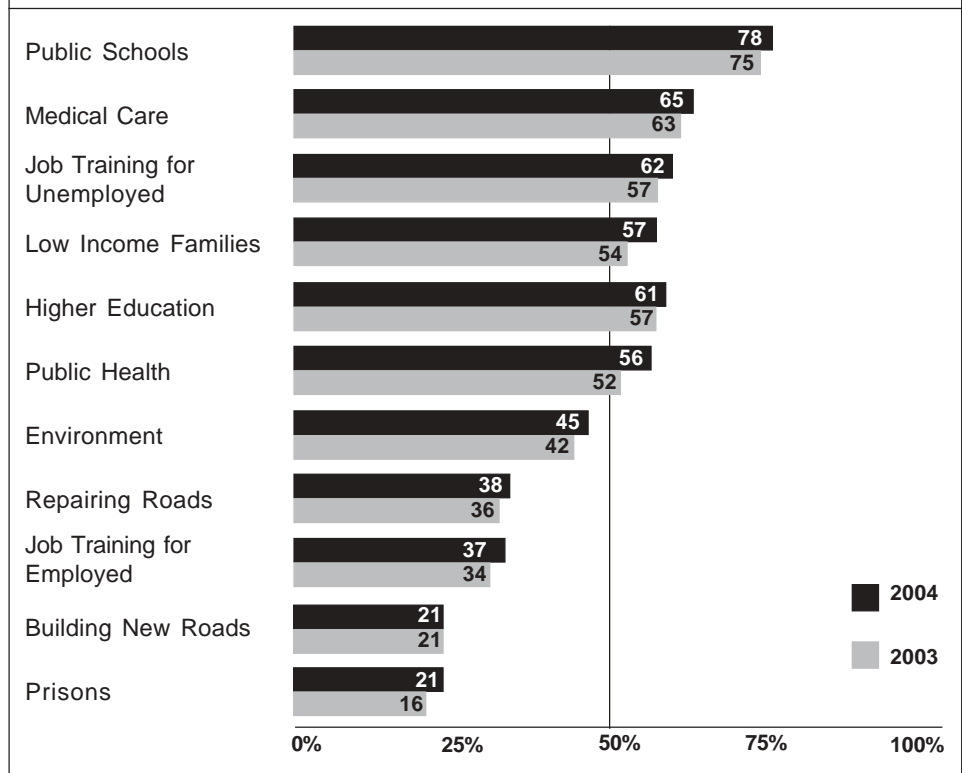


TABLE 2 SUPPORT FOR INCREASES IN STATE SPENDING, 2003

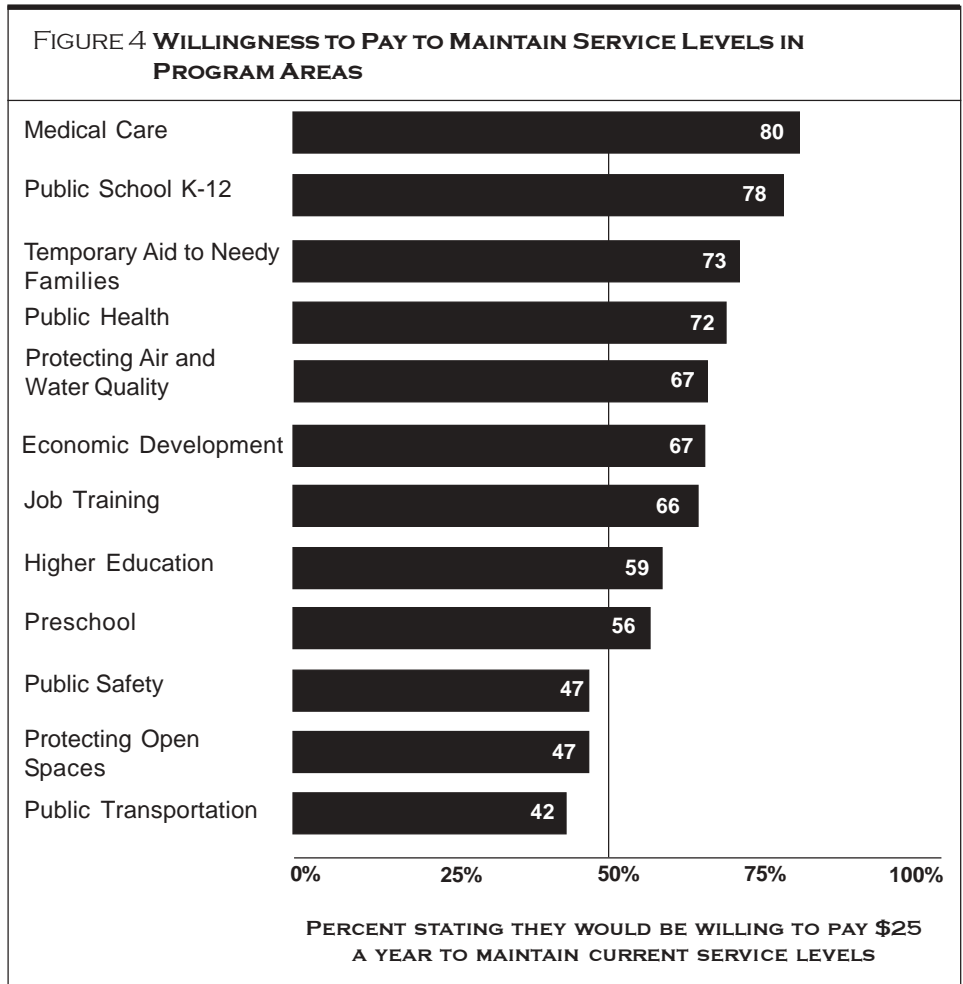
	Public Schools	Medical Care	Job Training	Low Income Families	Public Health	Higher Education
Statewide	78 %	65%	62 %	57 %	56 %	61 %
Region						
Chicago	84	75	71	64	58	71
Suburban Cook	85	68	61	62	67	65
Collar Counties	70	59	57	50	48	55
Northern IL	77	56	65	53	50	44
Central IL	78	58	54	56	52	52
Southern IL	69	56	60	48	54	56
Party Identification						
Republican	62	43	46	35	39	39
Democrat	88	79	70	72	67	76
Independent	80	63	59	53	58	55
Age Group						
18-24	91	76	60	72	63	76
25-34	85	67	57	61	58	64
35-44	77	59	63	52	49	57
45-54	73	58	64	54	46	57
55-64	65	66	65	51	56	46
65 +	61	59	66	45	60	47
Sex						
Male	73	62	58	51	49	55
Female	84	68	65	64	62	66
Education						
High School or Less	76	72	64	63	63	58
Some College	83	75	65	59	58	66
College Graduate	78	58	57	55	49	58
Income <21	85	71	73	72	70	73
\$21,000-34,999	82	75	68	64	64	65
\$35,000-55,999	74	65	65	69	54	58
\$56,000-99,999	83	66	57	52	61	61
\$100,000+	76	57	54	39	40	57
Race						
White	75	62	56	52	53	53
Black	89	83	90	85	74	77
Asian	83	67	67	65	65	82
Other	92	72	67	69	58	92
Hispanic	86	79	69	75	68	79
Non	77	63	60	54	53	57

THE BUDGET

Respondents View the Budget Problems as Serious

Nearly ninety percent of respondents to the 2004 survey indicated that they think that state budget problems in Illinois are somewhat serious or very serious, with about 42% indicating that they feel the problems are very serious. These results are nearly identical to those from the 2003 survey, suggesting little perception that the state budget situation has improved much. However, this year's respondents were somewhat less likely to choose reducing spending for government services as a preferred option to increasing taxes to keep government services at current levels. In 2003, 60% of respondents favored reducing spending and 35% favored increasing taxes. In 2004, 56% favored reducing spending while 37% favored increasing taxes to maintain service levels.

Despite continuing strong support for reducing state spending as a preferred means of addressing budget shortfalls, the majority of respondents would be willing to increase their taxes by \$25 per year to maintain service levels in each of nine different program areas, and 42 to 47% of respondents were willing to pay \$25 more in taxes to maintain service levels in each of another three program areas. Thus, many of the respondents expressed a willingness to pay as much as \$300 per year more in additional state taxes to prevent service cuts and more than half were willing to pay at least \$250 more in taxes to avoid cuts to particular program areas. Support for the individual program areas, as seen in **Figure 4**, was consistent with the other results in the *Illinois Policy Survey*, with public schools, medical care, temporary aid for needy families, and public health programs receiving the greatest support, and all program areas receiving substantial levels of support. It is also notable that medical care, economic development, and public transportation had significant increases over 2003 in the proportion of respondents willing to pay higher taxes to maintain service levels in these programs, with support for public transportation increasing from 32% to 42% of respondents. Nearly 55% of respondents from Chicago were willing to pay higher taxes to maintain public transportation services.



HOW THINGS ARE GOING IN ILLINOIS

Outlook Still Not Good But Is Improving

This year's survey results show a continuing rebound in respondents' satisfaction with the way things are going in Illinois. About 36% of this year's respondents reported being satisfied at some level with the way things are going in Illinois, while only 30% reported dissatisfaction at some level. While dissatisfaction remains at one of the highest levels in the past fifteen

years, the proportion of respondents' reporting satisfaction at some level has returned to levels comparable to the mid-1990's and well above the satisfaction levels of respondents in the early 1990's (albeit with lower dissatisfaction levels during those earlier time periods). See **Figure 5**.

Table 3 indicates that some of the increased satisfaction is related to improved perceptions of how the people of Illinois are doing financially as compared with a year ago. Although a little over one-third of respondents believed that the people of Illinois are worse off financially than they were last year, this represents a substantial improvement over 2003 and 2002. It appears that there is a slowly growing perception of improved economic conditions in the state while economic pressures remain intense and unforgiving for many residents. Fully one-fourth of respondents report that their family's financial condition is worse than it was a year ago, while another one-fourth report that their family's financial condition improved in the last year. See **Figure 6**.

Respondents were also a bit more positive this year about unemployment conditions in Illinois and in their community. See **Table 4** for a comparison of this year's results with those of the previous two policy surveys.

FIGURE 5 SATISFACTION WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING IN ILLINOIS: 1993-2004
IN GENERAL, HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING IN ILLINOIS?

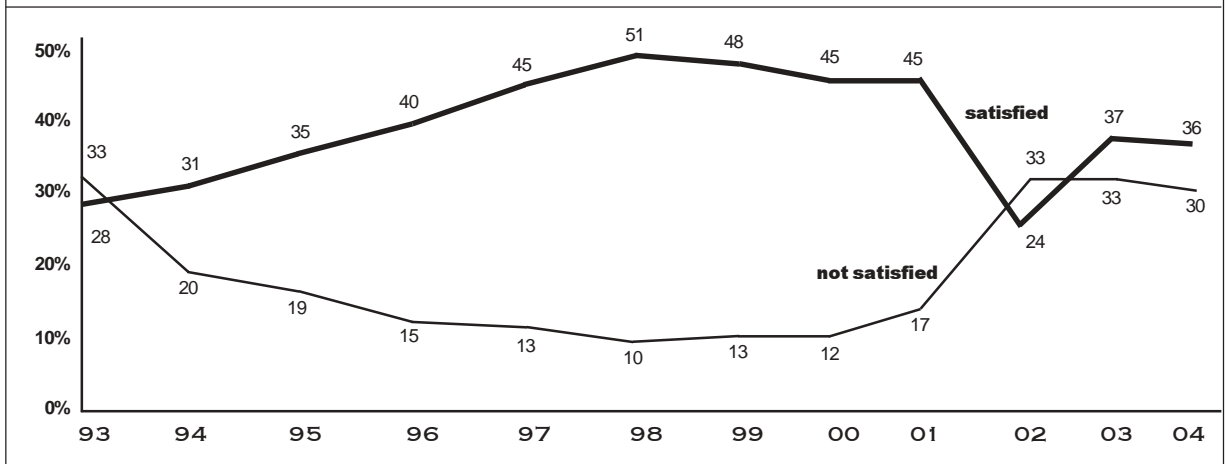


TABLE 3 CHANGE IN FINANCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE PAST YEAR

Would you say at the present time the people of Illinois are better off financially, just about the same, or worse off than they were last year?
...how about you and your family compared to last year?

	Better	Same	Worse	Don't Know
Financial Conditions of Illinois Residents	14.8	47.8	33.6	3.6
Personal Financial Condition	24.7	49.5	25.0	0.7

FIGURE 6 PERSONAL FINANCIAL CONDITION COMPARED TO LAST YEAR, 1995-2004

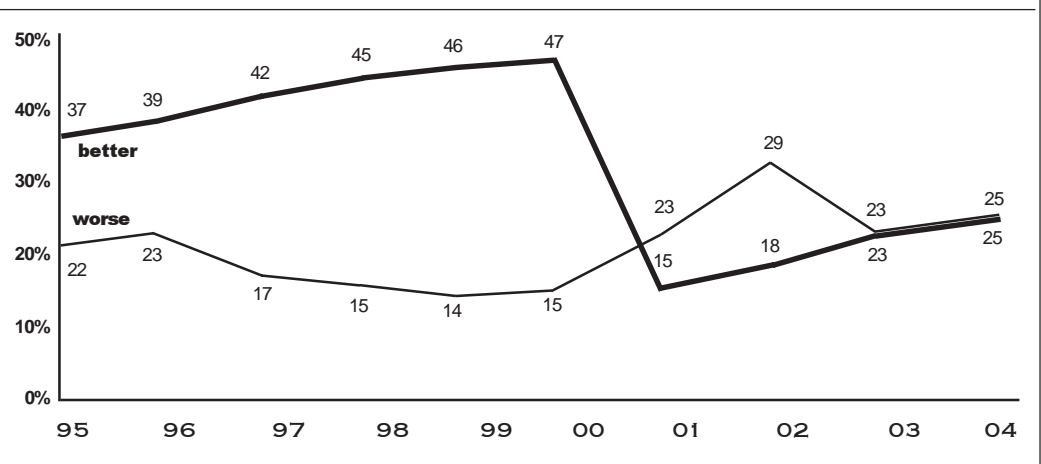


TABLE 4 CONCERN ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT

Would you say unemployment is not a problem, a problem, or an important problem in Illinois? ...in your community?

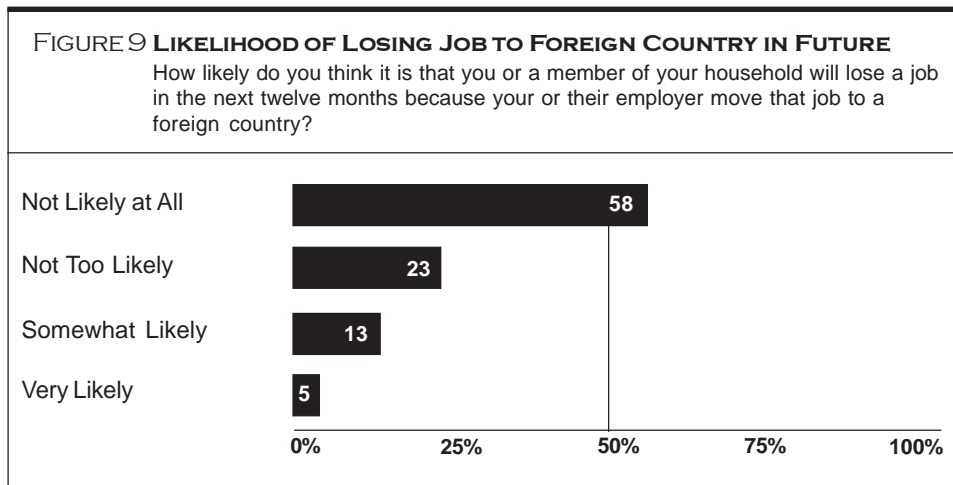
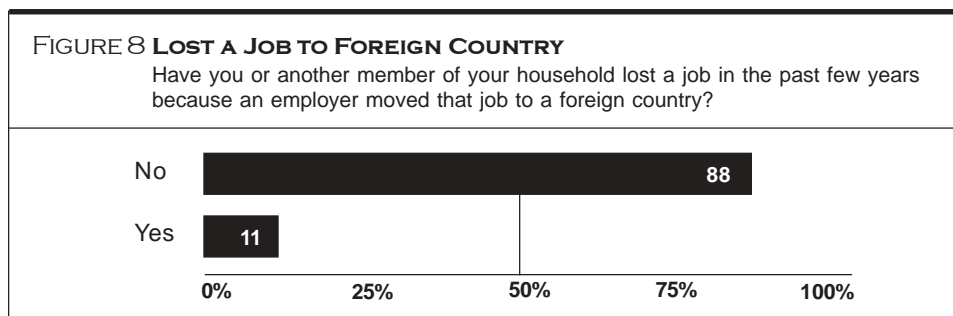
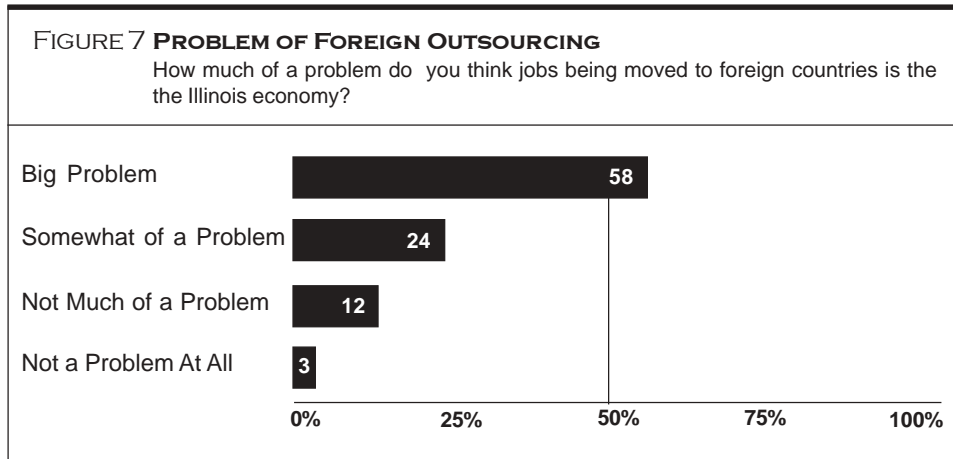
	Not a Problem			A Problem			Important Problem			Don't Know		
	'04	'03	'02	'04	'03	'02	'04	'03	'02	'04	'03	'02
In Illinois	5.3	3.9	3.5	35.5	35.5	35.7	56.8	60.3	59.5	2.3	1.3	1.4
In Community	22.1	17.9	14.4	31.3	32.0	36.4	45.0	49.2	48.3	1.6	0.9	0.9

CONCERNS EXPRESSED ABOUT FOREIGN OUTSOURCING

Loss of Jobs to Foreign Countries an Issue

The loss of jobs due to outsourcing to foreign countries and to foreign competition has been an issue in the news and on the minds of many of our respondents in recent years. The 2004 *Illinois Policy Survey* asked a series of questions designed to explore the degree of concern about these issues. **Figure 7** shows when asked how much of a problem jobs being moved to foreign countries is for the Illinois economy, 58% of respondents said it is a big problem and more than 82% said it was at least somewhat of a problem. However, while more than two-thirds of respondents in Northern Illinois and Southern Illinois felt that jobs being moved to foreign countries was a big problem, less than 52% of Collar Counties respondents agreed (though more than 80% concurred that job loss to foreign countries was at least somewhat of a problem). More than 10 percent of respondents said that they or another member of their household has lost a job in the past few years because the job was moved to a foreign country (see **Figure 8**), with about 15% of Chicago and suburban Cook County respondents saying so, but only about 6% of Collar County respondents reporting a job loss in their household over the past few years. When asked to look to the future, nearly one-third of all respondents, and nearly 40% of respondents from Chicago, said it was either very likely or somewhat likely that they or member of their household would lose a job in the next five years because of an employer moving that job to a foreign country. Nearly 29% of respondents from Northern Illinois expect this type of a job loss is very likely (18%) or somewhat likely (11%) in the next twelve months, and nearly 18% of all respondents expect that such a job loss is at least somewhat likely over the next twelve months (23% in suburban Cook). See **Figure 9**.

On another dimension, respondents were then asked whether the State of Illinois should provide tax breaks to businesses that choose to buy products and materials made in the United States rather than those made in foreign countries. Nearly three-fourths of respondents said that Illinois should provide these types of tax breaks, and, of those who favored such tax breaks, just about two-thirds said they would still favor the tax breaks even if it meant consumers had to pay higher prices for goods and services or that the respondent had to pay higher taxes.



EDUCATION

Public Perception of School Quality Remains Low

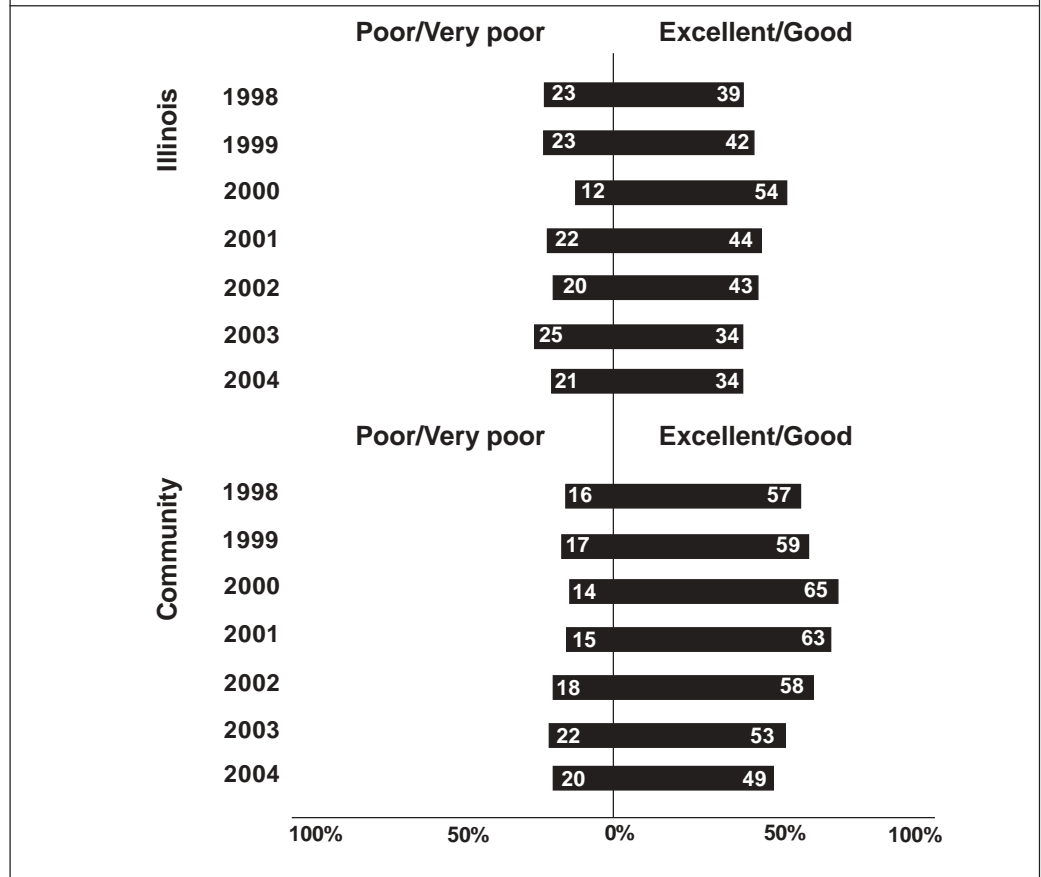
The state educational system has been a top concern of respondents throughout the history of the *Illinois Policy Survey*. But evaluation of the quality of public schools has varied somewhat from year to year, and from region to region.

Figure 10 presents respondents' ratings of public schools in Illinois and the respondent's local area over time. The proportion of respondents rating public schools in Illinois as excellent or good remains at the lowest level in at least a decade. Ratings of the public schools in one's own community have also fallen to a historic low. For the first time, less than 50% of respondents rated their local schools as excellent or good. However, this statewide result masks regional differences. Chicago is the only region where fewer than 50% of respondents rated their local schools as excellent or good, continuing the trend of Chicago respondents rating their local schools much lower than respondents rate local schools in other regions. Over 60% of respondents in the Collar Counties, Northern Illinois, and Southern Illinois rate their local schools as excellent or good, and the ratings of local schools in the latter two regions improved markedly this year. Southern Illinois respondents were most likely to rate their schools as excellent or good. In contrast, there was a marked reduction from last year in the rating given to local schools by respondents in Chicago, Suburban Cook County, and the Collar Counties. The ratings of local schools in all regions except Northern Illinois and Southern Illinois remain well below the ratings given by respondents five years ago.

Again this year, a majority (55%) of respondents indicated that they would support increasing state income taxes and reducing local property taxes as a means of financing elementary and high school education. Nearly half of the respondents who favored this change said they would still favor such a change even if their local schools were to get less money as a result of the change. Nearly half of our respondents indicated that they would favor providing more state aid to school districts with less ability to fund their own educational programs, and only 14 percent opposed this idea.

FIGURE 10 QUALITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In general, how would you rate the overall quality of public schools in Illinois ...in your own community or neighborhood.



**TABLE 5 EVALUATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 2000-2004
PERCENT RATING EXCELLENT/GOOD**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Statewide	65%	63%	58%	53%	49%
Region					
Chicago	36	31	27	29	24
Suburban Cook	77	71	80	65	59
Collar Counties	81	75	74	66	60
Northern Illinois	62	65	50	54	61
Central Illinois	70	67	60	53	54
Southern Illinois	67	65	67	57	63

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM ATTITUDES

Access and Affordability Still a Major Problem

With many health care issues at the forefront in state and national politics, this year's Illinois Policy Survey asked a series of questions about health care related issues.

In an effort to better understand the general state of mind of the respondents relative to the U.S. health care system, we first asked respondents to tell us what they think is the most urgent health care problem facing this country. Analysis of the open-ended responses indicates that 48% of respondents think that access and affordability issues are the most urgent health care problem, with 18% of respondents specifically mentioning health insurance as a particular health care concern. Another ten % of respondents cited AIDS/HIV as the most urgent problem, eight % cited cancer, and six % thought obesity was the most urgent health care problem we face, (with another two % mentioning diabetes, a common complication resulting from obesity). See **Table 6**.

When asked whether the U.S. health care system is best described as a system in a state of crisis, a system with major problems, a system with minor problems, or a system that doesn't have any problems, nearly three-fourths of respondents indicated that they believed that the health system is in crisis or has major problems, a substantial increase over the proportion reporting similar views in 2003. This result is consistent with recent national and international polls on the same subject. See **Table 7**. However, the increasing concerns over the state of the health care system were not manifested in increased support for national health insurance. Indeed, the proportion of respondents who felt that it is the responsibility of the federal government to assure that all Americans have health care coverage declined, albeit by a small amount, between the 2003 and 2004 surveys. See **Table 8**.

The 2004 survey asked about two timely health care related issues: stem cell research and medical malpractice/tort reform. Embryonic stem cell research was supported by about 53% of the respondents (see **Table 9** on the next page), while 17% opposed it, and 29% indicated that they needed more information in order to form an opinion. When asked whether the Illinois General Assembly should pass a law allowing embryonic stem cell research in the state, 57% of respondents said yes. See **Table 10**. When these

TABLE 6 MOST IMPORTANT HEALTH CARE PROBLEM

Access/Affordability	48 %
AIDS/HIV	10
Cancer	8
Obesity	6
Communicable Diseases	3

TABLE 7 EVALUATION OF U.S. HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Which of these statements do you think best describes the US health care system today...the health care system is in a state of crisis, it has major problems, it has minor problems, or it does not have nay problems?

	2004	2003
State of Crisis	17 %	14 %
Major Problems	55	51
Minor Problems	23	33
No Problems	3	1

TABLE 8 NATIONAL HEALTH CARE

Do you think it is the responsibility of the federal government to make sure all Americans have health care coverage, or is that not the responsibility of the federal government?

Yes, Government Responsibility	66 %
No, Not Government Responsibility	30
Don't Know	4

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM ATTITUDES

Continued

results are cross-tabulated by religious preference, one finds that respondents who do not have a religious preference were more likely to support stem cell research (61% support) than other respondents, but that support for stem cell research did not differ between Protestants and Catholics, with 49% of Protestants and 48% of Catholics saying they supported embryonic stem cell research. In terms of support for passing a law in Illinois to allow embryonic stem cell research, 65% of those without a religious preference, 54% of Catholic respondents, and 47% of Protestant respondents favored passing such a law.

A series of questions were also asked about medical malpractice and medical tort reform. See **Table 11**. First, respondents were asked whether they had lost a doctor because he or she left a practice or moved a practice out of state due to malpractice premiums. Overall, 15% of respondents said they had lost a doctor under these circumstances, but 44% of respondents from Southern Illinois indicated they had lost a doctor due to malpractice premiums. Respondents were then asked what they felt was the cause of increasing malpractice premiums. Overall, about 34% of respondents felt that the principal cause was trial lawyers demanding large settlements in court cases, with 40% or more of respondents from the Collar Counties, Northern Illinois, and Southern Illinois expressing this sentiment. In Chicago and Central Illinois, the most cited cause of increasing malpractice premiums was insurance companies seeking large profits, with 30% or more of respondents from these regions choosing this explanation. Less than 10% of respondents in any of the regions believed that incompetent doctors were to blame, and 20-30% of respondents in each region believed that *some combination* of lawyers, insurance companies, or doctors was to blame for the increasing malpractice insurance costs.

When asked whether there should be a limit on the amount of money people can receive from malpractice lawsuits, nearly 70% of the respondents said yes, with support being the highest among Southern Illinois respondents (81%) and the lowest levels of support among suburban Cook County (62%) and Chicago (63%) respondents. Nevertheless, it should be noted that there was substantial support for limits in every region of the state.

TABLE 9 SUPPORT FOR STEM CELL RESEARCH

Some people support embryonic stem cell research, saying it's an important way to find treatments for many diseases. Other people oppose stem cell research, saying it's wrong to use any human embryos for research purposes. What about you?

Support Stem Cell Research	53 %
Oppose Stem Cell Research	17
No Enough Information	29

TABLE 10 LEGISLATION REGARDING STEM CELL RESEARCH

Should the Illinois General Assembly pass legislation supporting stem cell research in Illinois or not?

Yes	57 %
No	26
Don't Know	16

TABLE 11 MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

Have you lost a doctor because he or she left a practice or moved a practice out of state because of malpractice premiums?

No	83 %
Yes	15
Don't Know	2

TABLE 12 REASONS FOR INCREASING MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

In your opinion are these increasing malpractice costs due to trial lawyers demanding large settlements in court cases, insurance companies seeking large profits, incompetent doctors, or something else?

Trial Lawyers Demanding Large Settlements	34 %
Insurance Companies Seeking Large Profits	26
Incompetent Doctors	7
Something Else	24

SOCIAL ISSUES

Respondents Feel Strongly About Gay Marriage; Assault Weapon Ban

Two other issues asked about in this year's survey were gay marriage and assault weapons. As shown in **Table 13**, respondents were fairly evenly split among those who support gay marriage, support civil unions and those who oppose any legal recognition for gay or lesbian couples. Nearly two-thirds of respondents supported some form of legal recognition of committed gay or lesbian couples. This is notable as there appears to be great ambiguity and difference of opinion as to the actual differences between gay marriage and civil union recognition. Many persons who support the same sets of rights for gay/lesbian couples in some cases calling those rights marriage rights and other persons attributing those same rights to civil unions. Support for legal recognition was favored by less than half of the respondents in Northern Illinois, Central Illinois, and Southern Illinois, with the lowest level of support, 44%, occurring in Southern Illinois. There was little difference in support among respondents in other regions, with a little more than two-thirds support in each of Chicago, suburban Cook, and the Collar Counties. In addition, women were more likely to support legal recognition (68%) than were men (61%). Only 51% of respondents who voted for President Bush in the 2004 election supported legal recognition of gay and lesbian relationships, whereas more than 76% of respondents who voted for John Kerry supported legal recognition. In general, support for legal recognition of gay and lesbian relationships diminished with age, with 76% of respondents 24 years of age and younger supporting recognition as compared with 48% of respondents 65 years of age and over. Both Catholics and persons without a religious preference supported legal recognition at a rate of about 72%, while less than 50% of Protestants supported legal recognition. Only 45% of Black and 53% of Asian respondents favored legal recognition, as compared with 67% of respondents who identified themselves as White. Hispanics supported legal recognition at a rate of about 70%.

TABLE 13 ATTITUDES ABOUT GAY MARRIAGE

There has been much talk recently about whether gays and lesbians should have the legal right to marry someone of the same sex. Which of the following comes closest to your position on this issue?

Support Legal Right to Marry	31 %
Support Civil Unions	34
Oppose Any Legal Recognition	29

TABLE 14 ASSAULT WEAPONS

Do you favor or oppose a state law that would ban the manufacture, delivery and possession of semi-automatic assault weapons in Illinois?

Favor	64 %
Oppose	32

When respondents were asked whether they would favor or oppose a state law to ban the manufacture, delivery, and possession of semi-automatic assault weapons in Illinois, nearly two-thirds of respondents favored such a ban, but less than half of respondents from Central Illinois and only 53% from Southern Illinois supported such a ban. Nearly 68% of women supported an assault weapons ban, as compared with 61% of men. In general, support for an assault weapons ban increased with educational attainment. Hispanics supported the ban at a 55% rate, as compared with 66% of non-Hispanics. See **Table 14**.

RESPONDING TO THE THREAT OF TERRORISM

Three Years Later, Post-9/11 Views Have Continued to Shift

Just weeks after the September 11 attacks, the 2001 Illinois Policy Survey asked a series of questions related to appropriate responses to the threat of terrorism and our capacity to respond to the threat of terrorism. We have revisited some of those issues in subsequent years to assess changes in public opinion on these issues.

Respondents were first asked to rate the security of American airports today. Nearly 80% of the 2004 respondents said they felt our airports are either very secure or somewhat secure. Less than 45% of the respondents believe that airports are more secure than a year ago, and less than 5% believe that airports are less secure than a year ago. As in past years, more than 20% of respondents indicate that security concerns have reduced their willingness to fly. See **Figure 11** and **Figure 12**.

As shown in **Table 15**, when asked to rate the United States' and Illinois' capacity to respond to a threat of terrorist attack, the respondents to the 2004 survey gave lower marks to both levels of government, continuing the erosion in confidence reported in last year's *Illinois Policy Survey* report. Only 47.6% of this year's respondents rate the United States' capacity to respond to a terrorist attack as excellent or good, well below the 54.5% excellent/good rating in 2003 and the 64.1% excellent/good rating in the 2001 survey. At the other end of the spectrum, the proportion of respondents rating the United States capacity to respond as poor or very poor has increased to 17.7% from 13.1% in 2003 and 11.7% in 2002. The rating of Illinois' capacity to respond to terrorist attack has also eroded, but not as drastically as that national rating, since 2001. The excellent/good rating fell to 40.3% from 48.8% in 2001 and 47.5% in 2003. The poor/very poor rating proportion increased to 15.5% in 2004, as compared with 13.6% in 2003 and 15.1% in 2001. Notable in this year's result at both the national and state levels is the fact that a higher proportion of respondents replied "don't know" to the rating questions than did in 2003. This may reflect further recent uncertainty and confusion among the populace with respect to these issues.

FIGURE 11 FEELINGS ABOUT AIR TRAVEL

Thinking about traveling by air, how secure do you believe our airports are today?

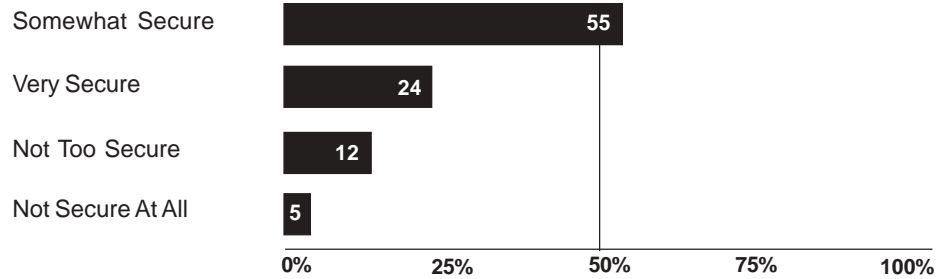


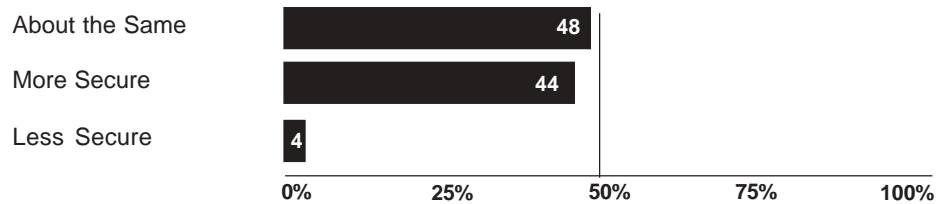
TABLE 15 OUR CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO THE THREAT OF TERRORISM

How would you rate the United States' current capacity to respond to a threat of a terrorist attack? ...the current capacity in Illinois?

	2004		2003		2002	
	US	Illinois	US	Illinois	US	Illinois
Excellent	11.2 %	7.8 %	15.5%	8.7%	20.7 %	9.6 %
Good	36.4	32.5	39.0	38.8	43.5	39.2
Fair	30.4	36.7	31.2	33.2	22.6	26.1
Poor	13.2	12.1	9.6	9.9	9.3	12
Very Poor	4.5	3.4	3.5	3.7	2.4	3.1
Don't Know	4.0	7.0	0.7	5.3	1.4	10

FIGURE 12 AIRPORT SECURITY

How would you rate the security of our airports today compared with a year ago?



TOLLS AND TOLLWAYS

Support for Changes Not Deep

The Illinois tollways and IPASS use was much in the news in 2004. The 2004 Illinois Policy Survey asked a series of questions to gauge respondent use of the tollways and support for the recently enacted changes in the toll structure on Illinois toll highways. More than half of our respondents indicated that they drive on an Illinois tollway at least a couple of times a month, with 26% indicating they drive the tollways several times a week. See **Table 16**. More than 34% of respondents statewide said that they currently have an IPASS. See **Table 17**. When asked whether they supported the state plan to charge higher tolls for drivers who do not use an IPASS, only 28% of respondents supported the plan. See **Table 18**. Support for increasing the tolls for commercial trucks using Illinois tollways was much higher, with 45% of respondents statewide supporting the toll increase. See **Table 19**.

As expected, geography does matter somewhat in the results. Support for higher tolls for non-IPASS users ranged from 28-32% in Chicago, suburban Cook County, the Collar Counties, and Northern Illinois, while support in Central and Southern Illinois was 18 and 21% respectively. Support for increasing tolls for commercial trucks ranged from 46-50% in Chicago, suburban Cook, and the Collar Counties, while in the downstate regions support for the increased tolls for commercial trucks ranged from 31-36%. Thus, Northern Illinois was a swing region in the sense that it was among the highest set of regions in supporting toll increases for non-IPASS users but had the second lowest level of support for increasing tolls for commercial trucks.

Support for higher tolls for non-IPASS users went up with the frequency with which the respondent used the tollways, but only reached a level of 39% among the most frequent tollway users. Support for the increased tolls was 44% among current IPASS users, but this still is well below a majority even in this group of respondents. Indeed, no matter how the results were cross-tabulated and narrowed, no group could be found that supported the increase for non-IPASS users at much more than a 50% rate (this level being among frequent users who have an IPASS).

Somewhat interestingly, frequency of use of the tollways generally was not a determining factor in the level of support for higher tolls for commercial trucks, with one notable exception. While every other frequency of use group favored the higher tolls for trucks at a rate of 39-43%, those who drive the tollways a couple times a month supported the higher tolls at a rate of 55%.

TABLE 16 USING THE TOLLWAY

How often do you drive on an Illinois Tollway?

	Illinois	Chicago	Sub. Cook	Collar	N. IL	C. IL	S. IL
Several Times a Week	26 %	22 %	38 %	32 %	11 %	10 %	4%
A Couple Times a Month	27	34	29	30	28	8	4
Several Times a Year	14	14	12	16	28	12	8
Hardly Ever	32	31	20	22	33	69	84

TABLE 17 I-PASS

Do you or anyone in your household currently have an I-Pass?

No	65 %
Yes	34

TABLE 18 SUPPORT FOR HIGHER TOLLS

Do you support or oppose the state plan to charge higher tolls for drivers who do not use an I-Pass?

	Illinois	Chicago	Sub. Cook	Collar	N. IL	C. IL	S. IL
Oppose	65 %	62 %	70 %	67 %	67 %	63 %	21 %
Support	28	32	29	29	28	18	54
Don't Know	6	5	1	5	6	16	25

TABLE 19 INCREASE TOLLS FOR COMMERCIAL TRUCKS

Would you support or oppose a state plan to increase the tolls for commercial trucks using Illinois Tollways?

	Illinois	Chicago	Sub. Cook	Collar	N. IL	C. IL	S. IL
Oppose	50 %	42 %	48 %	52 %	61 %	65 %	60 %
Support	45	49	50	46	33	31	36
Don't Know	5	9	3	3	6	4	4

EVALUATION OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Each year the Illinois Policy Survey asks respondents to rate the job being done by the President of the United States, U.S. Congress, Governor of Illinois, and the Illinois General Assembly. In 2004, the ratings of both President George W. Bush and Congress continued to decline from the extremely positive ratings they received in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks. See **Figure 13**. The President's excellent/good rating fell to 34% this year, the lowest positive rating proportion for a President in ten years. The President's poor/very poor rating grew to 38% of the respondents, the highest negative rating received by a President in any of the last fifteen years with the notable exception of George H. W. Bush's rating in the 1992 survey conducted around the time of his failed reelection attempt. This year's survey also represents the first time since 1992, and the only other time in the last fifteen years, that the President's negative job rating proportion exceeded his positive job rating proportion. See **Figure 14**.

The proportion of respondents rating the job Congress is doing as poor or very poor grew to 28% in 2004 from 24% in 2003. Congress' negative job rating proportion exceeded the positive job rating proportion this year for the first time since 1995, with the positive job rating for Congress also dropping to its lowest level since 1995. Nevertheless, Congress' ratings generally remain much better than those received in the early 1990's.

Like the President and Congress, this year's ratings of the Illinois General Assembly showed a decline when compared with last year's 2003 results, with 23% of respondents giving the legislature an excellent or good rating, and 17% rating the General Assembly as doing a poor or very poor job. For the most part, these ratings

FIGURE 13 RATINGS OF NATIONAL AND ILLINOIS GOVERNMENT, 2002-2003

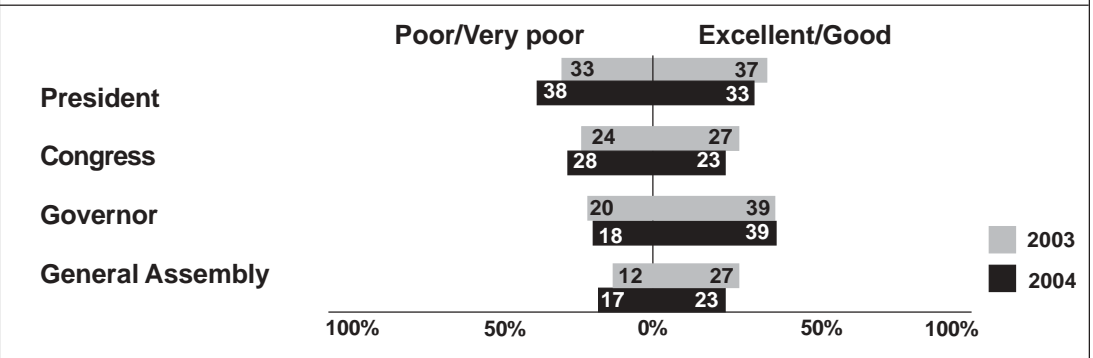


FIGURE 14 RATINGS OF THE PRESIDENT, 1989-2004

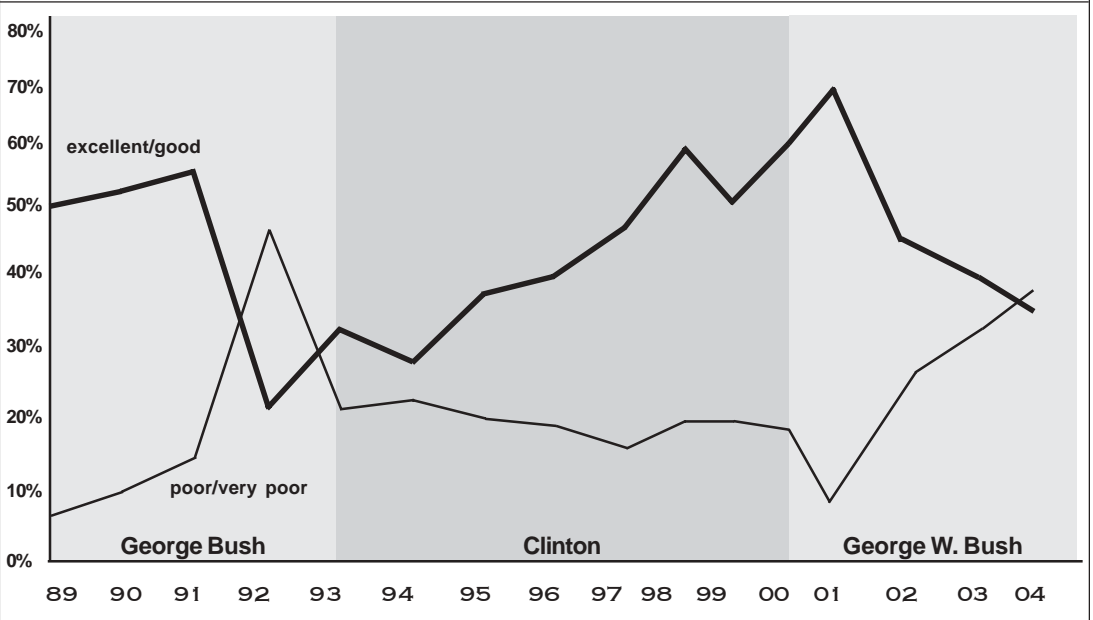
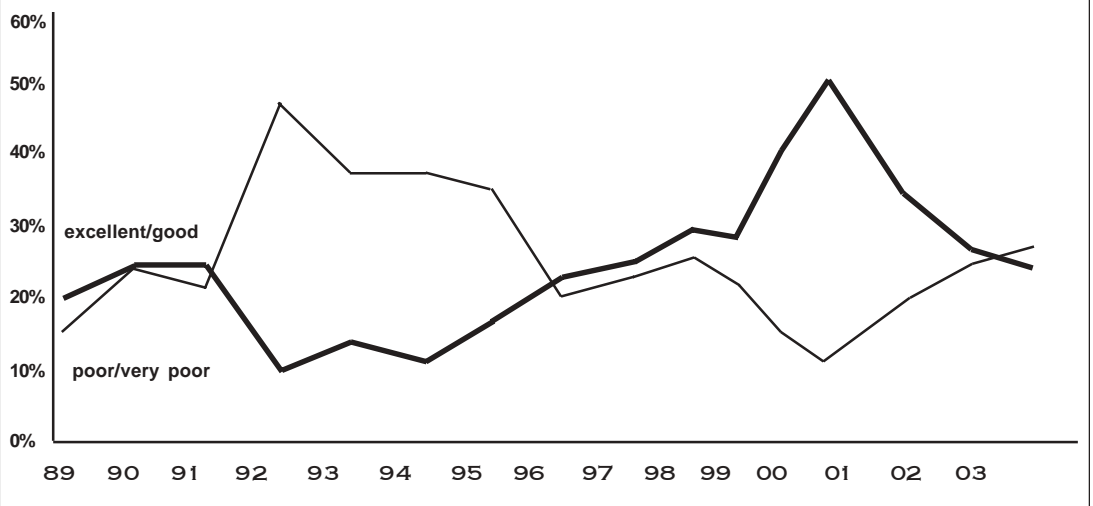


FIGURE 15 RATINGS OF CONGRESS, 1988-2004

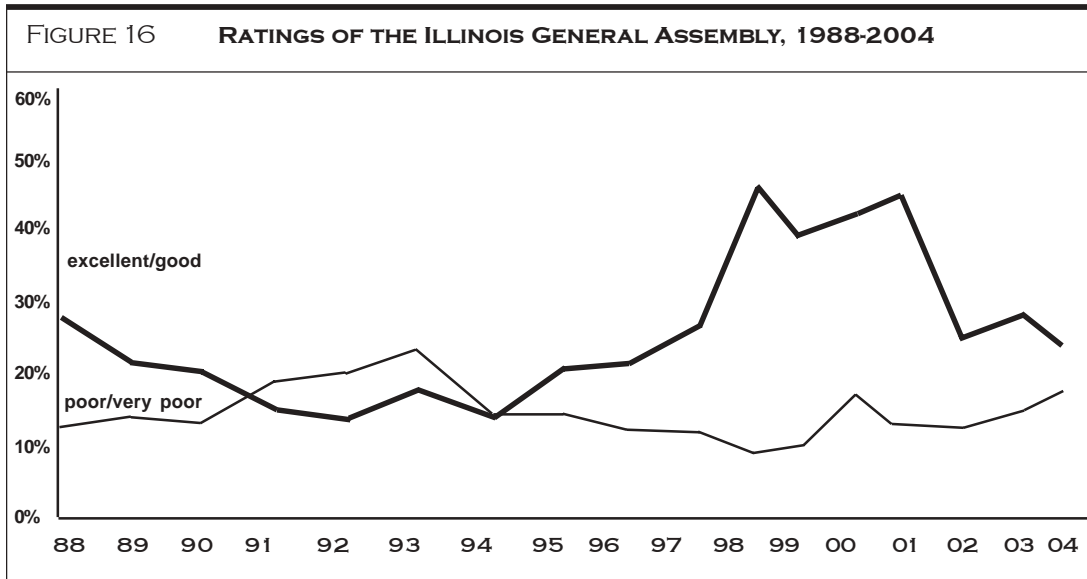


EVALUATION OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Job Approval Ratings at 10 Year Low, Continued

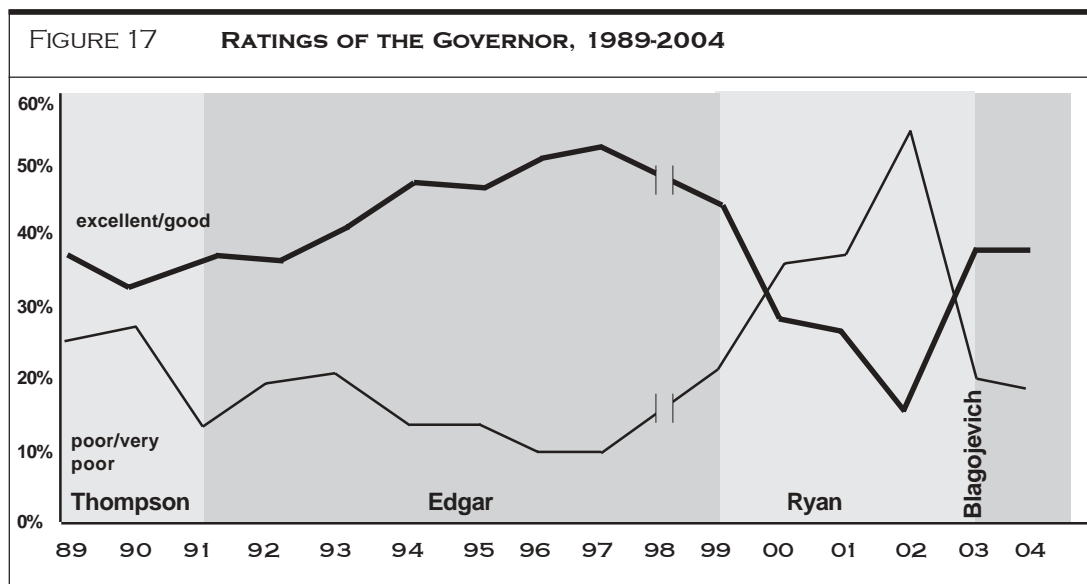
are fairly typical of the General Assembly's rating over the past twenty years, but do represent some erosion from the highly positive ratings the legislature received in the late 1990's and the early 2000's. See **Figure 16**.

Governor Rod Blagojevich's ratings held steady with last year's results, with 39% of respondents rating his job performance as excellent or good and 18% rating it as poor or very poor. See **Figure 17**. These ratings are fairly typical of the average ratings received by Illinois governors over the past twenty years.



The 2004 Presidential Election

The war in Iraq, terrorism and foreign policy more generally were the dominant reasons for the votes of Illinois residents in the 2004 presidential election. The war in Iraq was cited by 21.1% of the respondents who reported voting followed by 16.4% who cited national security and terrorism. An additional 4.8% cited foreign policy and 4.2% talked about the continuity of the war effort. The economy (9.7%) and jobs and unemployment (3.3%) were the major concerns of 13% of the voting respondents. Six percent cited "moral issues" while 4% mentioned abortion and 1.7% mentioned homosexual issues. See **Table 20**.



John Kerry received a majority of the ballots cast by voters most concerned with domestic issues (55.5% vs. 34.4% for Bush), while the two candidates split the votes of those respondents concerned about foreign policy and terrorism issues (43.9% for Bush and 45.2% for Kerry). However, those who cited the war in Iraq specifically voted for Kerry (69.3%) whereas 70% of those who cited national security or terrorism voted for Bush.

TABLE 20 DOMINANT REASON FOR VOTE IN 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

War in Iraq	21.1 %
National Security/Terrorism	16.4
Economy	9.7
Moral Issues	6.0
Foreign Policy	4.8
Continuity of War Effort	4.2
Abortion	4.0
Jobs/Unemployment	3.3
Homosexual Issues	1.7

REGIONAL MAP OF ILLINOIS

