

Suffolk University Political Research Center

>New Hampshire

SUPRC polls are carried out via telephone using standard statistical methods to select a representative sample of likely registered voters.

Sampling, data collection and tabulation for most of these polls are conducted by professional phone banks in Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Utah. The fieldwork from these data collection centers helped SUPRC predict the actual outcomes of the NH Presidential Primary in 2004 – in percentage and in actual votes on C-SPAN the night before the election. The SUPRC Director, Suffolk faculty, and polling graduate students closely oversee all procedures.

Sampling

Samples for SUPRC NH Presidential Primary surveys are random digit samples of telephone numbers selected using the Probability Proportionate to Size method, which means residential numbers from across the state are selected in proportion to the relative sizes of election voting districts (wards), towns, cities, and counties.

A computer selects the first eight digits of an actual working number and then appends a two-digit random number to produce a random-digit dial (RDD) sample. A RDD sample allows for contacting not only listed and unlisted numbers, but also households with new numbers.

In order to ensure a distribution of ages and genders within households, the interviewer selects the respondent by asking to speak to the adult in the household. Quotas are applied to ensure the sample mirrors the proportions of likely voters statewide. Specifically, the aim is for parity within region, gender, and political party affiliation in order of priority. For example:

Actual NH

30% Registered Republican

26% Registered Democrat

44% Undeclared

Sample NH (June 2007)

29% Registered Republican

25% Registered Democrat

43% Undeclared

1% Other Party affiliation/designation

2% Not Registered but voting

The above sample includes a key component in NH of election-day registration and voting. (There were 26,890 NH residents who went to their polling place, registered, and voted in the 2004 Presidential Party Primary.)

In addition, since all SUPRC are of likely voters, each respondent is screened to establish him/her as a voter who may meet one or more of the following requirements: self-reported voter registration, intention to vote, attention to the race, past voting, age, respondents' knowledge of their polling places and/or political party identification.

Interviewing

The RDD selected phone numbers are sent to the interviewers through computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) software. Both the software and human supervisors monitor each step of the interviewing process. While calls are automatically dialed, the system does not use predictive dialing so prospective respondents always find a live interviewer when they answer their phone. The professional interviewers and their supervisors are extensively trained in interviewing practices, including techniques designed to achieve the highest possible respondent cooperation.

Accuracy

Sampling error can be calculated when probability sampling methods, such as those described here, are employed. The standard formula to calculate sampling error at the 95 percent confidence level is: $(\text{SQRT}(.25/\text{sample size})) * 1.96$. In addition to sampling error, question wording and question order can influence poll results.

Poll results may deviate from full population values because a sample, not a census, is interviewed.

For a sample of about 500 interviews, the error due to sampling is plus or minus 4.38%. For example, when the survey says “46% of voters...” then chances are very strong (95 out of 100 theoretical outcomes) that no less than 41.62% and no more than 50.38% of all voters would have responded the same way.

Weighting

SUPRC has a constantly updated database of demographic information about the national samples and, if one should deviate significantly from past averages, weighting is used to bring the sample into conformity with other samples.

As a general rule, the SUPRC poll results are not weighted. Sound planning, pre-test, multiple field days, and extensive fieldwork monitoring are emphasized. The statewide probability sample, if conducted properly, should accurately reflect statewide attitudes. However, in cases where fieldwork is less than three days/nights (limiting the opportunity for callbacks), some demographic deviation is possible and weighting is employed.

Suffolk University Political Research Center

>Overall

SUPRC Presidential Primary polls are executed with a keen eye on who is eligible to vote in a particular party primary (any resident, any voter, party restricted, and/or rules for unenrolled, independent, or decline to enroll voters).

General rules of thumb include:

1. If a state's presidential primary requires prior voter registration, a randomly selected registered voter list is employed. Once contacted, respondents must correctly answer screen questions. If a state's presidential primary requires that any resident (registered or unregistered) can vote via same-day registration, the random-digit dial method of residential phone numbers is employed. Likely voters are then established by drilling down and the use of screen questions to reach correct universe.
2. Quotas are established based on comparable historical election district, city/town, county, and area results from similar past elections.
3. The goal of SUPRC polls is to exactly reproduce both the expected final demographic turnout of a particular state as well as using the exact wording of the ballot test question per the order and listing on the official state ballot approved by the respective Secretary of State or (area) Elections Board.
4. The results for any SUPRC poll are weighted according to the respondent's likelihood of voting, using a proprietary formula based on up to several questions about voting intention and past voting.
5. In some surveys undecided respondents are probed further in order to attach a choice to a respondent (ballot test). SUPRC employs ballot test "leaners" and records/reports the remaining undecided category as such.
6. Refusals are also counted and recorded but not probed in order to quantify and measure any candidate's hidden positives or negatives demographically. Respondents refusing a response in three consecutive questions or in five of ten questions are eliminated from any study.
7. No SUPRC polls taken during the 2008 Presidential election included cell phone numbers.
8. All sampling, data collection and tabulation are outsourced and conducted by professional phone banks in Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Utah. The SUPRC Director, Suffolk faculty, and polling graduate students closely monitor and oversee all procedures.
9. Samples are selected using the Probability Proportionate to Size method, which means residential numbers from across the state are selected in proportion to the relative sizes of election voting districts towns, cities, counties, and areas.
10. The aim for SUPRC polls is for parity within region, political party affiliation, gender, age, and race/ethnicity in order of priority.
11. Since all SUPRC surveys are of likely voters, each respondent is screened to establish him/her as a voter who may meet one or more of the following requirements: self-reported voter registration, intention to vote, attention to the race, past voting, age, respondents' knowledge of their polling places and/or political party identification.
12. Both voter list and random-digit dial households are sent to the interviewers through computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) software. Both the software and human supervisors monitor each step of the interviewing process. While calls are automatically dialed, prospective respondents always find a live interviewer when they answer their phone. The professional interviewers and their supervisors are extensively trained in interviewing practices, including techniques designed to achieve the highest possible respondent cooperation.
13. Sampling error can be calculated when probability sampling methods, such as those described here, are employed. The standard formula to calculate sampling error at the 95 percent confidence level is: $(\text{SQRT}(.25/\text{sample size})) * 1.96$. In addition to sampling error, question wording and question order can influence poll results.
14. SUPRC poll results may deviate from full population values because a sample, not a census, is interviewed.
15. SUPRC procures the most recent updated database of demographic information and voter registration for some surveys and, when applicable, random digit dial numbers using FIPS codes. If one should deviate significantly from past averages, weighting is used to bring the sample into conformity with other samples.



INTERVIEWING STATUS REPORT
Project Name - 139 - California Republican Poll
 Client - Suffolk
 David Paleologos

COMPLETED INTERVIEWS: 500 Completed Interviews N=500

	Quota	So Far	To Go
Bay Area	80	80	0
North Central	110	110	0
Southern	156	159	0
Los Angeles	105	105	0
Orange	75	75	0
Total	500	500	0

SAMPLE SUMMARY

	Cumulative
New Area Code or #	502
Operator Message	751
Business/ Government	155
Language Barrier	113
Fax / Modem	117
Wrong/ Bad Number	631
Blocked Number	55
Scheduled Callback	732
Not Available - Short Term	167
Soft Refusal	1187
Hard Refusal	567
Not Available - Long Term	19
Mid Terminate	10
Take Off List Permanently	46
Disqual (S2 Not likely to vote)	20
Disqual (S3 Not a republican)	90

CAN BE DIALED AGAIN

No Answer	5051
Busy	845
Answering Machine	1537

CONTACT INFORMATION

Length of survey	3.60min
Incidence Rate	82.62%

INTERVIEWING STATUS REPORT NH Primary Poll

COMPLETED INTERVIEWS: 500 Completed Interviews/Night

N=500

SAMPLE SUMMARY		Cumulative
New Area Code or #		0
Operator Message		1646
Business/ Government		518
Language Barrier		130
Fax / Modem		310
Wrong/ Bad Number		46
Blocked Number		1622
Scheduled Callback		9413
Not Available - Short Term		0
Soft Refusal	0	0
Refusal		1377
Not Available - Long Term		0
Mid Terminate		25
Take Off List Permanently		0
Disqual (S2 Not likely to vote)		718
624624 Disqual (S3 Not voting in Dem/Rep Primary)		624
Over Quota		602
CAN BE DIALED AGAIN		
No Answer/Answering Machine		6073
18775	Busy	
		403
<hr/>		
<hr/>		
CONTACT INFORMATION		
Length of survey		< 1 min

Total sample for tracking was 24577

See also 3 additional files with overviews.