

## Local Issues and Priorities in Alabama Media Release Points Volume 1, no. 2

### Ask-Alabama Poll, Summer 2004

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### Significant Findings

**1. Alabamians believe that their communities have not deteriorated during the past year.**

- a. 83% believe that their city or town has improved or retained its quality of life during the past year.

*By far, most Alabamians have a positive perspective on the quality of life in their community. They are not overcome with a sense that their town or city is spinning out of control.*

**2. There is considerable faith and confidence that local elected officials are making a positive contribution to their communities.**

- a. 66% of respondents agree that their local elected officials are moving their community in a positive direction.

*Two thirds of the public agree that their local elected leadership is working on behalf of their communities and moving their city or town in a forward direction. While a similar percentage feel that the honesty of local officials is a high or urgent issue, it appears that Alabamians do not think that their communities are suffering because of this.*

**3. The most critical local priorities in Alabama are jobs, education, roads, and crime.**

- a. Over 10% of the respondents identified jobs (17%), education (14%), roads (11%), and crime (10%) as the most critically pressing local priorities.

*Alabamians are realistic about the capabilities and priorities of their local governments and officials. Jobs, education, roads, and crime are the four top issues that the public believes their communities need to address. These are the issues that also most directly impact on the long-term health of the community.*

4. **The local issues that deserve the most attention in Alabama are education, jobs, honesty in government, crime, and availability of health care.**
- a. 78% assign the issue of local public education an urgent or high priority.
  - b. 72% assign the issue of local job availability an urgent or high priority.
  - c. 68% believe that honesty of local elected officials is an urgent or high priority.
  - d. 67% identified crime and law enforcement in their local community as an urgent or high priority.

*The survey responses underscore the need for local officials in Alabama to pay attention to basic services as the most effective program for promoting and enhancing their communities. Schools, economic opportunity, an open and honest administration, access to health care, and a safe and secure community are the core features that residents believe their local leaders must address.*

5. **There is strong backing for a lottery in support of education, but opposition is high among strong republicans and those who identify themselves as very conservative.**
- a. 69% support a lottery to benefit education in the State, and 19% are strongly opposed to this measure.
  - b. 32% of strong republicans are strongly opposed to an education lottery, and 46% of those who identify themselves as very conservative strongly oppose the lottery.

*It appears that the state budget crisis and the failure of Governor Riley's tax package has convinced nearly 70% of Alabamians that a State lottery is necessary to help fund public education adequately in the State. While less than a fifth of the population strongly opposes a lottery, this opposition is heavily concentrated among the most committed republican party members and the most conservative sector of the public. This finding may suggest that, barring a meltdown in the education fund revenues, it would be highly unlikely for the Governor to go head-to-head against a vital sector of his political base by supporting or pushing for a state education lottery.*

## **Poll Facts**

Dates of Survey: June 12 - June 27, 2004  
Sample Size: 609  
Estimated Margin of Error: +/- 4%  
Type of Survey: Random telephone survey of Alabamians 19 or older