

AU SURVEY SHOWS SUPPORT FOR ELECTORAL CHANGES IN ALABAMA

Media Release

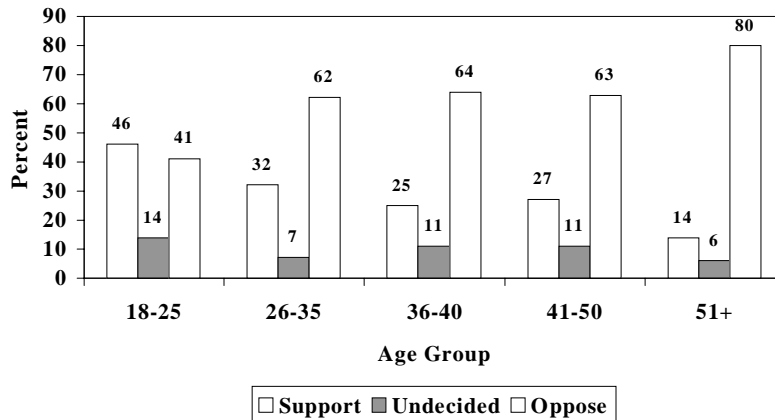
May 25, 2001

A recent survey of citizen opinion conducted by Auburn University's Center for Governmental Services demonstrates that Alabamans favor many proposed changes to the political electoral system in Alabama. The Auburn survey also reveals a strong link between a person's views on some of these issues and their race, age and political party affiliation. Completed by 615 registered Alabama voters, the survey examines the readiness of Alabamians to support changes in the electoral process. Alabamians support increased opportunities for voters to vote, an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to elect the President by popular vote, and the placement of amendments to the State Constitution on the ballot by voter petition.

One exception to the support for increased opportunities to vote is a reluctance to allow registered voters in Alabama to vote over the Internet. Two-thirds (67%) of the respondents are against this idea, with only 25% in favor. Perhaps not surprisingly, opinion on this issue is closely linked to the age of the respondent, with those aged 18-25 slightly favoring the change (46% for/41% against), nearly two-thirds of those aged 26-50 (63%) against the change, and

those 51 and older are overwhelmingly (80%) against the use of the Internet for voting.

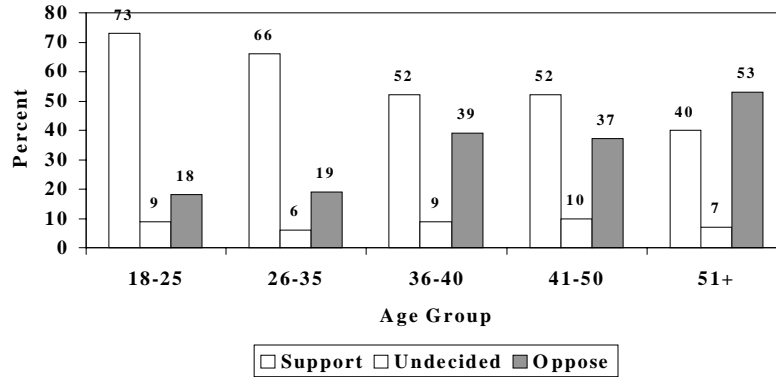
Support for Voting Over the Internet by Age Group



Auburn University, Center for Governmental Services Survey on Alabamian Attitudes Towards Electoral Reform May 25, 2001

The idea of allowing registered voters to request a ballot and vote by mail receives a more favorable reception from Alabama voters. Over half (54%) of the respondents support this idea. Again, opinions differ sharply depending on the age of the respondent, with support for voting by mail dropping as the age of the respondent increases. Seventy-three percent of those aged 18 to 25 favor voting by mail; 65% of those 26 – 35 favor this proposal; 53 % of those aged 36-50 support voting by mail; but only 40% of the respondents 51 or older think voting by mail a good idea.

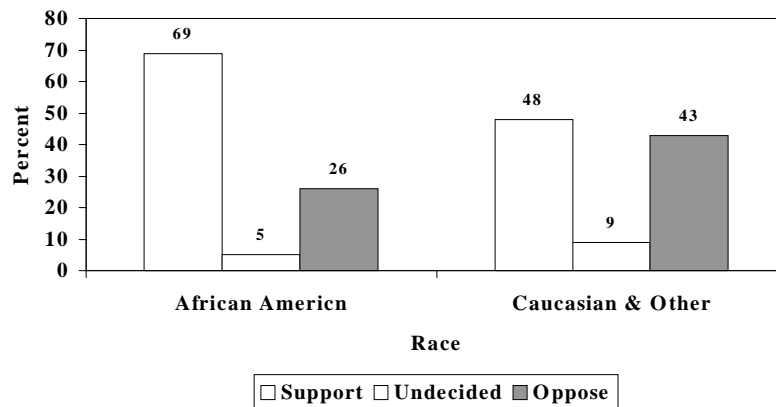
Support for Voting by Mail by Age Group



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Responses to this question also split along racial lines. More than two-thirds (69%) of African-Americans favor expanding the opportunity to vote by mail, Non African-Americans, however, are divided about the idea with 48% in favor and 43% against.

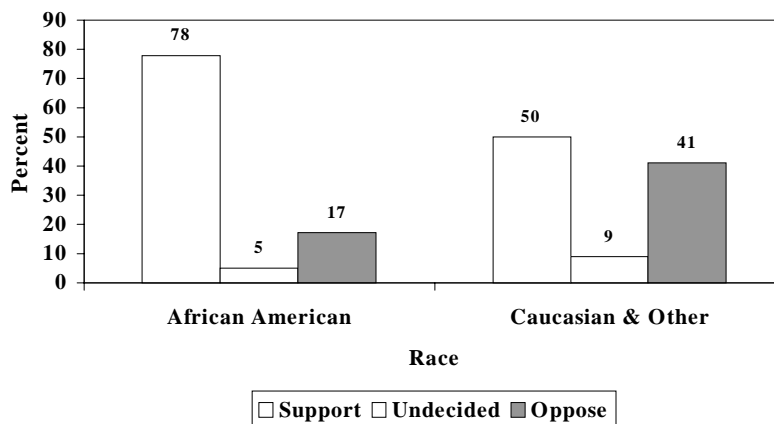
Support for Voting by Mail by Race



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Auburn’s Center for Governmental Services asked if polling booths should be set up in public places to permit voting during a two-week time period prior to Election Day. Respondents solidly approve, with 56% in favor and 35% opposed. Support is high (78%) among African-American respondents, but tepid (50% for/41% against) among non African-Americans. As with prior questions, younger respondents are more likely to support change. Those aged 18-25, for example resoundingly (80%) support a two-week long election period. Support for an extended electoral period drops as age increases. Fifty-eight percent of those aged 26-50 support an extended electoral period, but only 45% of those aged 51 and older favor the proposal to extend the time period during which a ballot can be cast.

Support for Voting 2-Weeks Prior to Election Day by Race

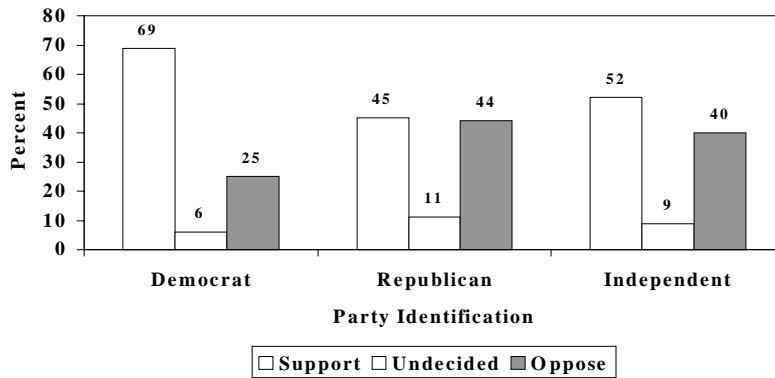


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Support for an extension of the voting period varies by political party identification. Republicans are sharply divided on this issue, with 46% in favor

and 43% opposed. Democrats, however strongly favor the extension of the election period, with 69 in support of the proposal and 25% against.

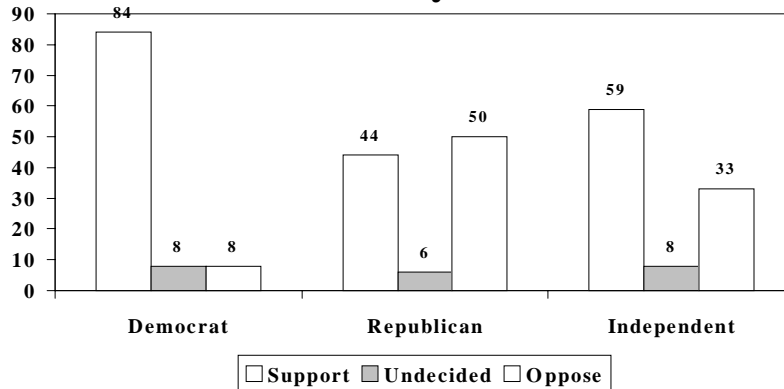
Support for Voting 2-Weeks Prior to Election Day by Party



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The level of support for amending the U.S. Constitution to elect the President by popular vote and eliminating the Electoral College varies according to political party, race, education and gender. Overall, 63% of all the respondents favor the direct popular election of the President. The responses split along party lines, with Republicans slightly against the idea (50% against/44% for), Independents firmly in favor (59%), and Democrats overwhelmingly (84%) supporting the direct election of the President.

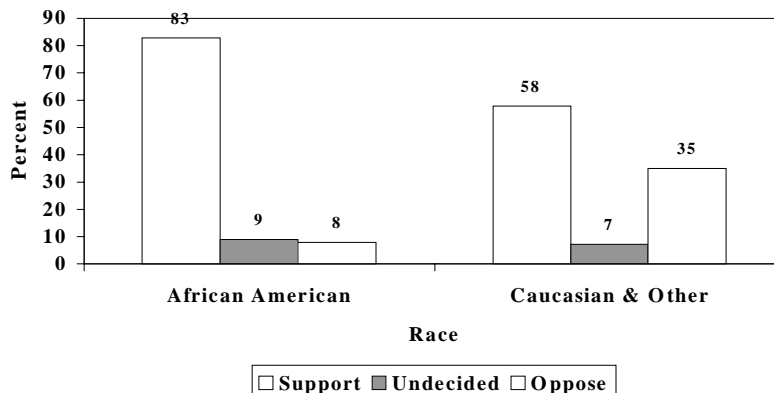
Support to Amend the U. S. Constitution to Elect the President by Popular Vote by Party



Auburn University, Center for Governmental Services Survey on Alabamian Attitudes Towards Electoral Reform May 25, 2001

The racial split is also pronounced. African-Americans are much more strongly in favor of the direct election of the President (83%), compared to non African-Americans with a 58% support level.

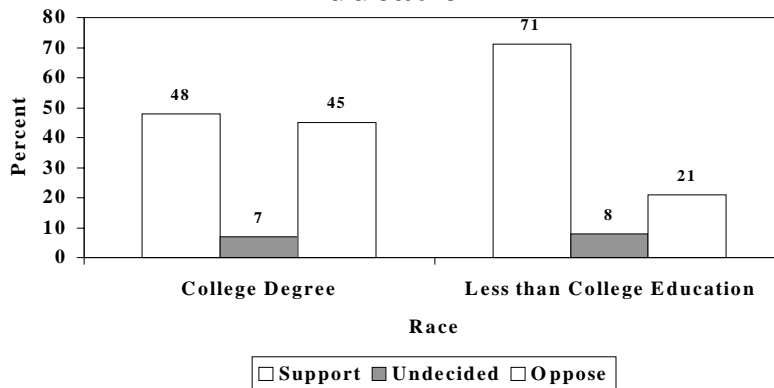
Support to Amend the U. S. Constitution to Elect the President by Popular Vote by Race



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Those respondents with a Bachelor’s Degree or higher educational level favor the change by a slim margin (48% for/45% against), while those whose education is less than college level show strong support (71%) for a directly elected President. Finally, the responses split according to gender, with men voicing mild support (53% for/42% against) and women, greater support (69% for/22% against).

Support to Amend the U. S. Constitution to Elect the President by Popular Vote by Education



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Auburn’s survey inquired if the State of Alabama should be required to put an amendment to the State Constitution on the ballot, provided that 5% of registered Alabama voters sign a petition for it. This proposal finds firm support. Fifty-eight percent of the total respondents favor this mechanism for placing State Constitutional amendments on the ballot, while 28% opposed the change. Such factors as age, race or party affiliation of the respondent have less bearing on responses to this question than on the other survey questions.

Overall, Alabamans favor changes in the electoral process. Support for these changes is stronger among voters who are young, African-American, Democrat, and/or female. Level of education is not a strong factor in determining support for electoral process change, with the exception of electing the President by popular vote, where support for the idea falls as the educational level of the respondent rises.

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