

# South Carolina Statewide School Choice Survey

## Interview Schedule

Field Dates: March 4-7, 2019

N=500 Registered Voters  
N=250 Landline  
N=250 Cell Phone  
Margin of Error =  $\pm 4.38\%$

Project #19078

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\* Denotes result under 0.5%.

^ Denotes rounding. Due to rounding, some figures may be higher or lower by less than one-half of one percent.

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### (ASK OF ALL CELL SAMPLE)

B. Before we begin, I need to know if I have reached you on a cell phone, and if so, are you in a place where you can talk safely without endangering yourself or others?

100% Yes, cell and in safe place

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### (ASK OF THOSE IN QA WHO ARE NOT THE NAME ON THE VOTER FILE)

D. Are you registered to vote in South Carolina?

**(IF YES, ASK:)** And would you say you are certain you are registered to vote in South Carolina?

100% YES, CERTAIN **(CONTINUE)**

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E. Are you, or is anyone in your household, employed by a newspaper, television or radio station, or a political party, or by a candidate for political office?

100% NO

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Now, I just have a few questions about yourself to make sure we have a representative sample...

1. In what year were you born?

3% 18 - 24  
13% 25 - 34  
25% 35 - 44  
14% 45 - 54  
19% 55 - 64  
26% 65 AND ABOVE  
\* REFUSED

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2. Would you say that things in South Carolina are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?

60% RIGHT DIRECTION  
31% WRONG TRACK  
  
5% NO OPINION (**DO NOT READ**)  
4% REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

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Moving on to another topic...

3. Do you think things in Kindergarten through 12th grade education in South Carolina are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?

32% RIGHT DIRECTION  
58% WRONG TRACK  
  
9% NO OPINION (**DO NOT READ**)  
2% REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

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4. Thinking back over the last three or four years... Do you believe South Carolina's K-12 (**K through 12**) public schools are... (**ROTATE**) getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

14% Getting better  
33% Getting worse  
49% Staying about the same  
  
4% DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)  
\* REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

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5. Thinking about kindergarten through 12th grade, do you have children currently in South Carolina public or private schools or did you have children who attended South Carolina public or private schools?

24%	YES/CURRENTLY ATTEND
34%	YES/ATTENDED
6%	YES/BOTH
37%	NO
–	DON'T KNOW (DO NOT READ)
–	REFUSED (DO NOT READ)
<b>63%</b>	<b>TOTAL YES</b>

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**(IF Q5:1-3, ASK) (N=317)**

6. Do or did your children attend regular public schools, a charter school, or a private religious or non-religious school? **(ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)**

<u>SKIP</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	
93%	59%	YES/PUBLIC SCHOOL
6%	4%	YES/CHARTER SCHOOL
15%	10%	YES/PRIVATE SCHOOL
*	*	DON'T KNOW (DO NOT READ)
–	–	REFUSED (DO NOT READ)

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**(IF Q6:1, ASK) (N=295)**

7. And, would you say you are... **(ROTATE)** satisfied or dissatisfied with the public school your child attended?

**(IF SATISFIED/DISSATISFIED, ASK:)** And, would you say you **STRONGLY (satisfied/dissatisfied)** or just **SOMEWHAT (satisfied/dissatisfied)**?

<u>SKIP</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	
33%	19%	STRONGLY SATISFIED
35%	21%	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED
16%	9%	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED
16%	9%	STRONGLY DISSATISFIED
*	*	DON'T KNOW <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
1%	*	REFUSED <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
<b>67%^</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>TOTAL SATISFIED</b>
<b>32%</b>	<b>19%^</b>	<b>TOTAL DISSATISFIED</b>

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**(IF Q6:2, ASK) (N=18)**

8. And, would you say you are... **(ROTATE)** satisfied or dissatisfied with the charter school your child attended?

**(IF SATISFIED/DISSATISFIED, ASK:)** And, would you say you **STRONGLY (satisfied/dissatisfied)** or just **SOMEWHAT (satisfied/dissatisfied)**?

<u>SKIP</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	
52%	2%	STRONGLY SATISFIED
39%	1%	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED
6%	*	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED
—	—	STRONGLY DISSATISFIED
4%	*	DON'T KNOW <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
—	—	REFUSED <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
<b>90%^</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>TOTAL SATISFIED</b>
<b>6%</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>TOTAL DISSATISFIED</b>

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**(IF Q6:3, ASK) (N=48)**

9. And, would you say you are... **(ROTATE)** satisfied or dissatisfied with the private school your child attended?

**(IF SATISFIED/DISSATISFIED, ASK:)** And, would you say you **STRONGLY (satisfied/dissatisfied)** or just **SOMEWHAT (satisfied/dissatisfied)**?

<u>SKIP</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	
73%	7%	STRONGLY SATISFIED
21%	2%	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED
4%	*	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED
1%	*	STRONGLY DISSATISFIED
—	—	DON'T KNOW <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
—	—	REFUSED <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
<b>94%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>TOTAL SATISFIED</b>
<b>6%</b>	<b>1%^</b>	<b>TOTAL DISSATISFIED</b>

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**(IF Q5:1, ASK) (N=118)**

10. If it were your decision and you could select any type of school, and financial costs and transportation were of no concern, which one of the following types of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child? **(RANDOMIZE)**

<u>SKIP</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	
10%	2%	CHARTER SCHOOL
16%	4%	HOME SCHOOL
28%	7%	PRIVATE NON-RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
19%	4%	PRIVATE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
26%	6%	PUBLIC SCHOOL
1%	*	DON'T KNOW <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
1%	*	REFUSED <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>

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**(SPLIT SAMPLE, ASK SAMPLE A Q11) (N=249)**

11. Do you believe that public school funding in South Carolina is at a level that is... **(ROTATE FIRST TWO PUNCHES)**

- 6% Too high
  - 71% Too Low
  - ...or...
  - 17% About Right?
  
  - 6% DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ) (PROBE ONCE)**
  - \* REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**
- 

**(SPLIT SAMPLE, ASK SAMPLE B Q12) (N=251)**

12. According to the most recent information available, ten thousand forty-five dollars is being spent per year on each student attending public schools in South Carolina. Do you believe that public school funding in our state is at a level that is... **(ROTATE FIRST TWO PUNCHES)**

- 12% Too high
  - 51% Too Low
  - ...or...
  - 31% About Right?
  
  - 5% DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ) (PROBE ONCE)**
  - 1% REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**
-

13. Now, I would like to read you some ideas that have been made to improve education in South Carolina. Please tell me which one you believe will make the most impact in improving education. **(RANDOMIZE)**

- 27% Reducing class sizes
  - 6% Increasing classroom technology
  - 17% Reforming the curriculum
  - 33% Raising teacher pay
  - 2% Increasing the number of IB and AP classes
  - 5% Increasing services like counseling
  
  - 7% All of the Above **(DO NOT READ)**
  - 2% None of the Above **(DO NOT READ)**
  
  - 1% DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ)**
  - \* REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**
-

Thinking some more about education in South Carolina...

14. How much, if anything, have you seen, read, or heard about school choice in South Carolina?  
**(ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP)**

18%	A lot
35%	Some
29%	Not too much
16%	Nothing at all
1%	DON'T KNOW <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
1%	REFUSED <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
<b>53%</b>	<b>TOTAL A LOT/SOME</b>
<b>45%</b>	<b>TOTAL NOT TOO MUCH/NOTHING</b>

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**(IF Q14:1-3, ASK) (N=413, results shown off total base)**

15. Based on what you know or have heard from others, do you favor or oppose school choice in K through 12 education, or do you not have an opinion?

**(IF FAVOR/OPPOSE, ASK:) And, would you say you STRONGLY (favor/oppose) or just SOMEWHAT (favor/oppose)?**

27%	STRONGLY FAVOR
14%	SOMEWHAT FAVOR
2%	SOMEWHAT OPPOSE
7%	STRONGLY OPPOSE
31%	NO OPINION
1%	REFUSED <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
<b>41%</b>	<b>TOTAL FAVOR</b>
<b>9%</b>	<b>TOTAL OPPOSE</b>

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Thinking about this further...

16. Based on what you know or have heard from others, do you favor or oppose “education scholarship accounts” in K through 12 education, often called an ESA, or do you not have an opinion?

**(IF FAVOR/OPPOSE, ASK:) And, would you say you STRONGLY (favor/oppose) or just SOMEWHAT (favor/oppose)?**

21%	STRONGLY FAVOR
11%	SOMEWHAT FAVOR
3%	SOMEWHAT OPPOSE
5%	STRONGLY OPPOSE
60%	NO OPINION
1%	REFUSED <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
<b>32%</b>	<b>TOTAL FAVOR</b>
<b>8%</b>	<b>TOTAL OPPOSE</b>

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17. Now, I'd like to describe education scholarship accounts to you. An education scholarship account in K through 12 education, often called an ESA, establishes for parents a scholarship account funded by their student's state education funds with restricted, but multiple uses for educational purposes. Parents can use these funds to pay for: school tuition, tutoring, online education programs, therapies for students with special needs, textbooks or other instructional materials, or save for future college expenses.

Now that you have heard more about it, do you favor or oppose this program, called an ESA?

**(IF FAVOR/OPOSE, ASK:)** And, would you say you **STRONGLY (favor/oppose)** or just **SOMEWHAT (favor/oppose)**?

<b>Q16</b>	<b>Q17</b>	
<b>INIT</b>	<b>DESC</b>	
21%	45%	STRONGLY FAVOR
11%	31%	SOMEWHAT FAVOR
3%	8%	SOMEWHAT OPOSE
5%	10%	STRONGLY OPOSE
60%	6%	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )
1%	1%	REFUSED ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )
<b>32%</b>	<b>75%^</b>	<b>TOTAL FAVOR</b>
<b>8%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>TOTAL OPOSE</b>

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**(SPLIT SAMPLE, IF Q17:1-4, ASK SAMPLE A)**

18. Please tell me some of the main reasons you **(favor/oppose)** ESAs? **(PROBE:)** And what are some other reasons?

**SEE VERBATIM LISTOUTS**

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**(ROTATE BLOCKS)**

Thinking (**again/some more**) about ESAs, I would like to read you some statements you may hear from people who say South Carolina SHOULD start an ESA program. After I read each statement, please tell me if you find that statement (**ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM, BOTTOM TO TOP**) very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not at all convincing as a reason to start an ESA program.

<b>VERY CONV</b>	<b>SMWT CONV</b>	<b>NOT TOO</b>	<b>NOT AT ALL</b>	<b>DK (DNR)</b>	<b>REF (DNR)</b>
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The (**first/next**) one is...(RANDOMIZE)

**(ALWAYS ASK Q19 FIRST)**

- |     |   |             |     |             |     |    |   |
|-----|---|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|----|---|
| 19. | Starting the ESA program will ensure children in low-income families, adopted or foster kids, children with special needs, and most military family kids in South Carolina can choose the school that is best suited to their individual learning style. By giving these families choices that are currently available only to the wealthy, ESAs help lessen income inequality and level the playing field for all. | 36%         | 38% | 9%          | 15% | 1% | * |
|     |   | <b>75%^</b> |     | <b>24%</b>  |     |    |   |
|     |   |             |     |             |     |    |   |
| 20. | Families should have more choices and options to pick the school that is right for their child.   | 57%         | 26% | 5%          | 10% | 1% | * |
|     |   | <b>83%</b>  |     | <b>15%</b>  |     |    |   |
|     |   |             |     |             |     |    |   |
| 21. | Starting the ESA program will ensure these families can choose the school that is best suited to their individual learning style.   | 40%         | 35% | 10%         | 15% | 1% | - |
|     |   | <b>74%^</b> |     | <b>25%</b>  |     |    |   |
|     |   |             |     |             |     |    |   |
| 22. | High-quality educational opportunities should be available to students regardless of their zip code or family's income. Starting an ESA program will ensure that these families in South Carolina have an equal opportunity for the education they choose and that works best for them.   | 50%         | 30% | 7%          | 12% | 1% | * |
|     |   | <b>80%</b>  |     | <b>18%^</b> |     |    |   |
|     |   |             |     |             |     |    |   |
| 23. | By giving these families choices currently available only to the wealthy, ESAs help lessen income inequality and level the playing field for all.   | 30%         | 35% | 14%         | 19% | 2% | * |
|     |   | <b>65%</b>  |     | <b>33%</b>  |     |    |   |

(Continued...)

	<b>VERY CONV</b>	<b>SMWT CONV</b>	<b>NOT TOO</b>	<b>NOT AT ALL</b>	<b>DK (DNR)</b>	<b>REF (DNR)</b>
24. Studies overwhelmingly show that increasing educational freedom improves the performance of nearby public school districts. Public schools work harder to improve to keep more kids enrolled at their school. In fact, 31 of 33 studies show a net positive impact of educational freedom on nearby district schools.						
	34%	38%	13%	13%	1%	1%
	<b>72%</b>			<b>27%^</b>		

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Thinking (**again/some more**) about ESAs, I would like to read you some statements you may hear from people who say South Carolina should NOT start an ESA program. After I read each statement, please tell me if you find that statement (**ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM, BOTTOM TO TOP**) very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not at all convincing as a reason to oppose an ESA program.

<b>VERY CONV</b>	<b>SMWT CONV</b>	<b>NOT TOO</b>	<b>NOT AT ALL</b>	<b>DK (DNR)</b>	<b>REF (DNR)</b>
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The (**first/next**) one is...(RANDOMIZE)

25. Adequate school funding is necessary for a successful education, but starting an ESA program for all South Carolina students will take much-needed money away from South Carolina’s already underfunded public schools and funnel it to private schools and wealthy parents who do not need it.

33%	26%	16%	22%	2%	1%
<b>59%</b>		<b>39%^</b>			

26. There is very little accountability for those using ESAs. There will be no way to know what children are learning, how they are keeping up with state and national standards, or how the money is being spent. Even more money will be wasted as already hundreds of thousands of dollars are unaccounted for and student achievement rates are untraceable.

31%	28%	16%	23%	2%	1%
<b>59%</b>		<b>39%</b>			

27. Our country was built on the concept of separation of church and state, but creating an ESA program means millions of taxpayer dollars will be funneled to private religious schools including Christian, Catholic, and Muslim schools. That’s wrong. Taxpayer dollars should only be used to fund public schools.

30%	20%	15%	35%	1%	*
<b>49%^</b>		<b>50%</b>			

28. An ESA program would hurt families in rural South Carolina who do not have access to all the educational options families in cities do. The program will also funnel more education funding away from rural schools and to well-off schools in urban and suburban areas.

27%	32%	16%	23%	1%	*
<b>59%</b>		<b>39%</b>			

29. Support for the ESA program is led by the ultra-conservative Koch Brothers and other dark money groups that pour money into South Carolina to further their own agenda, but does not help our kids or improve our public schools.

18%	23%	18%	36%	4%	1%
<b>41%</b>		<b>54%</b>			

(Continued...)

	<b>VERY CONV</b>	<b>SMWT CONV</b>	<b>NOT TOO</b>	<b>NOT AT ALL</b>	<b>DK (DNR)</b>	<b>REF (DNR)</b>
30. Since the 1980s, American schools have become more racially segregated, as typically higher-income white families pull their children out of public schools and enroll them in private schools. ESAs will result in further segregation as even more upper-class families will enroll their children in private schools.	22%	22%	19%	34%	2%	1%
	<b>44%</b>			<b>53%</b>		

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And, now that you have heard more information...

31. Do you favor or oppose "education scholarship accounts" in K through 12 education, often called an ESA?				
	<b>Q16</b>	<b>Q17</b>	<b>Q31</b>	
	<b><u>INIT</u></b>	<b><u>DESC</u></b>	<b><u>INF</u></b>	
	32%	75%^	66%	FAVOR
	8%	18%	30%	OPPOSE
	60%	6%	4%	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )
	1%	1%	*	REFUSED ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )

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Now, I just have a few more questions for statistical purposes only.

D1. What is the last grade you completed in school? **(DO NOT READ CHOICES)**

1% SOME GRADE SCHOOL (GRADES 1-8)  
4% SOME HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-11)  
24% GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL (GRADE 12)  
3% TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL SCHOOL  
21% SOME COLLEGE  
29% GRADUATED COLLEGE  
17% POST-GRADUATE

– REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**

**29% HIGH SCHOOL OR LESS**  
**24% SOME COLLEGE**  
**47%^ COLLEGE+**

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D2. And, in politics today, do you usually think of yourself as... **(ROTATE FIRST TWO CHOICES)**

a Republican,  
a Democrat,  
or something else?

**(IF REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT, ASK)** Would you call yourself a STRONG  
**(Republican/Democrat)** or a NOT-SO-STRONG **(Republican/Democrat)**?

**(IF SOMETHING ELSE, ASK)** Do you think of yourself as closer to the...**(ROTATE)**  
the Republican Party ...or... the Democratic Party?

24%	STRONG REPUBLICAN
10%	NOT-SO-STRONG REPUBLICAN
10%	LEAN REPUBLICAN
21%	SOMETHING ELSE/INDEPENDENT
8%	LEAN DEMOCRAT
6%	NOT-SO-STRONG DEMOCRAT
19%	STRONG DEMOCRAT
1%	DON'T KNOW <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
1%	REFUSED <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
<b>44%</b>	<b>TOTAL REPUBLICAN</b>
<b>33%</b>	<b>TOTAL DEMOCRAT</b>

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D3. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be **(ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM, BOTTOM TO TOP)** conservative, moderate, or liberal on most issues?

**(IF CONSERVATIVE/LIBERAL, ASK)** And would you say you are VERY **(conservative/liberal)** or just SOMEWHAT **(conservative/liberal)**?

25%	VERY CONSERVATIVE
22%	SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE
33%	MODERATE
10%	SOMEWHAT LIBERAL
7%	VERY LIBERAL
2%	DON'T KNOW <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
1%	REFUSED <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
<b>47%</b>	<b>TOTAL CONSERVATIVE</b>
<b>17%</b>	<b>TOTAL LIBERAL</b>

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D4. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic origin or descent, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?

4% YES  
95% NO  
  
1% UNSURE/REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

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**(IF D4:2-3, ASK)**

D5. And, are you African-American, Asian, White, or some other race?

25% AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
1% ASIAN (INCLUDES CHINESE, JAPANESE, KOREAN, LAOTIAN, FILIPINO, THAI, VIETNAMESE, ETC.)  
65% WHITE  
  
3% AMERICAN INDIAN (**DO NOT READ**)  
4% HISPANIC (**DO NOT READ**)  
1% OTHER (**SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_**) (**DO NOT READ**)  
2% UNSURE/REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

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Moving on...

D6. How would you describe your economic circumstances... (**ROTATE**)

8% Poor  
26% Working class  
46% Middle class  
15% Upper middle class  
...or...  
3% Well-to-do  
  
\* DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)  
2% REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

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D7. Do you have any children under the age of 18 living in your household who you are responsible for raising?

33% Yes

67% No

\* Don't Know/Refused (**DO NOT READ**)

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**(IF D7:1, ASK:) (N=165, results shown off total base)**

D7X. What kind of school does your child or children under the age of 18 attend? (**RANDOMIZE. ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES**)

25% Public

3% Private

1% Charter

3% Religious

2% Home School

1% Other (**DO NOT READ**)

2% Not in school yet

\* NOT SURE/REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

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D8. Are you, or is anyone in your household, a member of a labor union or a teachers association or employed by the city, county, state, or federal government? **(ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)**

3% Yes, labor union  
4% Yes, teachers association  
13% Yes, city, county, state, or federal employee  
79% No

\* Don't Know **(DO NOT READ)**  
1% Refused **(DO NOT READ)**

**20% TOTAL YES**

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D9. GENDER **(BY OBSERVATION)**

48% MALE  
52% FEMALE

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