

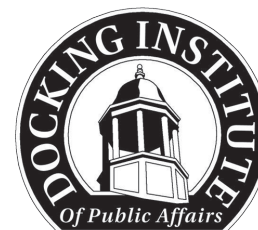
AllenAndersonAtchisonBarberBarton
nBourbonBrownButlerChaseChauta
uquaCherokeeCheyenneClarkClayC
loudCoffeyComancheCowleyCrawfo
ordDecaturDickinsonDoniphanDou
glasEdwardsElkEllisEllsworthFinne
yFordFranklinGearyGoveGrahamG
rantGrayGreeleyGreenwoodHamilt
onHarperHarveyHaskellHodgeman
JacksonJeffersonJewellJohnsonKearn
rnyKingmanKiowaLabetteLaneLea
venworthLincolnLinnLoganLyonMa
arionMarshallMcPhersonMeadeMia
miMitchellMontgomeryMorrisMorto
onNemahaNeoshoNessNorton Osag
geOsborneOttawaPawneePhillipsPo
ttawatomiePrattRawlinsRenoRepub
licRiceRileyRooksRushRussellSaline
ScottSedgwickSewardShawneeSher
idanShermanSmithStaffordStantonS
StevensSumnerThomasTregoWabaur
nseeWallaceWashingtonWichitaWils
sonWoodsonWyandotte AllenAnder
sonAtchisonBarberBartonBourbonB
rownButlerChaseChauta uquaChero
okeeCheyenneClarkClayCloudCoffe
eyComancheCowleyCrawfordDecat
urDickinsonDoniphanDouglasEdwa
ardsElkEllisEllsworthFinneyFordFra
anklinGearyGoveGrahamGrantGra
yGreeleyGreenwoodHamiltonHarp
erHarveyHaskellHodgemanJackson
JeffersonJewellJohnsonKearnyKing
manKiowaLabetteLaneLeavenworth
LincolnLinnLoganLyonMarionMars
shallMcPhersonMeadeMiamiMitche
ellMontgomeryMorrisMortonNema
haNeoshoNessNorton OsageOsborn
eOttawaPawneePhillipsPottawatom



Kansas Speaks 2012

An annual scientific survey
of what Kansas citizens think
about important issues
in their lives.

Prepared for the
Citizens of Kansas
by



Fort Hays State University

The Docking Institute of Public Affairs
Fort Hays State University

Copyright © October 2012
All Rights Reserved

History of Kansas Speaks

Dr. Gary Brinker
Director, Docking Institute

The Docking Institute of Public Affairs is a social research center housed on the campus of Fort Hays State University with a mission to serve the government and non-profit entities of Kansas. We are equally dedicated to providing FHSU students with hands-on educational opportunities and promoting a transparent, democratic state government. It is with these goals in mind that Kansas Speaks was conceived, a statewide public opinion survey of adult Kansans that enables the public, and particularly our elected leaders, to know how Kansans as a whole feel about state leaders and the policies they are promoting. We all know who the people vote for from the election outcomes, but Kansas Speaks provides a clearer picture of exactly what people want from their elected officials and why they vote the way they do.

Although the Kansas Speaks survey began in 2009, the idea had been proposed many years prior. Large sample telephone surveys that allow detailed analyses are quite costly, so appropriating the funding was the major obstacle. But in 2009, the Docking Institute of Public Affairs committed to funding Kansas Speaks using revenues from some of its sponsored projects and pro-bono contributions from our staff and fellows. We make the results available to as much of the statewide media as possible for dissemination to the public. Several major newspapers and numerous internet news sources have since cited Kansas Speaks in their news articles. We hope that this special publication in *The Wichita Eagle* and *The Hays Daily News* will increase awareness and interest in Kansas Speaks.

The study strives to collect the most representative data possible, using professional sampling agencies,

best practice data collection techniques and comparisons to known demographic data for quality control. We also are committed to maintaining the anonymity of our respondents, which has caused some difficulties in the past. Shortly after release of the 2010 edition of Kansas Speaks, associates of Kansas Watchdog.org, a project of the Franklin Center for Government and Public Integrity, obtained a generic hyperlink to the online questionnaire intended only for use by sampled respondents. They proceeded to submit unsolicited data into the survey data base, demonstrating how unscrupulous political activists could potentially bias the results of the survey through repeated, unauthorized submission of survey data.

Fortunately, comparative analysis of the online survey data showed it was not significantly different from the data collected by telephone, suggesting that this was not done on a large scale. Consequently, we now confidentially monitor the identities of our respondents to ensure the integrity of the sample. We are grateful to our colleagues at the Franklin Center for greatly enhancing the validity of Kansas Speaks survey data.

After viewing the overall results of the Kansas Speaks survey, we invite readers to access the full report from our website: www.fhsu.edu/docking. Follow the Kansas Speaks links to access the reports from any of the four editions. We are also happy to provide the data files to any academics that might use the data for their academic research. Our hope is that Kansas Speaks will help make Kansans more aware of their public policy preferences and provide a valuable tool for our elected leaders and public officials to use in serving their constituents.

Most Interesting Findings of the Study

Dr. Chapman Rackaway
Research Fellow

In a nation beset with bad news of late, the 2012 Kansas Speaks survey indicates that most Kansans believe the state is a great place to live and do important things well. Kansans overwhelmingly think the state is a great place to live – less than 5 percent of all respondents said Kansas is a poor or very poor place to live. Among Democrats, that number is much higher. However, frustration with Governor Sam Brownback's conservative agenda after eight years of the Kathleen Sebelius and Mark Parkinson administrations may explain the partisan differences in attitude. Voters are also more likely to think Kansas is a good place to live, by a margin of 10 percent, than non-voters. With a growing divide between eastern and western Kansas, we looked at distinct areas of Kansas: the rural 785 and 620 area codes versus the urban/suburban 913 and 316 area codes. There were no clear differences between the urban/suburban and rural areas. Suburban Kansas City and the rural west both saw a majority, and more rate Kansas as a good place to live, with numbers slightly lower in the Wichita and southwest regions of the state.

Less than half of the Kansans who responded to Kansas Speaks thought the state economy ranged from good to excellent. The more educated a respondent, the better he or she thought the Kansas economy was, generally speaking. Strangely, though, Republicans tended to think that the Kansas economy was in better shape than Democrats. Since the Governor campaigned on improving a struggling Kansas economy, there is a disconnect between his message and his base supporters. Party identification was

important in the evaluation of the Governor's tax plan, passed by the Legislature in 2012. Two-thirds of Republicans supported the Governor's plan, while more than three-quarters of Democrats opposed it.

With more than three in five respondents expressing concern that the Kansas economy will directly impact their family in the coming years, clearly the economy is at the forefront of most Kansans' minds. Support for changing the tax structure as a method of boosting the economy is not preferred by most Kansans, though.

Between 42 and 48 percent of all respondents favored no change to any of the three main forms of tax: income, property and sales.

Respondents were clearly in favor of two tax increases, however. For high-income earners and corporations, more than half of the participants favored tax increases. Democrats were much more likely to favor the higher taxes than Republicans, not surprisingly, except for small businesses where most favored lower taxes or no changes, regardless of party affiliation.

Kansans are split on the quality of state government, with Republicans and those with higher levels of education more positive in their evaluations. Since the election of Governor Brownback, he has been a touchstone of Kansas politics and a controversial figure. Reactions to the Governor and state Legislature were split, with roughly 40 percent in favor of and opposed to each, leaving a middle ground of 20 percent neutral towards both entities. Democrats were much less satisfied with both the executive and legislative branches, again not surprisingly.

Survey Methodology

Dr. Jian Sun, Docking Institute
Senior Research Scientist

To assess attitudes and opinions of Kansans, the Docking Institute surveys a random sample of residents age 18 and older in Kansas every year. Since 2010, the Docking Institute has been using an address-based sampling technique, which selects a random sample of addresses in Kansas.

The sample was purchased from Survey Sample International Inc. Addresses for which telephone numbers were available were surveyed by telephone. Addresses for which no phone number was available were mailed a questionnaire. Each year, the Docking Institute contacted thousands of Kansas residents and collected answers from more than 900 people. In 2012, 4,468 residents were contacted and 928 of them completed the survey. The margin of error was 3.2 percent at the 95-percent confidence level. A margin of error of 3.2 percent means that there is a 95-percent probability that findings among the sample vary no more than +/- 3.2 percent from the value that would be found if all adult Kansas residents were surveyed, assuming no response bias. In 2012, the survey had higher response rates among Kansas residents who are white, non-Hispanic and those over 55. Therefore, the overall population estimates are biased toward the opinions of white, non-Hispanic and older Kansans.

The questionnaire was developed with the assistance of Dr. Chapman Rackaway, Docking Institute Research Fellow and Associate Professor of Political Science at Fort Hays State University. The survey questions measure what the researchers deemed the most substantive indicators of satisfaction with state government and policies.

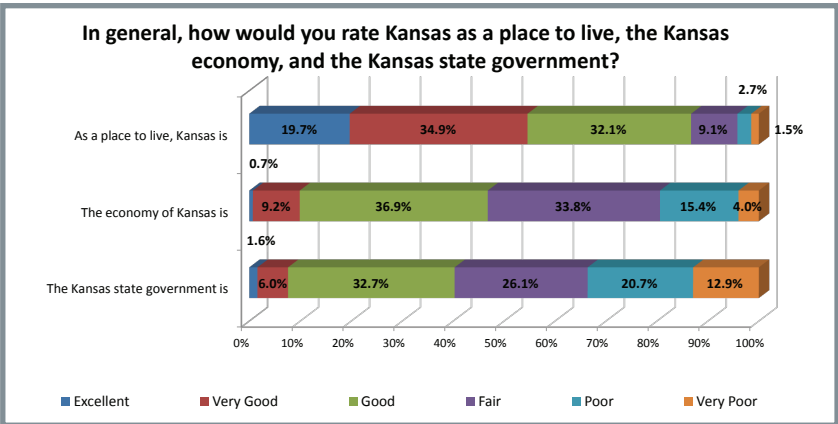


Figure 1

Figure 1 shows that the vast majority of respondents think Kansas is at least a good place to live, with only about 4 percent expressing negative feelings. Respondents who voted in 2010 and those who identify with the Republican Party were more likely to rate living in Kansas more highly. However, respondents were not as optimistic about the state of the Kansas economy, with over half saying the economy is, at best, in fair condition. Upper income, highly educated, Republican and voting respondents tended to rate the state economy more highly. Respondents were only marginally satisfied with the state government, with about 1/3 rating it as doing less than a "fair" job. Republican and lower educated respondents tended to rate state government more highly. In the 2009 Kansas Speaks results, more respondents said Kansas is a "good" place to live, whereas in 2012 they are more likely to say "fair."

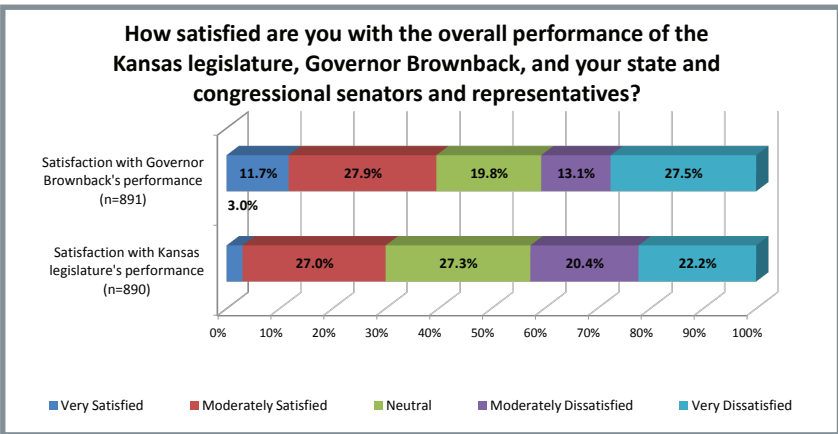


Figure 2

Respondents expressed mixed satisfaction with the overall performance of Governor Brownback and the Kansas Legislature, with a slightly higher percentage indicating dissatisfaction with both. Satisfaction with both was higher among Republicans and the less educated. The Governor was also rated more highly by those who voted in 2010. Satisfaction with the state government declined somewhat compared to the 2009 survey results.

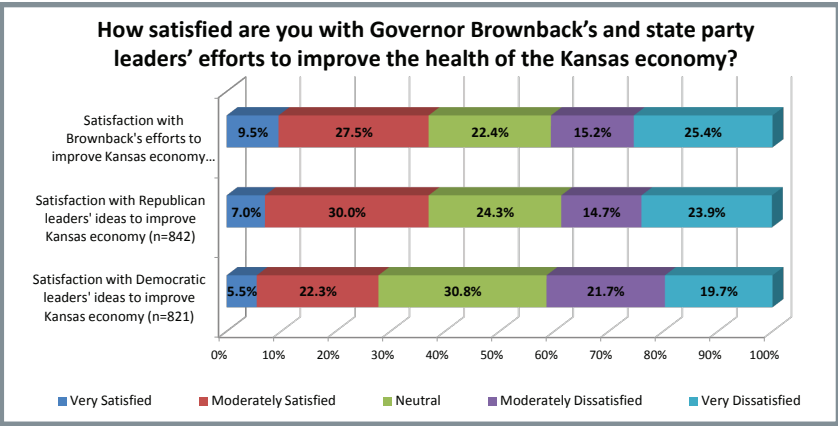


Figure 3

Respondents were also highly divided in their satisfaction with the Governor's and both party leaders' efforts to improve the Kansas economy. Satisfaction with the Governor was higher among the lower educated, Republicans and respondents who voted in 2010. However, dissatisfaction with the Governor was also higher among voting respondents, with non-voting respondents tending to be neutral. Satisfaction with the Democratic Party leaders' efforts was higher among older, female, lower-income and Democratic respondents. Satisfaction with the Republican Party leaders' efforts was higher among the Republican and lower-educated respondents.

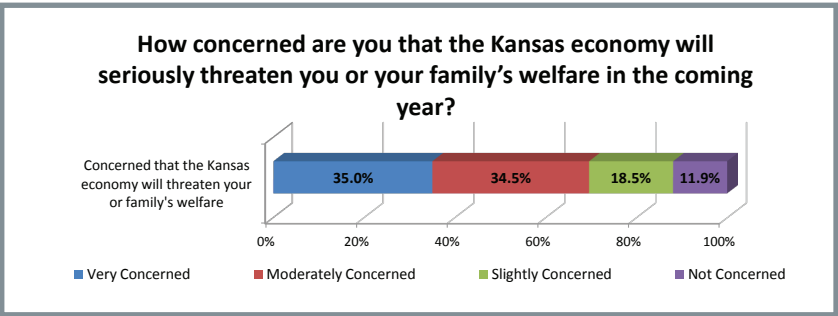


Figure 4

About one-third of respondents said they were "very concerned" that economic conditions will threaten them or their families' welfare in the coming year, while another one-third expressed moderate concern. One-third of Kansans feel little or no concern for their families' economic welfare. Concern tended to be higher among the older, less educated, female, lower income and Democratic respondents. Concern for respondents' and their families' welfare increased in 2012 compared to the 2009 survey results.

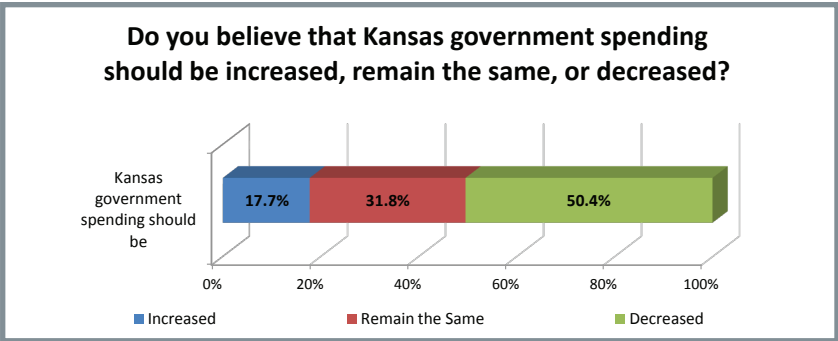


Figure 5

When asked about state spending, half of respondents favored decreasing state expenditures, while another one-third favored keeping state spending unchanged. Less than one-fifth favor increased state spending. Upper-educated and Democratic respondents were more likely to favor increased state spending.

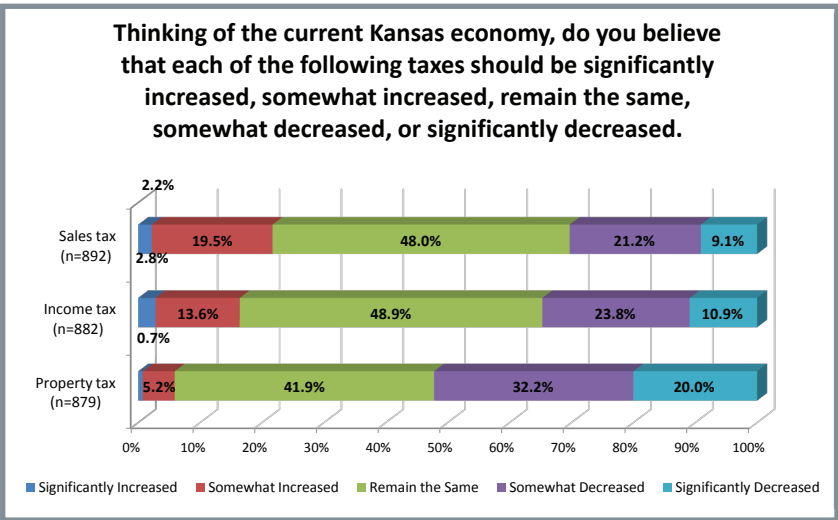


Figure 6

Although respondents were most likely to favor keeping sales tax and income tax as is, over half said property taxes should be decreased, while more favored a reduction in sales and income taxes than favored increases. Upper-educated and Democratic respondents were more likely to favor increasing income taxes. Increasing sales tax was more popular among the upper-educated, male, upper-income and voting respondents. Lower property taxes are favored most often among Republican and low-income respondents.

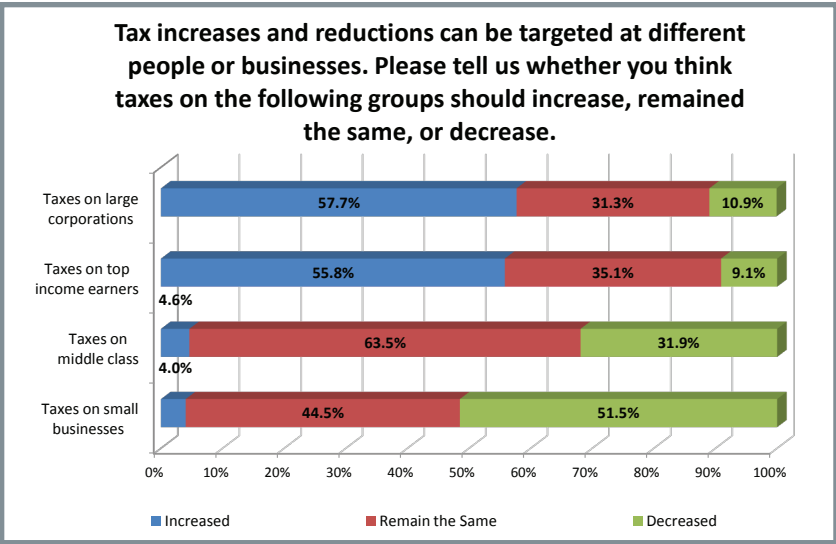


Figure 7

When asked about more specific taxation policies, over half of respondents favored increasing taxes on large corporations and the top income earners, up by several percentage points from the 2009 survey. Almost all respondents wanted to decrease or keep the current tax rates on small businesses and the middle class. The upper educated were more likely to favor increasing taxes on the middle class, while those with household incomes of less than \$35,000 were most likely to favor lowering taxes on the middle class. However, respondents’ overall support for lowering taxes on the middle class decreased by 11 percent between 2009 and 2012. Raising taxes on large corporations was more popular among female, lower-income and Democratic respondents. Democratic respondents were also more likely to favor increasing taxes on upper income Kansans. Republican respondents were more likely to favor reduced taxes on small businesses.

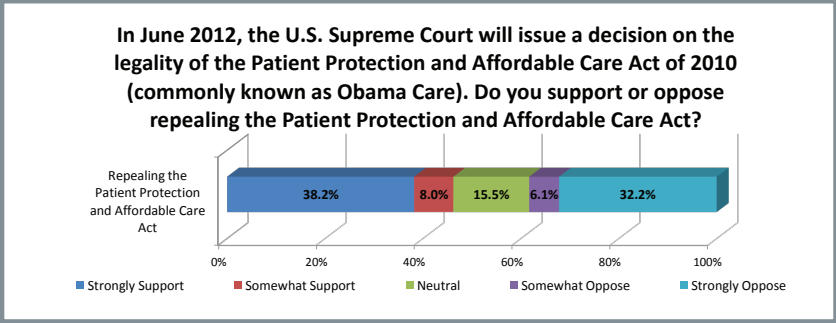


Figure 8

Respondents interviewed prior to the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision supporting the Constitutionality of the Patient Protection and Affordability Act (ObamaCare) were asked about their support for repealing the legislation. Although highly divided on this issue, the results showed slightly higher support than opposition among respondents for repealing ObamaCare. Male, Republican and respondents who voted in 2010 were more likely to favor repealing ObamaCare.

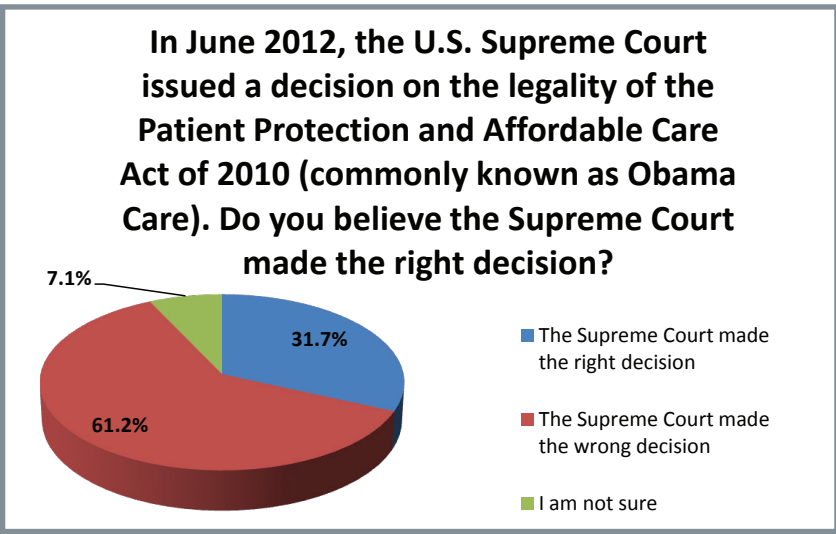


Figure 9

Respondents interviewed after the Supreme Court decision to uphold ObamaCare were asked whether they thought the Court made the correct decision. Almost two-thirds said the Supreme Court made the wrong decision, while almost one-third felt it was the correct decision. The upper educated and Democratic respondents were more likely to agree with the Court’s decision.

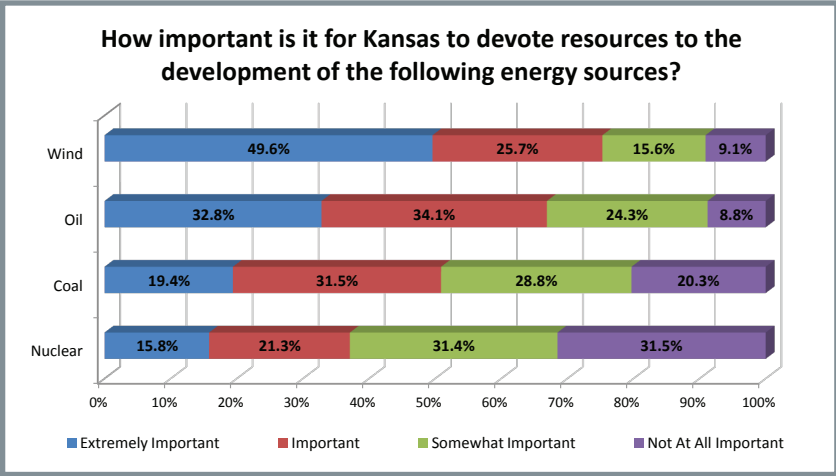


Figure 10

Respondents were asked to indicate their support for devoting resources for the development of the four energy sources. Half of respondents felt it “very important” to devote resources to developing wind energy, while one-third felt this way towards oil resources. Almost one-third favored no support at all for nuclear energy. Support for oil and coal was slightly higher among the less-educated and lower-income respondents, and significantly higher among Republican respondents. Wind energy received stronger support among the Democratic and lower-income respondents. Males and Republicans were more likely to support nuclear energy. Since the 2009 survey, support for oil development has increased, with a similar decrease in support for wind energy.

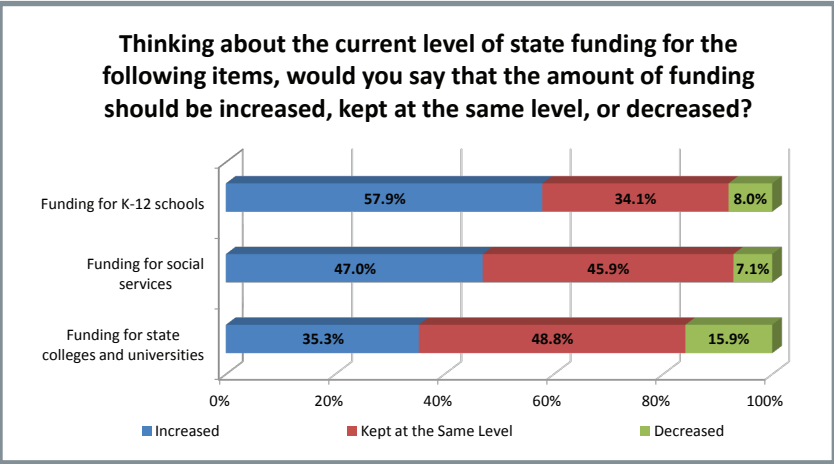


Figure 11

When asked about their support for public education and social services, respondents expressed the most financial support for K-12, with well over half favoring an increase in spending for these schools. They were highly divided on whether to increase funding for social services or leave the current funding in place. Only one-third favored increased funding for higher education, with about half wanting to leave funding for colleges and universities as is. Compared to the 2009 survey, support for K-12 has increased, while support for higher education has decreased somewhat.

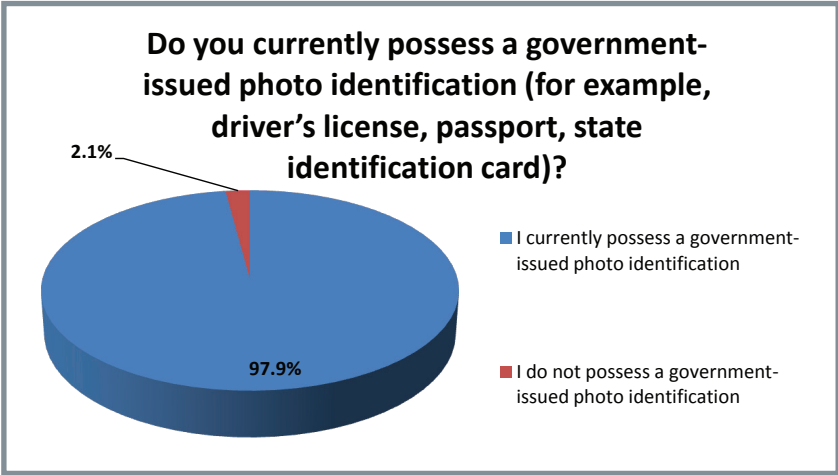


Figure 12

The survey attempted to measure Kansans' preparation for the upcoming election, which will require all voters to present a government-issued photo ID before being allowed to vote. Figure 12 shows that only 2 percent of respondents said they did not possess the credentials required to participate in the election, although there is no way of determining how many of these respondents are eligible to vote. Figure 13 shows that just over half of respondents with no government photo I.D. intend to obtain one by the November 2012 election. This leaves about 0.85 percent of the entire sample with no I.D. and no plans to acquire one prior to the election. This may seem a small percentage, but if the survey is representative of all Kansas adults, this represents over 17,000 Kansas residents who have no government issued photo I.D. and no intentions of obtaining one.

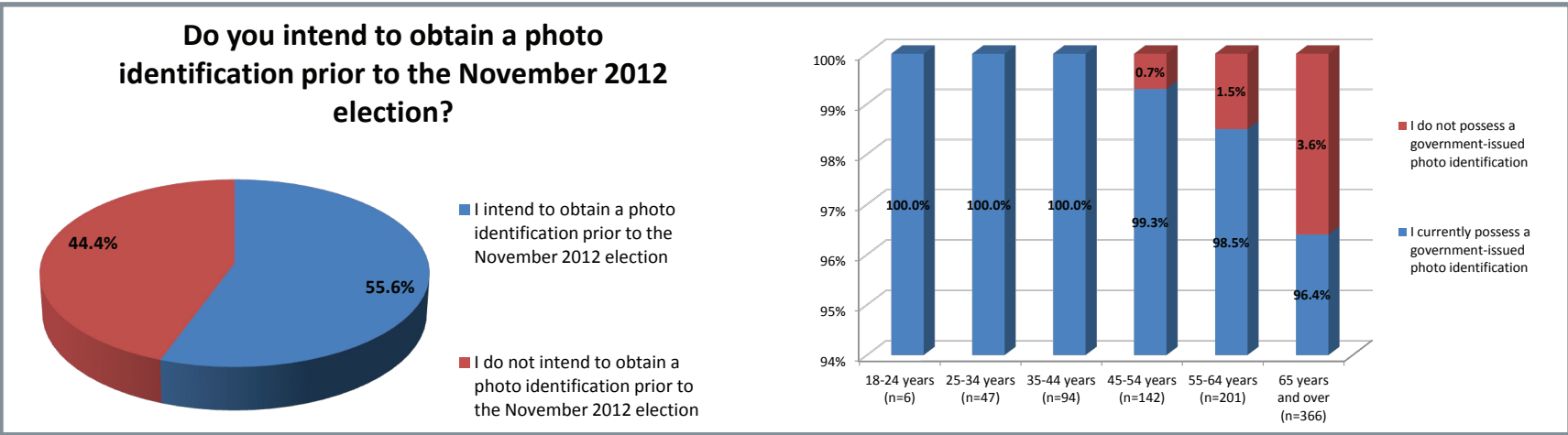


Figure 13

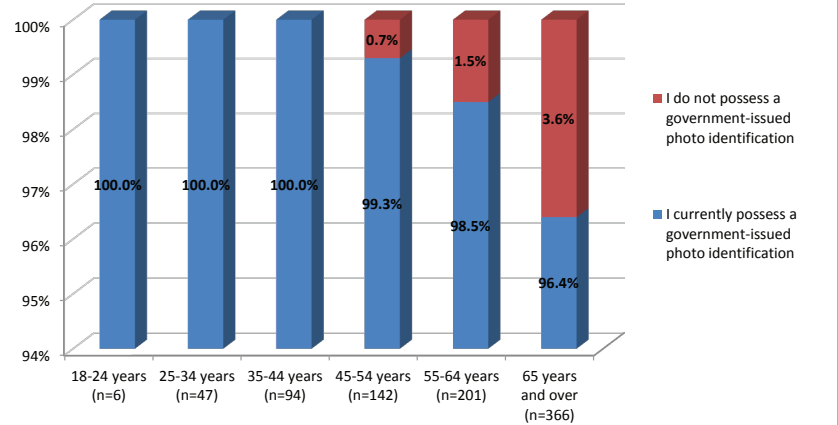


Figure 14

Figure 14 shows the age breakdown for respondents that do not possess a government-issued photo I.D. At least three-fifths are 65 years of age or over. They also tend to have low levels of education and to be of non-white ethnicity. Of the respondents who said they voted in the 2010 election, 1.7 percent did not have the required I.D. to vote in 2012 when they took the survey.

EYE OF THE tiger

Fort Hays State University innovation that drives solutions

- **The best value** – learning opportunities with exceptional depth inside and outside the classroom from the beginning of the college experience AND the lowest tuition of any college or university, public or private, in the Midwest region.
- **The state leader in online education** – FHSU's Virtual College annually serves more than 8,000 students online in more than 40 bachelor's and master's degree programs, and in more than 50 certificate programs.
- **The fastest-growing university in the Kansas Board of Regents system** – FHSU's enrollment has more than DOUBLED since the turn of the century, from 5,506 in fall 2000 to 13,310 today.
- **The Kansas connection to China** – FHSU has the largest enrollment in China, with about 3,600 students at partner universities, of any school that is not a Chinese university.

For information or to enroll, please visit
www.fhsu.edu or call 800-628-FHSU.



**FORT HAYS STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Forward thinking. World ready.