

# THE GRANITE STATE POLL

## THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

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### EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES SEEN AS KEY TO NH FUTURE

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DURHAM, NH – New Hampshire residents believe that improving access to educational opportunities is the key to New Hampshire's economic future. And the institutions most important to insure New Hampshire's future are state government and schools and colleges. Residents of New Hampshire are far more optimistic about job opportunities in their own line of work than they are about the overall job market in New Hampshire.

These findings are based on the latest **Granite State Poll**,<sup>?</sup> conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. The Granite State Poll is sponsored by the University of New Hampshire. Five hundred six (506) randomly selected New Hampshire adults were interviewed by telephone between February 10 and February 17, 2006. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/-4.4 percent.

#### Focus for NH Policy Makers

While New Hampshire is faced with a number of problems, New Hampshire residents believe the most important problems for New Hampshire policy makers to focus on are access to quality healthcare and improving educational opportunities. Thirty-one percent of New Hampshire residents believe that access to quality healthcare is the most important problem for New Hampshire policy makers to focus on, 29 percent say improving educational opportunities is most important for policy makers to focus on, 24 percent cite a strong economy, 11 percent say protecting New Hampshire's lifestyle, 4 percent say maintaining a clean environment, and 1 percent cite some other issue.

When the top two issues cited are combined, 57 percent cite improving educational opportunities, 56 percent cite access to quality healthcare, 41 percent cite maintaining a strong economy, 20 percent say protecting New Hampshire's lifestyle, 16 percent cite maintaining a clean environment and 1 percent cite some other issue.

#### Threats to NH's Future

The U.S. Census estimates that the New Hampshire population will grow 33 percent between 2000 and 2030 and New Hampshire residents see the greatest threats to New Hampshire's future related to this population growth. When asked to name the greatest threats to New Hampshire's future, 20 percent cite population growth and sprawl and 19 percent cite affordable housing. Other important threats are the cost of health care (17%), growth in the size of government and taxes (13%), and a lack of high paying jobs (11%).

And while improving educational opportunities is seen as the issue for New Hampshire policy makers to focus on, few Granite Staters see either the quality of education or the cost of education as threats to New Hampshire's future -- only 11 percent of respondents said that the quality of education is the greatest threat to New Hampshire's future and 6 percent cited the cost of education.

#### Most Important Institutions

When asked about the institutions that are most important to insure New Hampshire's future, 28 percent cited schools and colleges, 28 percent named state government, 23 percent named local government, 14 percent said the business community, 2 percent named the news media, 1 percent cited some other organization, and 4 percent are unsure.

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<sup>?</sup> We ask that this copyrighted information be referred to as *the Granite State Poll*, sponsored by the University of New Hampshire.

### Granite State Poll Methodology

These findings are based on the most recent Granite State Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center from February 10 to February 17, 2006. A random sample of 506 New Hampshire adults was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to plus or minus 4.4 percent. Results reported for other subgroups have potential for somewhat larger variation than those for the entire population.

The data have been weighted to adjust for numbers of adults and telephone lines within households, respondent sex, and region of the state. In addition to potential sampling error, all surveys have other potential sources of non-sampling error including question order effects, question wording effects, and non-response.

#### Most Important Issues for NH Policy Makers

“Which of the following do you think is most important for New Hampshire policy makers to focus on ... a strong economy ... improving education opportunities ... maintaining a clean environment ... access to quality healthcare ... or protecting New Hampshire’s lifestyle?” “What is next most important?”

	<u>Most Important</u>	<u>Top Two Responses *</u>
Access to quality health care	31%	56%
Improve education opportunities	29	57
Strong economy	24	41
Protecting NH lifestyle	11	20
Clean environment	4	16
Other	1	1
Don’t know / Not Sure	0	1
(N=)	(503)	(503)

\* Percentages sum to more than 100%.

#### Greatest Threat to NH Future

“What do you think is the greatest threat to New Hampshire’s future ... a lack of high paying jobs ... the cost of health care ... population growth and sprawl ... quality of education ... the cost of education ... affordable housing ... increased government and taxes?” “What is the next greatest threat?”

	<u>Most Important</u>	<u>Top Two Responses *</u>
Population growth & sprawl	20%	28%
Affordable housing	19	32
Cost of health care	17	38
Increased government & taxes	13	24
Lack of high paying jobs	11	22
Quality of education	11	22
Cost of education	6	19
Other	2	3
Don’t know / Not Sure	2	4
(N=)	(503)	(503)

\* Percentages sum to more than 100%.

#### Most Important Institution

“Which of the following institutions to you think is most important to insure New Hampshire’s future ... state government ... local government ... town government ... businesses ... schools and colleges ... or the news media?” “What is next most important?”

	<u>Most Important</u>	<u>Top Two Responses *</u>
Schools & colleges	28%	47%
State government	28	49
Local / town government	23	54
Businesses	14	27
News Media	2	6
Other	1	1
Don’t know / Not Sure	2	4
(N=)	(500)	(500)

\* Percentages sum to more than 100%.

