

Vermont VPR / VT PBS September 2020 Poll

Polling Methodology

This project was sponsored jointly by Vermont Public Radio (VPR) and Vermont PBS, Colchester, VT. The sponsors worked with Rich Clark, professor of political science and former director of the Castleton Polling Institute, to develop the questionnaire.

Data were collected between September 3 and September 15, 2020 by Braun Research, Inc., a market research, data collection, and data processing company headquartered in Princeton, New Jersey, with call centers in four locations. Interviews were conducted by phone with live interviewers.

A dual frame landline and cell phone random digit dialing design was used; the sampling procedures for both frames are described below. Of the 604 completed interviews, 239 were conducted over landline phones, and 365 with cell phones.

For the cell phone sample, interviewers selected whomever answered the phone, assuming a one-to-one relationship between phone number and individuals. Anyone who did not live in the prescribed geographic area (the state of Vermont) was screened out as ineligible. For the landline sample, interviewers requested to speak with the youngest male member of the household who is at least 18 years of age; if there was no male in the household, interviewers requested the youngest female.

The margin-of-error is (+/-) 4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level for data representing the entire sample. Data were weighted by utilizing a raking method to reflect census figures for gender, age, education, and geographic distribution (county-level population) across the state. The weights are based on the U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates from 2018 for the state of Vermont. Neither sampling errors nor statistical tests were adjusted to account for sample design effects due to weighting. An average design effect from the dual-frame sample for this study was not calculated. Table 1 shows the margins of error for the sample and sub-sample groups.

Table 1. Sampling Error at the 95 percent confidence level

**Vermont Registered Voters
Sampling Error at the 95% Confidence Level**

| | Sampling Error | Sample Size | Population Estimates |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Total sample | 4.0% | 604 | 504856 |
| | | | |
| | Sampling Error | Sample Size | Population |
| Male | 5.8% | 285 | 248995 |
| Female | 5.5% | 319 | 255861 |
| Chittenden County | 7.4% | 174 | 34855 |
| Northern counties (Caledonia, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, and Orleans) | 7.9% | 154 | 27158 |
| Central Vermont (Addison, Orange, and Washington) | 9.6% | 103 | 19824 |
| Southern Vermont (Bennington, Rutland, Windham, and Windsor) | 7.4% | 173 | 47612 |
| High School Grad or less | 8.4% | 137 | 190380 |
| Associates degree or some college | 8.1% | 147 | 144969 |
| Bachelor's degree and beyond | 5.5% | 316 | 169507 |
| 18 - 44 years of age | 7.5% | 169 | 184297 |
| 45 - 64 years of age | 6.4% | 236 | 176578 |
| 65 years of age and older | 7.1% | 192 | 121578 |
| Democratic | 5.4% | 324 | 277166 |
| Republican | 7.1% | 191 | 172156 |
| Independent | 12.3% | 63 | 55534 |

Table 2. Representativeness of weighted data

| | Vermont State Figures | VPR Poll figures (weighted) | Difference |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Male | 49.30% | 49.20% | 0.10% |
| 18 - 34 years old | 27.50% | 26.40% | 1.10% |
| 65 years and older | 21.70% | 22.10% | -0.40% |
| Pct with {Bachelor's degree / College degree} or more | 33.60% | 34.50% | -0.90% |
| Pct registered to vote (VAP) | 97.20% | 89.10% | 8.10% |
| Pct White, non-Hispanic | 92.60% | 90.10% | 2.50% |
| Pct Cell phone only | 48.60% | 43.20% | 5.40% |
| Pct LL only | 14.60% | 13.00% | 1.60% |
| Median HH Income | \$54,447 | | |
| HH Income > \$100K | 20.80% | 17.30% | 3.50% |
| Counties | | | |
| Addison | 5.90% | 5.60% | 0.30% |
| Bennington | 5.90% | 5.80% | 0.10% |
| Caledonia | 5.00% | 5.00% | 0.00% |
| Chittenden | 25.50% | 26.10% | -0.60% |
| Essex | 1.00% | 1.00% | 0.00% |
| Franklin | 7.70% | 8.00% | -0.30% |
| Grand Isle | 1.10% | 1.10% | 0.00% |
| Lamoille | 4.00% | 4.00% | 0.00% |
| Orange | 4.60% | 4.70% | -0.10% |
| Orleans | 4.30% | 4.20% | 0.10% |
| Rutland | 9.70% | 9.90% | -0.20% |
| Washington | 9.50% | 8.80% | 0.70% |
| Windham | 7.00% | 7.30% | -0.30% |
| Windsor | 8.90% | 8.40% | 0.50% |

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Vermont VPR/VT PBS 2020 General Election Poll

[INTRO]: Hi, my name is _____ and I'm calling on behalf of Vermont Public Radio and Vermont PBS. I am not selling anything or asking for money. We are conducting a study concerning the future of our state, and we'd really appreciate your help.

Have we reached you on a landline or cell phone?

Landline

Cell phone

REFUSED → "Thank you" and terminate

Do you live in Vermont?

YES, LIVES IN VERMONT

NO, DOES NOT LIVE IN VERMONT → "Thank you" and terminate

[If calling cell phone]: **Are you currently driving a car or doing any activity that requires your full attention?**

Yes, engaged in other activity → "Can I call back at a later time?"

No, not doing anything to distract

Not sure / Refused → "Can I call back at a later time?"

[IF LANDLINE] **To correct for sampling errors, may I please speak to the youngest adult male in the household who is at least 18 years of age?**

SPEAKING

GETTING PERSON [REPEAT INTRO]

CALLBACK [GET NAME]

NO MALE IN HOUSEHOLD [PROCEED WITH YOUNGEST FEMALE]

REFUSED

[IF LANDLINE, Once target respondent is on the phone] **Thank you very much for helping us with this important study. Your telephone number was randomly selected from among all households in Vermont. This call may be monitored for quality assurance.**

Participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question or end the interview at any time.

[IF ASKED:] **This survey should take {approximately/less than} 10 minutes to complete.**

Intro: **Let's begin...**

Q1: follownews

How closely do you follow news about national and state politics? Would you say very closely, somewhat closely, not very much, or not at all?

- 1 VERY CLOSELY
- 2 SOMEWHAT CLOSELY
- 3 NOT VERY MUCH
- 4 NOT AT ALL
- 9 DON'T KNOW/REFUSED

Q2: PresApp

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

- 1 APPROVE
- 2 DISAPPROVE
- 8 NOT SURE/NO OPINION
- 9 REFUSED

Q3: GovApp

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Phil Scott is handling his job as Governor of Vermont?

- 1 APPROVE
- 2 DISAPPROVE
- 8 NOT SURE/NO OPINION
- 9 REFUSED

Q4: LeahyApp

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Patrick Leahy is handling his job in the U.S. Senate?

- 1 APPROVE
- 2 DISAPPROVE
- 8 NOT SURE/NO OPINION
- 9 REFUSED

Q5: SandersApp

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bernie Sanders is handling his job in the U.S. Senate?

- 1 APPROVE
- 2 DISAPPROVE
- 8 NOT SURE/NO OPINION
- 9 REFUSED

Q6: WelchApp

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Peter Welch is handling his job in the U.S. House of Representatives?

- 1 APPROVE
- 2 DISAPPROVE
- 8 NOT SURE/NO OPINION
- 9 REFUSED

Q7: likelyvote

How likely are you to vote in the November general election? Would you say you definitely will vote, probably will vote, probably will not vote, or definitely will not vote?

- 1 DEFINITELY WILL VOTE
- 2 PROBABLY WILL VOTE
- 3 PROBABLY WILL NOT VOTE
- 4 DEFINITELY WILL NOT VOTE → SKIP TO QUESTION Q14
- 8 NOT SURE/NO OPINION
- 9 REFUSED

Q8: Horserace_pres

If the presidential election were held today, would you vote for ... [RANDOMIZE ORDER OF FIRST TWO CANDIDATES NAMED CANDIDATES]

- 1 Republican Donald Trump
- 2 Democrat Joe Biden
- 3 Or someone else
- 9 NONE OF THE ABOVE
- 98 NOT SURE/NO OPINION
- 99 REFUSED

[IF Q8=1] Q8a. AgainstBiden

Is the reason you are voting for Trump more because you support Trump or more because you oppose Biden?

- 1 Support Trump
- 2 Oppose Biden
- 3 Neither
- 8 NOT SURE/NO OPINION
- 9 REFUSED

[IF Q8=2] Q8b. AgainstTrump

Is the reason you are voting for Biden more because you support Biden or more because you oppose Trump?

- 1 Support Biden
- 2 Oppose Trump
- 3 Neither
- 8 NOT SURE/NO OPINION
- 9 REFUSED

Q9: Horserace_gov

If the election for Vermont's Governor were held today, would you vote for ... [RANDOMIZE ORDER OF 8 NAMED CANDIDATES]

- 1 Republican Phil Scott
- 2 Democrat/Progressive David Zuckerman
- 3 Truth Matters Party candidate Emily Peyton
- 4 Independent Wayne Billado
- 5 Independent Michael Devost
- 6 Unaffiliated Charly Dickerson
- 7 Independent Kevin Hoyt
- 8 Independent Erynn Hazlett Whitney

9 No one / not voting on this item (volunteered)
98 OTHER/NOT SURE/NO OPINION
99 REFUSED

Q10: Horserace_LG

If the election for Vermont's Lieutenant Governor were held today, would you vote for ... [RANDOMIZE ORDER OF 5 NAMED CANDIDATES]

1 Republican Scott Milne
2 Democrat Molly Gray
3 Progressive Cris Ericson
4 "Banish the F35S" Party candidate Ralph Corbo
5 Independent Wayne Billado
9 No one / not voting on this item (volunteered)
98 OTHER/NOT SURE/NO OPINION
99 REFUSED

Q11: Horserace_House

If the election for US House of Representatives were held today, would you vote for ... [RANDOMIZE ORDER OF 7 NAMED CANDIDATES]

1 Democrat Peter Welch
2 Republican Merriam Berry
3 Independent Peter Becker
4 Independent Marcia Horne
5 Independent Shawn Orr
6 Independent Jerry Trudell
7 Communist candidate Christopher Helali
9 No one / not voting on this item (volunteered)
98 OTHER/NOT SURE/NO OPINION
99 REFUSED

Q12: VoteEarly

Are you likely to vote early or wait until November 3rd to cast your ballot?

1 Vote early
2 Vote on Nov. 3
8 NOT SURE
9 REFUSE

Q13: VoteMethod

Will you likely vote by mail or in person?

1 Vote by mail
2 Vote in person
8 NOT SURE
9 REFUSE

Q14: Vote2016

If you voted in the 2016 presidential election, did you vote for Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, someone else, or were you not able to vote in 2016?

1 Trump
2 Clinton

- 3 Other
- 4 Did not vote
- 8 NOT SURE/ DON'T REMEMBER
- 9 REFUSED

Q20: ScottSenate

If Phil Scott were to challenge Senator Patrick Leahy in the next Senate election, would you favor Scott or Leahy?

- 1 Scott
- 2 Leahy
- 3 Neither
- 8 NOT SURE/ DON'T REMEMBER
- 9 REFUSED

Q12: TrustElection

In general, how confident are you that the 2020 presidential election will be conducted fairly? Would you say you are ... [READ FOUR OPTIONS]

- 1 Very confident
- 2 Somewhat confident
- 3 Not too confident
- 4 Not confident at all
- 8 NOT SURE
- 9 REFUSE

Q13: History

In thinking about American history, which statement comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right? [ROTATE STATEMENT ORDER]

- A. The U.S. may not have been perfect, but focusing on its historical flaws makes the country weaker.**
- B. It makes the U.S. stronger when we acknowledge the country's historical flaws.**
- 1 Closer to Statement A (focus on flaws makes the country weaker)
- 2 Closer to Statement B (stronger when we acknowledge historical flaws)
- 3 NEITHER
- 8 NOT SURE/NO OPINION
- 9 REFUSED

Q14: Marijuana

Would you support or oppose a law to create a system for selling marijuana that is taxed and regulated by the Vermont state government?

- 1 Support
- 2 Oppose
- 8 NOT SURE / NO OPINION
- 9 REFUSED

Q15. OpenK12

Given the current state of the pandemic, do you favor or oppose having K-12 schools open for in-person instruction?

- 1 Favor
- 2 Oppose
- 8 NOT SURE / NO OPINION (VOL.)

9 REFUSED (VOL.)

Q16. OpenCollege

Given the current state of the pandemic, do you favor or oppose Vermont universities and colleges having students back on campus?

- 1 Favor
- 2 Oppose
- 8 NOT SURE / NO OPINION (VOL.)
- 9 REFUSED (VOL.)

Q17: Vaccine

If a vaccine for COVID19 were developed in the next 12 months, how eager or reticent would you be to get vaccinated as early as possible ... would you be very eager, somewhat eager, somewhat reticent (un-eager), or very reticent?

- 1 Very eager
- 2 Somewhat eager
- 3 Somewhat reticent
- 4 Very reticent
- 8 NOT SURE / NO OPINION (VOL.)
- 9 REFUSED (VOL.)

Q18: ProudVT

Has the state's response to the COVID19 pandemic made you more proud of being a Vermonter, less proud of being a Vermonter, or has it had no impact on your level of pride?

- 1 More proud
- 2 No impact
- 3 Less proud
- 8 NOT SURE / NO OPINION (VOL.)
- 9 REFUSED (VOL.)

V5a. Thinking about the future of your community, are you very optimistic, somewhat optimistic, somewhat pessimistic, or very pessimistic?

- 1 Very optimistic
- 2 Somewhat optimistic
- 3 Neither optimistic nor pessimistic (vol.)
- 4 Somewhat pessimistic
- 5 Very pessimistic
- 9 DK / REFUSED (VOL.)

V5b If you were to advise an 18 year-old considering where to build a successful life and career, would you recommend that he or she stay in Vermont or leave Vermont?

- 1 Stay in Vermont
- 2 Leave Vermont
- 8 NOT SURE / IT DEPENDS (VOL.)
- 9 REFUSED (VOL.)

Q19: VTIndy

Given the state of national politics, would you support or oppose an effort in Vermont to secede from the United States and re-establish Vermont as an independent republic?

- 1 Support
- 2 Oppose
- 8 NOT SURE / NO OPINION
- 9 REFUSED

DEMOGRAPHICS

D1: Gender

Lastly, I would like to ask a few questions about you merely for the purposes of classification and to be sure our sample accurately reflects the population as a whole.

INTERVIEWER: MARK GENDER, DO NOT ASK

- 1 MALE
- 2 FEMALE

D2: YearBorn

In what year were you born?

- DON'T KNOW = 8888
- REFUSED = 9999

D3: Education

What is the highest grade of school or year in college you have completed?

- 1 Less than High School
- 2 High School Diploma
- 3 Some college
- 4 College degree
- 5 Some post-graduate work
- 6 Post-graduate degree
- 8 DON'T KNOW
- 9 REFUSED

D4: Party

In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

- 1 REPUBLICAN
- 2 DEMOCRAT
- 3 INDEPENDENT
- 4 OTHER (SPECIFY)
- 8 DON'T KNOW
- 9 REFUSED

[ASK ONLY IF PARTY = "Independent" OR "Other"] D4a: IndLean

As of today, do you lean more to the Democratic Party or to the Republican Party?

- 1 LEAN DEMOCRAT
- 2 LEAN REPUBLICAN
- 3 LEAN TOWARD NEITHER PARTY
- 4 OTHER (SPECIFY)
- 8 DON'T KNOW
- 9 REFUSED

D5: Race

Would you describe your race or ethnicity as ... [READ RESPONSE OPTIONS]

- 1 White
- 2 Hispanic/Latino
- 3 African American or Black
- 4 Asian
- 5 Mixed race heritage
- 6 Other (Please specify): _____
- 9 Refused (vol.)

D6: RegVote

Are you registered to vote in Vermont?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 8 DON'T KNOW
- 9 REFUSED

D7: County

In what county do you live?

- 1 ADDISON
- 2 BENNINGTON
- 3 CALEDONIA
- 4 CHITTENDEN
- 5 ESSEX
- 6 FRANKLIN
- 7 GRAND ISLE
- 8 LAMOILLE
- 9 ORANGE
- 10 ORLEANS
- 11 RUTLAND
- 12 WASHINGTON
- 13 WINDHAM
- 14 WINDSOR
- 88 DON'T KNOW
- 99 REFUSED

[ASK ONLY IF CALLING CELL PHONE] D8: Landline

Do you use a landline phone at home on which you can be reached?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 8 DON'T KNOW
- 9 REFUSED

[ASK ONLY IF CALLING LANDLINE PHONE] D9: Cell

Do you also use a cellphone for personal use on which you can be reached?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 DON'T KNOW
- 9 REFUSED

D10: Income1

Last year, that is in 2019, what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category. [READ]

- 1 Less than \$20,000
- 2 20 to under \$40,000
- 3 40 to under \$60,000
- 4 60 to under \$80,000
- 5 80 to under \$100,000 [OR]
- 6 \$100,000 or more
- 9 DK/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]

D11: Followup

Finally, would you be willing to be interviewed by a reporter to discuss your reactions to some of the topics we've been talking about?

- 1 YES → [COLLECT NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER]
- 2 NO

D12: Completed

That completes our survey. Thank you for your time, and have a wonderful {day/evening}!