

North Carolina Center
for Voter Education 

**Report on Public Attitudes toward
527 Political Organizations
North Carolina Statewide Survey
Executive Summary**

**May 16-18, 2006
n=500 +/-4.4%**

AMERICANVIEWPOINT

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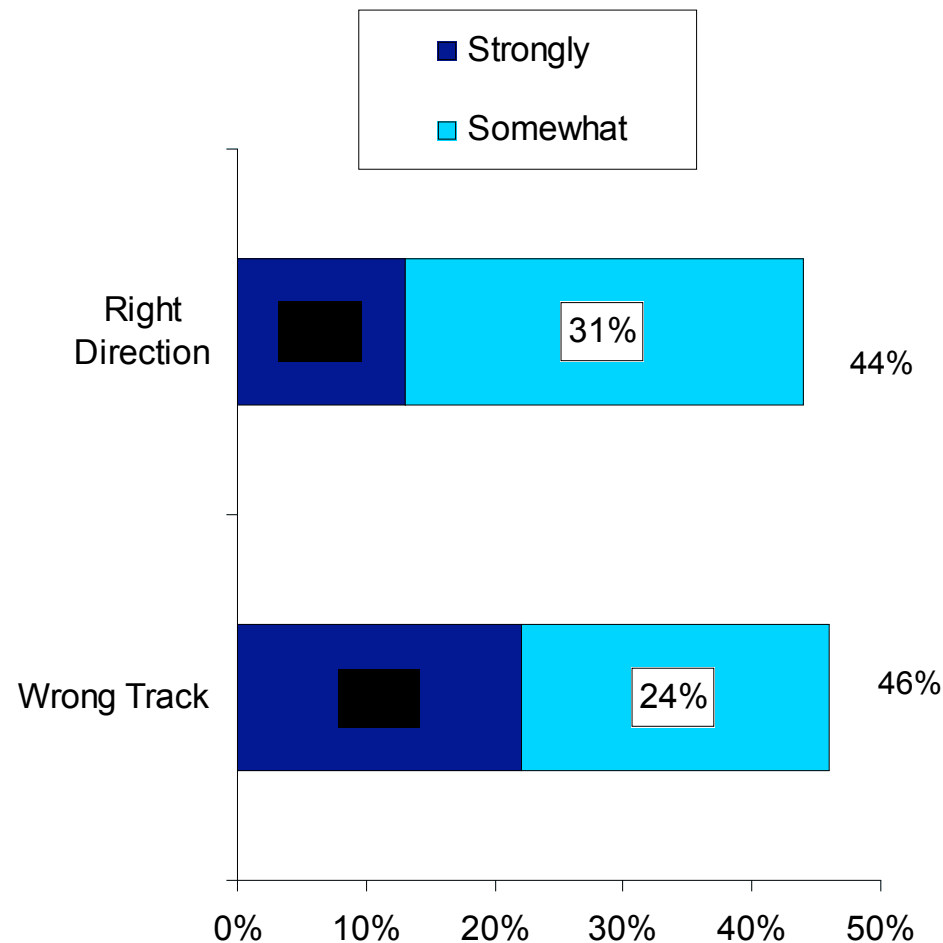
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Nearly twice as many voters feel strongly that things are off on the wrong track as those who strongly feel things in North Carolina are going in the right direction.

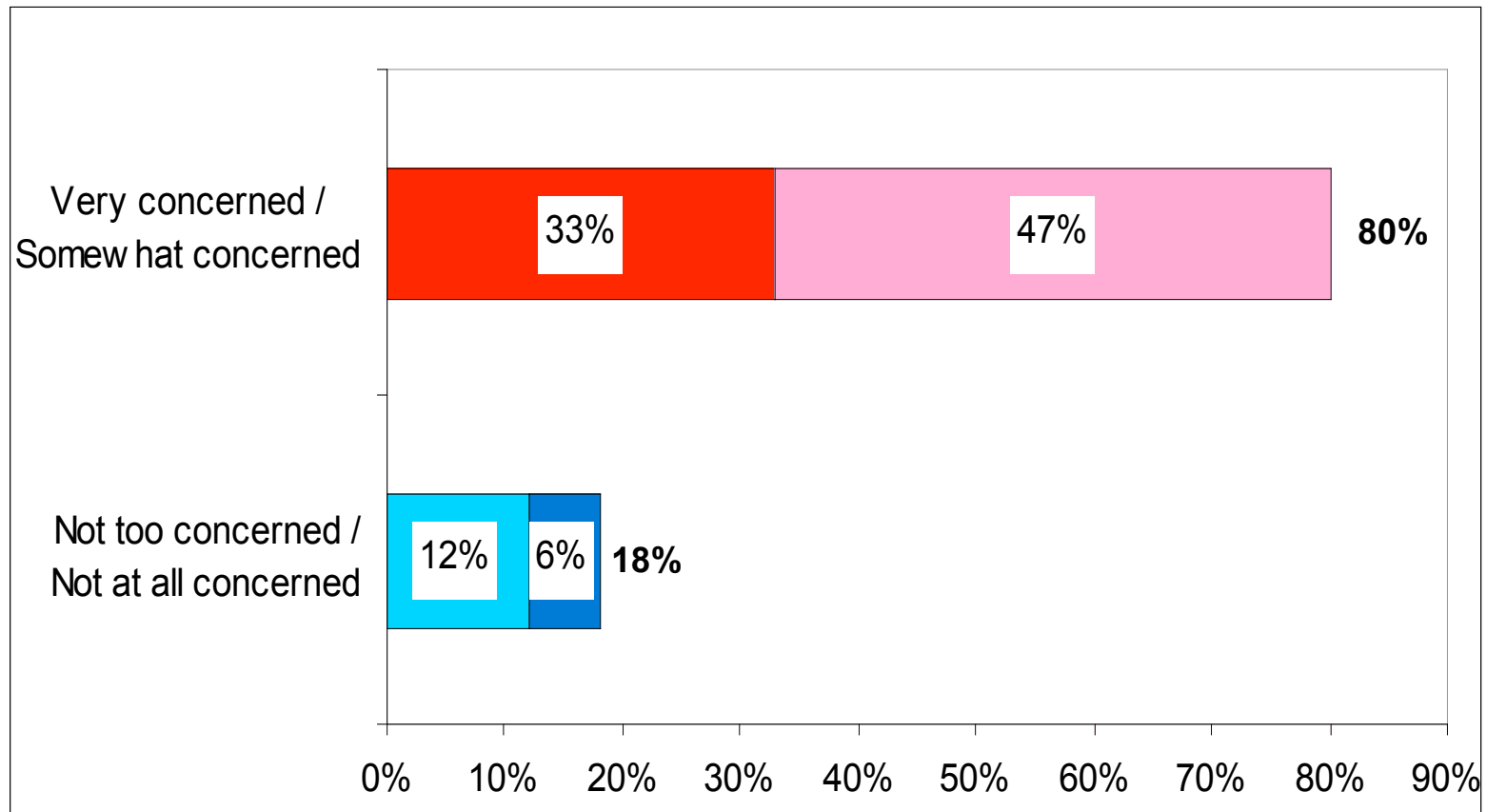
Generally speaking, do you feel things in North Carolina are going in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track?



- 58% of behavioral Republicans say things in NC are off on the wrong track, compared with 42% of ticket-splitters and 40% of Democrats.

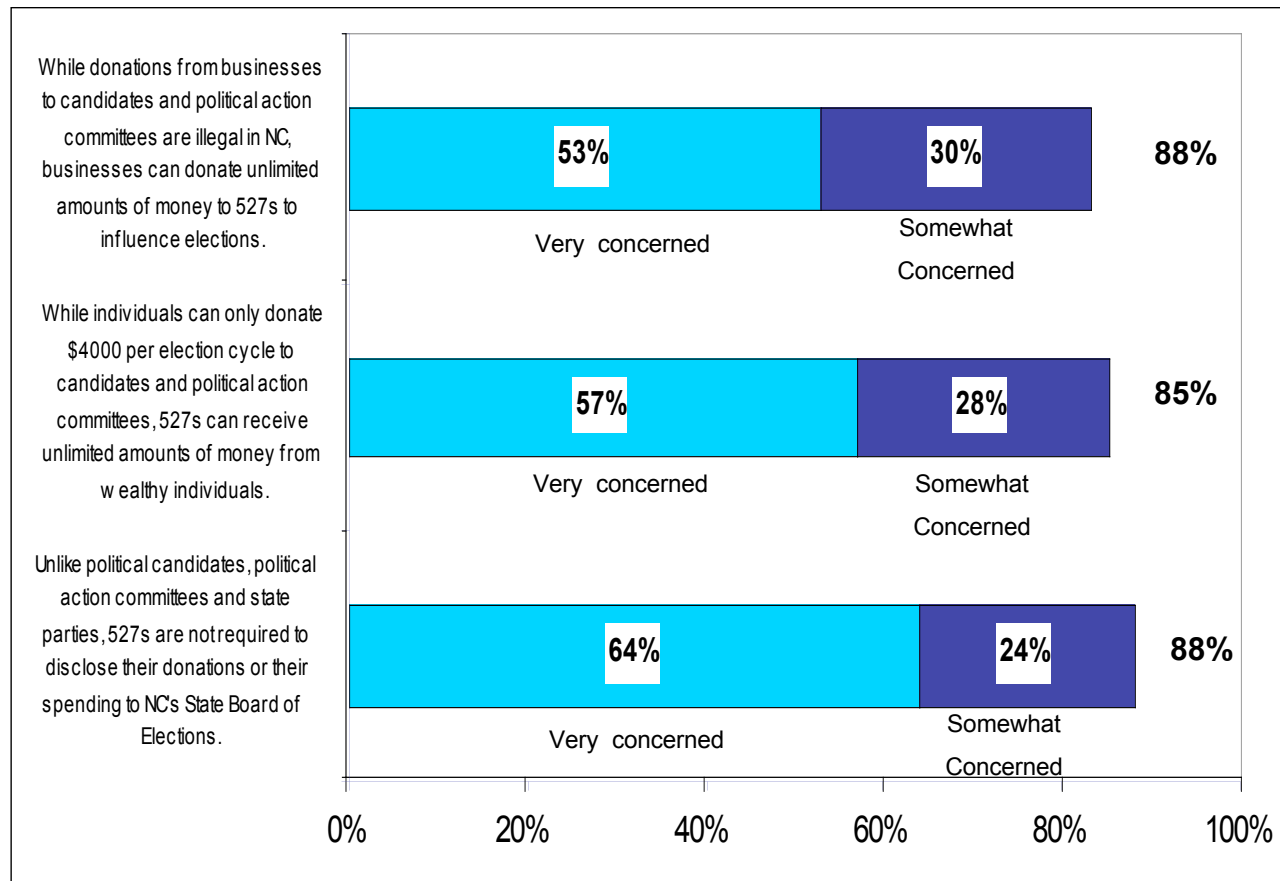
There is a high level of concern over the role campaign spending by outside groups has on state and local campaigns. Concern is even greater among those who have seen, read, or heard something regarding allegations (44% very concerned). The intensity of concern is lower among behavioral Republicans (23% very concerned) than among ticket-splitters (38% very concerned) and Democrats (36% very concerned).

How concerned are you over the role campaign spending by outside groups have on campaigns for state and local offices?



There are also high levels of concern over 527s, especially in regards to the lack of transparency. Concern drops off a bit regarding donations from businesses, especially with behavioral Republicans, but remains high. Important to note is that ticket-splitters are more concerned than partisans on all three aspects. There is clearly an opportunity for the legislature to reform 527s.

As you may know, North Carolina election law allows people and organizations to form special political groups called “527s” to campaign for or against different candidates, political parties or issues. 527s operate under different rules than the laws that govern what individual people, candidates, political parties and political action committees can do when it comes to getting involved in elections. I would now like to read to you several facts regarding 527s and have you tell me whether each makes you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned.

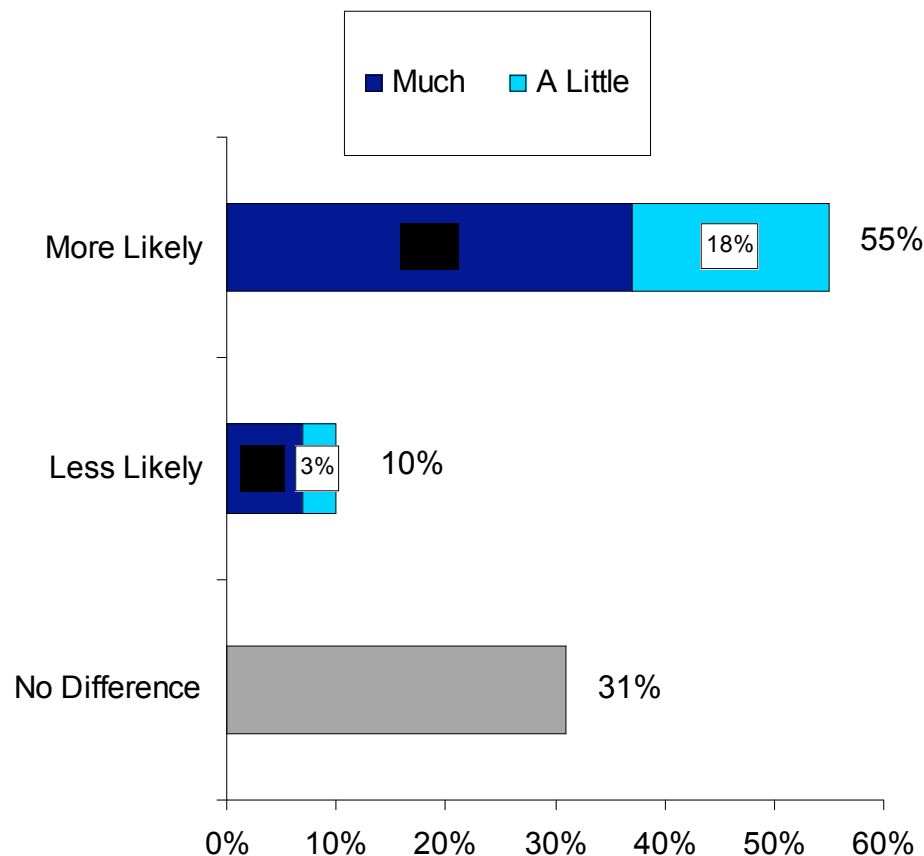


Very Concerned (by Party)

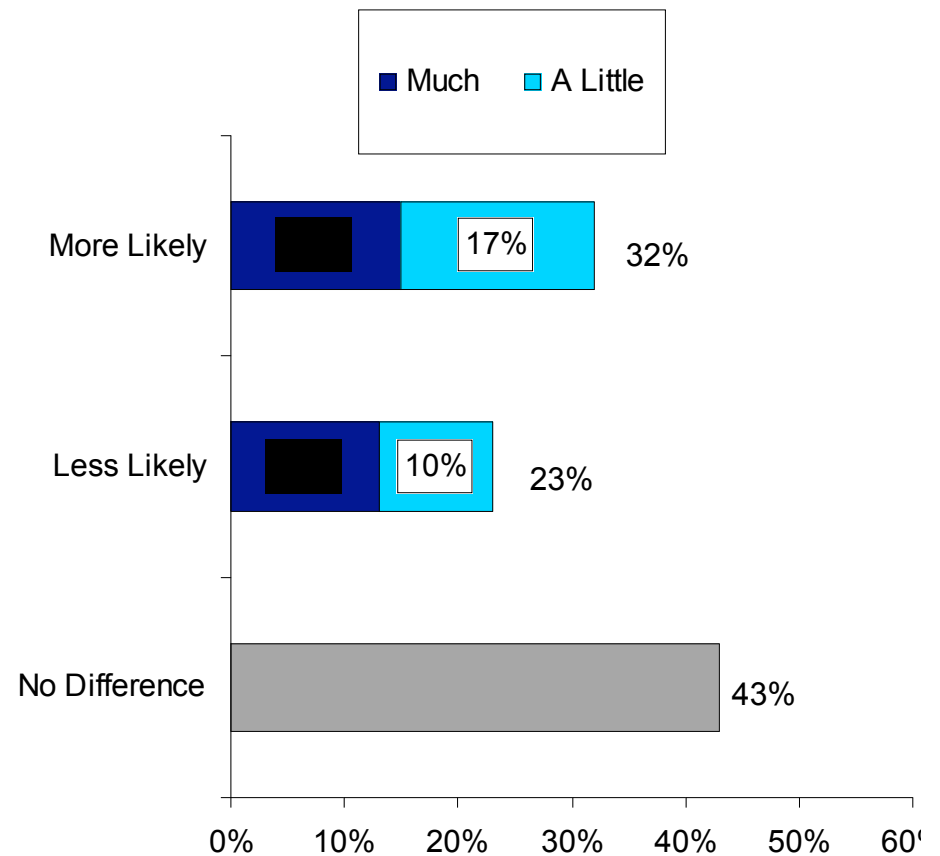
	GOP	Ticket Splitters	Dem.
Issue 1	46%	57%	55%
Issue 2	59%	61%	53%
Issue 3	62%	69%	63%

A majority of voters are more likely to vote for a candidate who supported further restrictions on 527s, including 52% of ticket-splitters, **70% of all Independents and 81% of IND women**, all three key voting blocs in any election. This compares favorably to concurrent polling data which shows a plurality of voters are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports the pilot public financing program, including 35% of ticket-splitters, 46% of Independents and 54% of IND women. However, the vote impact among conservatives drops off for both of these.

Would you be more or less likely to vote for a legislator who SUPPORTED legislation to put further restrictions on 527s, or would it not make a difference?



Would you be more or less likely to vote for a legislator who SUPPORTED a pilot public financing program, or would it not make a difference?



Conclusions and Recommendations

- The high visibility of campaign finance irregularities has created the groundwork to pass meaningful reforms in the legislature to limit the role special interest groups can have on elections, especially in regards to 527s.
- Compared to other campaign reform proposals, the data suggests bipartisan agreement that voters want to take on the problem at its source by reforming the 527 laws.
- Voters, particularly the important swing-vote of ticket-splitters, appear to be willing to reward those candidates that support additional regulation of 527 political groups, specifically indicating they would be more likely to support such candidates in the coming election.