

UNH Poll Finds Shaheen's Approval Remains Steady

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EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS: Andrew Smith, director of the UNH Survey Center, is available for interviews at (603) 862-2226.

DURHAM, N.H. -- Governor Jeanne Shaheen currently receives moderate job approval ratings from Granite Staters, according to the latest Granite State Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. Her approval ratings have remained unchanged since October.

The Granite State Poll is sponsored by UNH. Five-hundred forty (540) adults were interviewed between January 25 and February 5, 2002. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/-4.2 percent. For more detailed results and charts, visit the Survey Center Web site at www.unh.edu/survey-center and click on Press Releases.

GUBERNATORIAL APPROVAL

In the midst of a tough Senate campaign and facing a struggling New Hampshire economy, Governor Jeanne Shaheen's approval rating among New Hampshire residents remains moderate. Fifty-five percent of New Hampshire adults say they approve of the job Shaheen is doing as governor, 35 percent disapprove, and 10 percent are neutral. Shaheen's approval ratings have changed little since the October 2001 Granite State Poll when 55 percent of New Hampshire adults approved of her performance as governor, 32 percent disapproved, and 13 percent were neutral. Typically, an approval rating of 60 percent or more is considered high. Ratings in the 40s are considered to spell trouble.

When the opinions of registered voters are examined,

Shaheen's approval ratings have decreased significantly since her previous term in office, an indication that her job approval has been hurt by the flagging New Hampshire economy. During New Hampshire's economic boom in September 1999, 66 percent of Granite State voters said they approved of her job performance. In the most recent Granite State Poll, only 55 percent of registered voters said they approved of her job performance.

"Governor Shaheen is in a difficult political position," says Andrew Smith, director of the UNH Survey Center. "The economy has gone south and many people have lost their jobs. Fairly or unfairly, governors typically get credit when the economy is doing well and take the blame when the economy is doing poorly. The state of the economy over the next nine months will have considerable impact on perceptions of Shaheen's job performance."

Shaheen's personal favorability rating has also remained steady. Currently, 58 percent of New Hampshire adults say they have a favorable opinion of Shaheen, 30 percent have an unfavorable opinion of her, 8 percent are neutral, and 4 percent say they don't know enough about her to say. Last October, 58 percent of New Hampshire adults said they had a favorable opinion of Shaheen, 29 percent had an unfavorable opinion, 9 percent were neutral, and 4 percent said they don't know enough about her to say. Governor Shaheen's net favorability rating, the percentage having a favorable opinion minus the percentage having an unfavorable opinion, is +28, essentially unchanged from October when it stood at +29.

SUB-GROUP ANALYSIS

Shaheen gets her highest job approval ratings from Democrats, liberals, union households, and people with higher levels of income and higher levels of education. Republicans and conservatives give her the lowest job approval ratings. There is a significant gender gap in approval of the job Shaheen is doing as governor, with 63 percent of women approving of her job performance and 44 percent of men disapproving.

GRANITE STATE POLL METHODOLOGY

These findings are based on the most recent Granite State Poll conducted by the UNH Survey Center from January 25 to February 5, 2002. A random sample of 540 New Hampshire adults was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to plus or minus 4.2 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 for 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.

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