

**Dr. Edward Chervenak  
Anthony Licciardi**

February 22, 2018

A survey of 530 randomly selected Tangipahoa Parish registered voters was conducted Monday February 19, 2018 by the University of New Orleans Survey Research Center. Survey respondents were asked if they approved or disapproved of the casino resort project and if they thought Tangipahoa Parish was heading in the right direction or the wrong direction in an interactive voice response telephone survey (IVR)<sup>1</sup>. This survey of 530 randomly selected respondents yields a margin of error of +/- 4.2% and a confidence level of 95%. The poll was sponsored by Louisiana Public Opinion LLC.

The casino resort is proposed to be located south of Interstate 12 on the Tangipahoa River at the Robert exit. The project will have to run a gauntlet of committee and floor votes in the state legislature as well as at the Tangipahoa Parish Council, before it could be ultimately approved or rejected by voters in a parish wide election

---

<sup>1</sup> IVR surveys, also known as “robo-polls” employ an automated, recorded voice to call respondents who are asked to answer questions by punching telephone keys. Advantages of IVR surveys include their low cost, the almost immediate collection of data, and the simple and convenient processing of data. They also reduce interviewer bias to zero by eliminating the live human interviewer. Every survey respondent hears the same question read the same way.

When conducting IVR surveys, pollsters must not rely on all details of a call list. They cannot assume that the details of the person in the file will match the individual who picks up the call. Demographic categories of race, age, gender, and political party identification must be self-reported by the respondent to ensure a valid and accurate analysis.

Ideally, the sample of respondents should reflect the population of interest. Unfortunately, this is usually not the case. One of the problems with telephone surveys is non-response since some people may screen their calls or hang-up when called. This may cause some groups to be over- or under-represented.

Because IVR surveying is prohibited by FCC rules from calling cell phone numbers, only VOIP and home phone numbers can be called. The growing trend of minority and younger households without land lines can result in a coverage error. Residents who are cell phone only who would be eligible to participate are excluded from IVR polls, unless they answer the survey from a home telephone in another home. As such, no reliable conclusions can be drawn from the observed survey data unless the sample has been post-weighted to correct for the lack of representativeness. It is imperative that survey analysts accurately post weight the cases to reflect the demographics of the population of interest. In this instance this sample was post-weighted to reflect gender, age, and race parameters of the population of registered voters in Tangipahoa Parish.

**Table 1.**

**Do you approve or disapprove of the casino resort proposed for the Robert exit on Interstate 12?**

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>DEMOCRATS</b>	<b>REPUBLICANS</b>	<b>OTHER PARTY</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>
<b>Approve</b>	49.2%	60.5%	38.9%	52.0%	56.8%	43.0%
<b>Disapprove</b>	30.7%	17.4%	47.3%	17.0%	29.6%	31.5%
<b>Undecided</b>	20.1%	22.1%	13.8%	31.0%	13.6%	25.5%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Forty-nine percent of survey respondents from Tangipahoa Parish say they approve of the proposed casino resort project and 31% disapprove. One in five respondents are undecided.

Self-identified Democrats approve of the project by a three to one margin (61% to 17%). Twenty-two percent of Democrats are undecided. Republicans, however, express more opposition than support for the proposed casino (47% to 39%). Fourteen percent of Republicans are undecided. A majority of other party and no party identifiers, (52%) approve of the project, while 17% disapprove, and 31% are undecided.

While both men and women approve of the casino resort than disapprove of it, there is a gender gap. Fifty-seven percent of men and 43% of women approve. Relatively equal percentages of men and women oppose the proposed casino, but women are twice more likely than men to report they do not have an opinion on the matter.

**Table 2.**

**Do you approve or disapprove of the casino resort proposed for the Robert exit on Interstate 12?**

	<b>18-34</b>	<b>35-54</b>	<b>55+</b>	<b>BLACK</b>	<b>WHITE</b>	<b>OTHER RACE</b>
<b>Approve</b>	44.1%	63.3%	41.9%	50.6%	48.7%	33.3%
<b>Disapprove</b>	18.6%	27.2%	41.4%	25.3%	32.9%	33.3%
<b>Undecided</b>	37.3%	9.5%	16.7%	24.1%	18.4%	33.4%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

All three age categories approve of the casino resort proposal. Those respondents in the in the 35 to 54 age category express the highest level of support for the proposed casino and do so by a 2 to 1 margin. The oldest age cohort, the category of people most likely to vote, is basically split in its opinion about whether they approve or disapprove of the casino with 17% undecided. Respondents in the youngest age cohort, which is the least likely age demographic to vote, are twice more likely to approve than disapprove of the proposed casino. However, over one-third of the youngest respondents are ambivalent about the project.

Black survey respondents approve of the casino resort proposal 2 to 1 with 24% reporting they are undecided. White respondents are nearly as likely as African-Americans to approve of the casino, but are more likely than blacks to express opposition to it. Other race Respondents are equally divided across approval, disapproval, and having no opinion.

**Table 3.**

**Is Tangipahoa Parish heading in the right direction or wrong direction?**

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>DEMOCRATS</b>	<b>REPUBLICANS</b>	<b>OTHER PARTY</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>
<b>Right Direction</b>	44.4%	56.3%	37.2%	39.0%	51.2%	38.7%
<b>Wrong Direction</b>	30.9%	17.9%	46.4%	18.0%	32.8%	29.3%
<b>Don't Know</b>	24.7%	25.8%	16.3%	43.0%	16.0%	32.1%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Forty-four percent of survey respondents say that Tangipahoa Parish is heading in the right direction, 31% believe it is heading in the wrong direction, and 25% are not sure. Positive sentiment about the direction of the parish is down from an April 29, 2016 survey, where 51% believed the parish was heading in the right direction and 21% thought it was moving in the wrong direction. Democratic Party identifiers are more likely than Republican Party identifiers to report that the parish is heading in the right direction. Forty-six percent of Republicans think the parish is going in the wrong direction while only 18% of Democrats think that is the case. Other party identifiers are twice more likely than not to think the parish is heading in the right direction. However, a plurality (43%) did not express an opinion on this question.

There is a gender gap on the perception of the direction of the parish. Fifty-two percent of men believe the parish is heading in the right direction while 39% of women express this viewpoint. The sexes are in closer agreement in saying that the parish is moving in the wrong direction. Women are twice more likely than men to answer that they are not sure where they stand on the direction of the parish.

**Table 4.**

**Is Tangipahoa Parish heading in the right direction or wrong direction?**

	<b>18-34</b>	<b>35-54</b>	<b>55+</b>	<b>BLACK</b>	<b>WHITE</b>	<b>OTHER RACE</b>
<b>Right Direction</b>	35.2%	49.7%	46.5%	44.2%	44.5%	33.3%
<b>Wrong Direction</b>	31.7%	31.6%	29.8%	24.0%	33.8%	33.3%
<b>Don't Know</b>	33.1%	18.7%	23.7%	31.8%	21.7%	33.4%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The youngest age cohort’s responses on the direction of Tangipahoa Parish is fairly evenly split, however slightly more (35%) believe the parish is heading in the right direction than the wrong direction (32%). Another one third say they don’t know. Thirty-five to fifty-four year olds rate the parish as moving in the right direction higher than either of the other two groups. Thirty-two percent of 35 to 54 year olds think the parish is heading in the wrong way and 19% don’t know. The oldest age group, fifty-five and older, find themselves between the other two age categories on the topic. Forty-seven percent say the parish is heading in the right direction, 30% think it is moving in the wrong direction, and 24% don’t know.

An equal percentage of black and white respondents think that Tangipahoa is heading in the right direction, although whites are more likely than black respondents to say that the parish is proceeding in

the wrong direction. Blacks are more likely than whites to express uncertainty on this question. Non-black minorities are evenly split across the three answer categories.

### Conclusion

In a very close local option election on November 5, 1996, voters in Tangipahoa Parish voted 51%-49% to approve riverboat gaming for the parish. It appears that demographic and population changes of the parish, over the course of nearly twenty-two years, reveal that given the opportunity, the electorate would likely approve of the proposed casino resort project in Robert. The likelihood of such a measure reaching the ballot is not quite as clear. There are state legislative committees and floor votes in both houses that must approve procedural legislation before the matter would be sent to the Tangipahoa Parish Council for its approval. There, at least 6 parish councilmen must agree to put the measure on the ballot for the voters of Tangipahoa Parish, but not before the Louisiana State Bond Commission approves it.

## Appendix

### Script

1. This is a 60 second confidential university survey of Tangipahoa Parish voters. Do you approve or disapprove of the casino resort proposed for the Robert exit on Interstate 12? Press 1 for approve, press 2 for disapprove, press 3 for don't know.
  2. Is Tangipahoa Parish heading in the right direction or wrong direction? Press 1 for right direction, press 2 for wrong direction, press 3 for don't know.
  3. If you think of yourself as a Democrat press 1, Republican press 2, something else press 3.
  4. If you are male press 1. If you are female press 2.
  5. If you are between 18 and 34 years old press 1, 35 to 54 years old press 2, if you are older than 54 press 3.
  6. If you are black press 1. If you are white press 2. Something else press 3.
- Thank you for taking the survey.

### Survey Sample Demographics & Tangipahoa Parish Voter Population Demographics

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>SAMPLE</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>
<b>MALE</b>	45.90%	45.20%
<b>FEMALE</b>	54.10%	54.80%
<b>BLACK</b>	29%	27.90%
<b>WHITE</b>	70.50%	68.80%
<b>OTHER RACE</b>	0.50%	3.30%
<b>18-34</b>	27.40%	28.30%
<b>35-54</b>	32.10%	33.40%
<b>55+</b>	40.50%	38.30%