

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alabama Voters Want Change in Supreme Court Elections

Raleigh, N.C. – After one of the most expensive state Supreme Court elections in the nation in 2008, voters from Alabama are now saying that they would like to implement stricter spending limits on such elections in the future, Public Policy Polling finds.

61% of Alabama voters would like to have stricter spending limits for candidates in the state Supreme Court elections, with 14% saying that they would not.

Respondents also showed a great deal of concern with how candidates' advertisements are being bought. 89% of respondents said that they are at least somewhat concerned with special interest groups trying to sway elections through advertising, with 60% saying that they are very concerned.

Along with concern over advertisements, Alabama voters also think that contributions can influence a winning candidate in the courtroom. 67% said that they believe campaign contributions influence the way that judges make decisions, with 11% saying they don't.

“Clearly the voters in Alabama would like to see some changes in their Supreme Court elections,” said Jonathan Crook of Public Policy Polling. “However, it seems that they would prefer a more tested option, such as stricter spending limits, as opposed to experimenting with a public finance system.”

PPP found that 66% of voters would be in favor of implementing a public finance system in the judiciary similar to North Carolina's, but most respondents are unsure as to the merits of public funding in general.

PPP surveyed 667 Alabama voters from June 2nd to 5th. The survey's margin of error is +/-3.8%. Other factors, such as refusal to be interviewed and weighting, may introduce additional error that is more difficult to quantify.

If you would like an interview regarding this release, please contact Jonathan Crook at (252) 206-6192.

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Alabama Survey Results

- Q1** North Carolina currently has a law that gives statewide judicial candidates the option of accepting public campaign funding if they agree to spending limits and refuse money from Political Action Committees. It also makes judicial elections nonpartisan and provides voter guides to explain judicial candidates' qualifications. What would your position be on Alabama adopting a similar program? If you strongly favor it, press 1. If you somewhat favor it, press 2. If you somewhat oppose it, press 3. If you strongly oppose it, press 4. If you're not sure, press 5.
- Strongly Favor*30% *Strongly Oppose* 4%
Somewhat Favor....33% *Not Sure*.....22%
Somewhat Oppose .11%
- Q2** Do you feel like judicial candidates are able to accept campaign financing from private entities like lawyers and law firms without creating a conflict of interest? If yes, press 1. If no, press 2. If you're not sure, press 3.
- Yes*13% *Not Sure*.....20%
No.....67%
- Q3** Do you think that there should be more strict spending limits for Alabama's Supreme Court elections? If yes, press 1. If no, press 2. If you're not sure, press 3.
- Yes*61% *Not Sure*.....24%
No.....14%
- Q4** Would you be in favor of any kind of public finance system for Alabama's Supreme Court elections? If yes, press 1. If no, press 2. If you're not sure, press 3.
- Yes*20% *Not Sure*.....35%
No.....45%
- Q5** Do you think that a public finance system would be effective in reducing conflicts of interest in Alabama's Supreme Court? If yes, press 1. If no, press 2. If you're not sure, press 3.
- Yes*33% *Not Sure*.....42%
No.....26%
- Q6** Do you agree with the concept of public finance in general for state, judicial, or federal elections? If yes, press 1. If no, press 2. If you're not sure, press 3.
- Yes*25% *Not Sure*.....42%
No.....33%
- Q7** Do you think that campaign contributions influence the way that judges make decisions in the courtroom? If yes, press 1. If no, press 2. If you're not sure, press 3.
- Yes*67% *Not Sure*.....22%
No.....11%
- Q8** Are you concerned about special interest groups buying advertisements for judicial candidates in order to sway elections? If you are very concerned, press 1. If you are somewhat concerned, press 2. If you are somewhat unconcerned, press 3. If you are not concerned at all, press 4.
- Very Concerned*.....60% *Somewhat Unconcerned* 9%
Somewhat Concerned29% *Not Concerned*..... 2%
- Q9** Would you describe yourself as a liberal, moderate, or conservative? If liberal, press 1. If moderate, press 2. If conservative, press 3.
- Liberal*..... 14%
Moderate..... 37%
Conservative..... 49%





Q10 If you are a woman, press 1, if a man, press 2.

Woman 54%

Man..... 46%

Q11 If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If other, press 3.

Democrat 38%

Republican..... 41%

Other..... 21%

Q12 If you are white, press one now. If you are African-American, press two now. If other, press 3.

White 69%

African-American 28%

Other..... 3%

Q13 If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1 now. If you are 30 to 45, press 2. If you are 46 to 65, press 3. If older, press 4.

18 to 29..... 11%

30 to 45..... 25%

46 to 65..... 44%

Older than 65..... 20%





Crosstabs

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
N.C. Public Finance Favorability				
Strongly Favor	30%	33%	32%	28%
Somewhat Favor	33%	30%	39%	30%
Somewhat Oppose	11%	9%	10%	11%
Strongly Oppose	4%	3%	3%	4%
Not Sure	22%	24%	15%	27%

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Accepting Finance Without Conflicts of Interests				
Yes	13%	19%	17%	9%
No	67%	67%	66%	67%
Not Sure	20%	14%	17%	24%

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Stricter Spending Limits				
Yes	62%	55%	62%	63%
No	14%	21%	16%	11%
Not Sure	24%	24%	22%	26%

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Judicial Public Finance Favorability				
Yes	20%	32%	22%	14%
No	45%	34%	47%	47%
Not Sure	35%	34%	30%	38%





Crosstabs

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Fewer Conflicts of Interests				
Yes	33%	42%	36%	28%
No	25%	23%	28%	24%
Not Sure	42%	34%	36%	48%

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Public Finance In General				
Yes	25%	34%	29%	19%
No	33%	29%	32%	35%
Not Sure	42%	37%	39%	46%

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Contributions Influence Courts				
Yes	67%	67%	67%	67%
No	11%	11%	13%	10%
Not Sure	22%	22%	20%	23%

	Base	Ideology		
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Special Interest Groups Concern				
Very Concerned	60%	46%	60%	65%
Somewhat Concerned	29%	34%	29%	27%
Somewhat Unconcerned	9%	15%	9%	7%
Not Concerned	2%	5%	2%	1%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
N.C. Public Finance Favorability			
Strongly Favor	30%	26%	36%
Somewhat Favor	33%	37%	29%
Somewhat Oppose	11%	9%	12%
Strongly Oppose	4%	3%	5%
Not Sure	22%	25%	19%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Accepting Finance Without Conflicts of Interests			
Yes	13%	13%	14%
No	67%	63%	70%
Not Sure	20%	24%	16%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Stricter Spending Limits			
Yes	61%	60%	63%
No	14%	12%	17%
Not Sure	24%	28%	20%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Judicial Public Finance Favorability			
Yes	20%	18%	21%
No	45%	38%	55%
Not Sure	35%	44%	24%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Fewer Conflicts of Interests			
Yes	33%	28%	38%
No	26%	20%	32%
Not Sure	42%	52%	30%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Public Finance In General			
Yes	25%	22%	28%
No	33%	26%	41%
Not Sure	42%	52%	31%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Contributions Influence Courts			
Yes	67%	64%	70%
No	11%	9%	14%
Not Sure	22%	26%	16%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Special Interest Groups Concern			
Very Concerned	60%	57%	63%
Somewhat Concerned	29%	31%	27%
Somewhat Unconcerned	9%	11%	7%
Not Concerned	2%	0%	3%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
N.C. Public Finance Favorability				
Strongly Favor	30%	30%	31%	31%
Somewhat Favor	33%	33%	34%	34%
Somewhat Oppose	11%	13%	9%	10%
Strongly Oppose	4%	4%	3%	5%
Not Sure	22%	21%	23%	21%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Accepting Finance Without Conflicts of Interests				
Yes	13%	19%	10%	8%
No	67%	56%	74%	73%
Not Sure	20%	25%	16%	19%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Stricter Spending Limits				
Yes	61%	54%	69%	61%
No	14%	17%	11%	15%
Not Sure	24%	30%	19%	24%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Judicial Public Finance Favorability				
Yes	20%	26%	15%	19%
No	45%	39%	50%	48%
Not Sure	35%	36%	35%	33%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Fewer Conflicts of Interests				
Yes	33%	34%	30%	36%
No	26%	25%	27%	23%
Not Sure	42%	41%	43%	41%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Public Finance In General				
Yes	25%	26%	22%	29%
No	33%	31%	36%	31%
Not Sure	42%	43%	42%	40%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Contributions Influence Courts				
Yes	67%	64%	71%	65%
No	11%	11%	13%	10%
Not Sure	22%	26%	16%	25%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
Special Interest Groups Concern				
Very Concerned	60%	53%	65%	62%
Somewhat Concerned	29%	29%	30%	28%
Somewhat Unconcerned	9%	16%	5%	6%
Not Concerned	2%	2%	0%	4%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
N.C. Public Finance Favorability				
Strongly Favor	30%	31%	28%	35%
Somewhat Favor	33%	34%	33%	26%
Somewhat Oppose	11%	9%	14%	10%
Strongly Oppose	4%	4%	4%	-
Not Sure	22%	22%	21%	28%

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Accepting Finance Without Conflicts of Interests				
Yes	13%	11%	20%	6%
No	67%	73%	49%	81%
Not Sure	20%	16%	31%	14%

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Stricter Spending Limits				
Yes	61%	66%	51%	61%
No	14%	11%	22%	21%
Not Sure	24%	23%	27%	18%

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Judicial Public Finance Favorability				
Yes	20%	18%	23%	27%
No	45%	48%	40%	49%
Not Sure	35%	35%	37%	23%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Fewer Conflicts of Interests				
Yes	33%	32%	33%	52%
No	26%	26%	26%	14%
Not Sure	42%	42%	41%	35%

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Public Finance In General				
Yes	25%	26%	22%	36%
No	33%	34%	30%	35%
Not Sure	42%	40%	49%	29%

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Contributions Influence Courts				
Yes	67%	69%	60%	81%
No	11%	10%	14%	14%
Not Sure	22%	21%	26%	5%

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Special Interest Groups Concern				
Very Concerned	60%	63%	51%	70%
Somewhat Concerned	29%	29%	31%	21%
Somewhat Unconcerned	9%	7%	15%	9%
Not Concerned	2%	1%	3%	-





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
N.C. Public Finance Favorability					
Strongly Favor	30%	24%	28%	30%	38%
Somewhat Favor	33%	35%	34%	35%	28%
Somewhat Oppose	11%	17%	11%	7%	16%
Strongly Oppose	4%	4%	5%	3%	3%
Not Sure	22%	21%	22%	25%	16%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Accepting Finance Without Conflicts of Interests					
Yes	13%	23%	13%	10%	15%
No	67%	55%	78%	66%	60%
Not Sure	20%	22%	9%	24%	25%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Stricter Spending Limits					
Yes	61%	55%	67%	62%	58%
No	14%	18%	12%	15%	14%
Not Sure	24%	26%	21%	24%	28%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Judicial Public Finance Favorability					
Yes	20%	18%	23%	17%	23%
No	45%	50%	49%	46%	38%
Not Sure	35%	32%	28%	37%	40%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Fewer Conflicts of Interests					
Yes	33%	31%	37%	29%	36%
No	26%	34%	29%	25%	18%
Not Sure	42%	35%	34%	46%	46%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Public Finance In General					
Yes	25%	29%	27%	23%	24%
No	33%	40%	35%	32%	29%
Not Sure	42%	31%	38%	45%	47%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Contributions Influence Courts					
Yes	67%	62%	71%	69%	61%
No	11%	18%	14%	8%	13%
Not Sure	22%	19%	16%	23%	26%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Special Interest Groups Concern					
Very Concerned	60%	43%	56%	64%	66%
Somewhat Concerned	29%	36%	37%	26%	21%
Somewhat Unconcerned	9%	20%	6%	7%	12%
Not Concerned	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%

