

AMERICAN VIEWPOINT

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NC Center for Voter Education
April 29 - May 2, 2002
n=600

Hello, my name is _____, and I'm calling on behalf of *AMERICAN VIEWPOINT*, an independent market research firm located in Alexandria, Virginia. This is not a sales call. We are doing a survey on issues facing North Carolina today and we would like to have your opinions.

- A. Are you or is anyone in your household a reporter or active in any political campaigns this year?

Yes **[terminate]**
No

- B. Are you registered to vote in North Carolina at this address?

Yes **[go to Q1]**
No **[go to QC]**

- C. Is there anyone in your household who is registered in North Carolina to vote?
[IF YES ASK: May I please speak to that person?]

Yes **[repeat introduction]**
No **[terminate]**

1. Thinking about all elections, including state and local elections, would you say that you...**[read responses 1 through 4]**

43% Always vote	[continue]
36% Vote in most elections	[continue]
14% Vote in about half of elections	[continue]
8% Vote in less than half	[continue]
0% Don't Know	[terminate]
0% Refused	[terminate]

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2. Thinking about the general election being held this November for offices such as U.S. Senator and U.S. Congress, would you say that you will...**[READ Responses 1 through 4]**

67% Definitely vote **[continue]**
29% Probably vote **[continue]**
3% Probably not vote **[continue]**
0% Definitely not vote **[terminate]**
0% Don't know **[terminate]**
0% Refused **[terminate]**

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? **[PROBE: Strongly/Somewhat]**

52%	Strongly approve	
25%	Somewhat approve	78% TOTAL APPROVE
7%	Somewhat disapprove	15% TOTAL DISAPPROVE
7%	Strongly disapprove	
6%	Don't know	
2%	Refused	

4. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mike Easley is handling his job as Governor? **[PROBE: Strongly/Somewhat]**

17%	Strongly approve	
43%	Somewhat approve	60% TOTAL APPROVE
14%	Somewhat disapprove	28% TOTAL DISAPPROVE
14%	Strongly disapprove	
11%	Don't know	
1%	Refused	

5. Thinking back to the last general election, how would you describe your level of interest in judicial campaigns? **[READ 1 THROUGH 4]**

27% Very interested
50% Somewhat interested
17% Not very interested
5% Not at all interested
2% Don't know
0% Refused

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[Ask if “somewhat” “not very” or “not at all” in Q5]

6. What is the primary reason you were not more interested in the judicial elections? **[READ AND ROTATE 1 THROUGH 4]**

43% Didn't know enough about the candidates
10% Didn't have time
7% Not interested in judicial elections
4% Didn't like the candidates
5% Other **[specify]**
1% Don't know
* Refused

7. How much trust and confidence do you have in the North Carolina Court System? **[READ 1 THROUGH 4]**

24% A great deal
55% Some
13% Just a little
5% None at all
4% Don't know
* Refused

8. Thinking back to the last elections for judges in your state, how much information would you say you had about the candidates in those elections? **[READ 1 THROUGH 4]**

6% A great deal of information
36% Some information
42% Just a little information
15% No information at all
1% Don't know
* Refused

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9. As you may know, there is a proposal in the state legislature to reform judicial elections. Under this proposal statewide judicial candidates would be given public campaign funding if they agree to not take special interest contributions and adhere to spending limits. The proposal would also make judicial elections non-partisan and provide for voter guides explaining judicial candidates' positions on the issues and experience. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?
[RE-READ IF NECESSARY] [PROBE: Strongly/Somewhat Favor/Oppose]

37%	Strongly favor	
34%	Somewhat favor	71% TOTAL FAVOR
8%	Somewhat oppose	16% TOTAL OPPOSE
8%	Strongly oppose	
13%	Don't know	

10. Which of the following should be the most important responsibility of North Carolina's courts and judges? **[READ AND ROTATE 1 THROUGH 8]**

23%	Providing equal justice for the rich and poor
9%	Protecting individuals' rights
19%	Ensuring fairness under the law
19%	Upholding the law even if it is unpopular
2%	Being an independent check on other branches of government
7%	Dispensing punishment for crimes
2%	Advancing social and economic justice
4%	Protecting civil rights
10%	More than one/equal [volunteered]
0%	Other [specify]
5%	Don't know
*	Refused

11. How much influence do you think campaign contributions made to judges have on their decisions? **[READ 1 THROUGH 4]**

38%	A great deal of influence
40%	Some influence
10%	Just a little influence
4%	No influence at all
1%	Depends [volunteered]
6%	Don't know
*	Refused

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12. If the only difference between two candidates running for judicial office was that one used taxpayer money to run his campaign and the other used special interest money, which one would you vote for? **[PROBE: Definitely/Probably] [IF Don't Know, ASK "Which way do you lean"]**

22% Definitely candidate using taxpayer money
24% Probably candidate using taxpayer money
11% Lean candidate using taxpayer money
5% Lean candidate using special interest money
16% Probably candidate using special interest money
5% Definitely candidate using special interest money
16% Don't know
58% TOTAL TAXPAYER MONEY
25% TOTAL SPECIAL INTEREST MONEY

I am now going to read you some statements people have made regarding judicial elections in North Carolina. For each, please tell me if you agree or disagree with the statement. Here is the first one...**[RANDOMIZE SERIES] [IF CHOOSE A POSITION: Do you feel strongly about that?]**

13. The outcome of judicial elections in North Carolina reflects the will of the average person.

24% Strongly agree
22% Not strongly agree
22% Not strongly disagree
25% Strongly disagree
7% Don't know
0% Refused
46% TOTAL AGREE
47% TOTAL DISAGREE

14. Judges should be independent of political parties and run in non-partisan campaigns to keep politics from influencing their courtroom decisions.

79% Strongly agree
9% Not strongly agree
5% Not strongly disagree
4% Strongly disagree
2% Don't know
0% Refused
89% TOTAL AGREE
9% TOTAL DISAGREE

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15. North Carolina should provide voter guides to judicial elections to help inform voters about the candidates in each race.

80%	Strongly agree	
12%	Not strongly agree	91% TOTAL AGREE
3%	Not strongly disagree	6% TOTAL DISAGREE
3%	Strongly disagree	
2%	Don't know	
*	Refused	

16. Regardless of other important issues facing the state, the Governor and legislature need to address judicial reform before the next elections.

54%	Strongly agree	
23%	Not strongly agree	77% TOTAL AGREE
9%	Not strongly disagree	15% TOTAL DISAGREE
6%	Strongly disagree	
8%	Don't know	
0%	Refused	

17. There are two systems of justice in North Carolina—one for the rich and powerful, and one for everyone else.

42%	Strongly agree	
16%	Not strongly agree	58% TOTAL AGREE
12%	Not strongly disagree	38% TOTAL DISAGREE
25%	Strongly disagree	
4%	Don't know	
*	Refused	

[RANDOMIZE Q18-20]

18. Some people say that courts are unique institutions of government that should be free of political and public pressure.

Other people say that courts are just like other institutions of government and should not be free of political and public pressure.

Do you feel that courts should or should not be free of political and public pressure? **[IF CHOOSE POSITION: Do you feel strongly about that?]**

70%	Strongly should be free	
9%	Not strongly should be free	79% TOTAL FREE
4%	Not strongly should not be free	17% TOTAL NOT FREE
12%	Strongly should not be free	
4%	Don't know	
*	Refused	

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19. Some people say that we need to adopt judicial campaign reform to avoid corruption scandals that have occurred in other states.

Other people say that we don't have a judicial corruption problem here in North Carolina, and since we don't have a problem, there is no point in fixing something that isn't broken.

Do you feel that North Carolina should or should not adopt judicial election reform in the near future? **[IF CHOOSE POSITION: Do you feel strongly about that?]**

54%	Strongly should adopt	
18%	Not strongly should adopt	72% TOTAL ADOPT
4%	Not strongly should not adopt	14% TOTAL NOT ADOPT
9%	Strongly should not adopt	
14%	Don't know	
*	Refused	

20. Some people say that judges should continue to be elected by a vote of the people.

Other people say that judges should be appointed in some manner by the Governor and the legislature.

Do you feel that courts should be **[ROTATE]** elected or appointed? **[IF CHOOSE POSITION: Do you feel strongly about that?]**

75%	Strongly elected	
6%	Not strongly elected	81% TOTAL ELECTED
5%	Not strongly appointed	15% TOTAL APPOINTED
10%	Strongly appointed	
4%	Don't know	
0%	Refused	

Now, let me read you a series of concerns that some people have about courts and judges. For each one, please tell me whether it concerns you a lot, concerns you a little, doesn't concern you too much, or doesn't concern you at all. **[RANDOMIZE SERIES]**

21. In North Carolina, lawyers are some of the biggest campaign contributors to judicial candidates, and they often appear in court before judges they've given money to.

64%	Concerns you a lot
20%	Concerns you a little
5%	Doesn't concern you too much
7%	Doesn't concern you at all
3%	Don't know
*	Refused

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22. Because the cost of running statewide for judges in North Carolina can already cost over \$1 million, some people who would make good judges don't run for office.

60% Concerns you a lot
25% Concerns you a little
7% Doesn't concern you too much
6% Doesn't concern you at all
1% Don't know
* Refused

23. Because voters have little information about judicial candidates, judges are sometimes selected for reasons other than their qualifications.

67% Concerns you a lot
23% Concerns you a little
5% Doesn't concern you too much
4% Doesn't concern you at all
1% Don't know
* Refused

24. Now knowing what you do, would you favor or oppose a proposal in the state legislature to reform judicial elections. Under this proposal statewide judicial candidates would be given public campaign funding if they agree to not take special interest contributions and adhere to spending limits. The proposal would also make judicial elections non-partisan and provide for voter guides explaining judicial candidates' positions on the issues and experience.

[RE-READ IF NECESSARY] [PROBE: Strongly/Somewhat Favor/Oppose]

50%	Strongly favor	
29%	Somewhat favor	80% TOTAL FAVOR
6%	Somewhat oppose	13% TOTAL OPPOSE
7%	Strongly oppose	
7%	Don't know	

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25. Some people say our courts have become too activist, reaching into other areas of government, and have begun making law instead of just interpreting law. These people say that some courts' actions could even be considered unconstitutional.

Other people say that our courts need to be active and make rulings that affect public policy to provide corrective actions when the legislature or Governor errs. They feel these courts are only doing their job to protect the people of North Carolina.

Do you feel that **[ROTATE]** courts are becoming too activist in making law, rather than interpreting law, or do you feel that courts are just doing what's right for North Carolina by correcting errs by the legislature and Governor? **[IF CHOOSE POSITION: Do you feel strongly about that?]**

32% Strongly becoming too activist
11% Not strongly becoming too activist
13% Not strongly just doing what's right
22% Strongly just doing what's right
22% Don't know
1% Refused
43% TOTAL TOO ACTIVIST
35% TOTAL DOING WHAT'S RIGHT

Now, I have just a few questions for statistical purposes. . .

26. If we were to check the voter registration rolls, would you be registered as a **[rotate R/D]** Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

34% Republican
51% Democrat
10% Independent
* Other **[volunteered]**
1% Don't Know
4% Refused

27. Which one of the following best describes how you usually vote? **[ROTATE 1THRU 5 TOP TO BOTTOM/ BOTTOM TO TOP]**

22% Only or mostly for Democrats
9% For a few more Democrats than Republicans
35% I vote for the person not the party **[volunteered]**
9% For a few more Republicans than Democrats
19% Only or Mostly for Republicans
1% Other **[volunteered]**
1% Don't Know
3% Refused

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28. On political issues, do you consider yourself to be **[ROTATE]** Conservative, Moderate, or Liberal? **[PROBE: Very/Somewhat Conservative/Liberal] [If moderate ASK: Which way do you lean?]**

3%	Very Liberal	
7%	Somewhat Liberal	
3%	Lean Liberal	10% TOTAL LIBERAL
33%	Moderate	45% TOTAL MODERATE
8%	Lean Conservative	37% TOTAL CONSERVATIVE
22%	Somewhat Conservative	
15%	Very Conservative	
9%	Don't Know / Refused	

29. What is your age? **[READ categories if necessary]**

5%	18-24
6%	25-29
5%	30-34
5%	35-39
11%	40-44
9%	45-49
14%	50-54
11%	55-59
9%	60-64
8%	65-69
6%	70-74
8%	75 And Over
3%	Refused

30. What is your current marital status?

69%	Married
15%	Single / Never Married
7%	Divorced / Separated
7%	Widowed
0%	Other
2%	Refused

31. Do you have any children under 18 years old living at home?

27%	Yes
71%	No
3%	Refused

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32. What is the last grade of school you completed?
- 3% Grade School Or Less (1-8)
 - 7% Some High School
 - 26% High School Graduate
 - 3% Vocational / Technical Training
 - 10% Some College (Less Than 2 Years)
 - 13% Some College (2 Years Or More)
 - 25% College Graduate
 - 11% Post Graduate Work
 - 2% Don't Know / Refused
33. Which of the following income groups includes your total household income in 2001 before taxes?
- 21% Under \$30,000
 - 21% \$30,000 _ \$49,999
 - 17% \$50,000 _ \$69,999
 - 11% \$70,000 _ \$89,999
 - 7% \$90,000 _ \$109,999
 - 3% \$110,000 _ \$129,999
 - 1% \$130,00 _ \$149,999
 - 3% \$150,000 and over
 - 4% Don't Know
 - 12% Refused
34. Do you consider yourself to be White, Black, Hispanic, Asian or something else?
- 75% White
 - 18% Black
 - * Hispanic
 - * Asian
 - 1% Other
 - 1% Don't Know
 - 4% Refused
35. **SEX OF RESPONDENT: [Don't Ask, Just Record]**
- 48% Male
 - 52% Female

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36. Are you employed outside the home, are you a homemaker, or are you retired?

31%	Male, Employed
*	Male, Homemaker
13%	Male, Retired
2%	Male, Not Employed
30%	Female, Employed
6%	Female, Homemaker
13%	Female, Retired
2%	Female, Not Employed
2%	Refused

Media Markets

*	Atlanta
26%	Charlotte
*	Chattanooga
1%	Florence / Myrtle Beach
20%	Greensboro
8%	Greenville
9%	Greenville / Spart. / Ashville
1%	Norfolk / Portsmouth / Newport News
29%	Raleigh / Durham
5%	Wilmington