



HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY

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HPU POLL: N.C. VOTERS SAY THE ‘AMERICAN DREAM’ IS BECOMING HARDER TO OBTAIN

HIGH POINT, N.C., Sept. 6, 2012 – The Democratic Party is preparing for their last evening of convention speeches tonight in Charlotte – speeches that have historically referred to a concept of the “American dream.” A new HPU Poll finds that most registered voters in North Carolina say this concept is a spiritual one, and it will be harder to obtain a generation from now.

Fifty-eight percent of those surveyed said that the American dream is mainly about finding spiritual happiness, compared to 26 percent who said it is about achieving material goods. At the same time, 64 percent said they expected the American dream to be more difficult to achieve a generation from now.

This sentiment of those surveyed might reflect their financial situations as 42 percent said that they are worse off financially than they were four years ago, compared to 37 percent who said they are about the same, and 18 percent who said they are better off.

“We have heard both Democrats and Republicans talk about which party’s candidates could best help Americans achieve the American dream,” says Martin Kifer, Director of the HPU Poll. “These findings show that North Carolinians are not feeling optimistic about the next generation of Americans easily achieving the American dream. As we have seen in past HPU Polls and other recent surveys, many people are not pleased with their personal finances. Those attitudes could affect the outcome of the elections this year.”

What is the American dream?

For you and your family, do you consider the American dream to be mainly about achieving material goods, or is it more about finding spiritual happiness?

Material goods – 26 percent

Spiritual happiness – 58 percent
Not sure – 16 percent

Future of the American dream

Looking to the future--say a generation from now--do you feel the American dream will be easier to attain than it is today, harder, or will it be about the same?

Easier – 11 percent
Harder – 64 percent
About the same – 22 percent
Not sure – 3 percent

Personal Finances – Better Off than Four Years Ago

We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you and your family living there are better off or worse off financially than you were four years ago? Or are you doing about the same?

Better off – 18 percent
Worse off – 42 percent
About the Same – 37 percent
Not sure – 2 percent

(For registered voters, n = 543, margin of sampling error is approximately 4.3 percent)

For the survey, the HPU Poll through SurveyUSA interviewed 600 state of North Carolina adults Aug. 26 to Aug. 30. Of the adults, 543 were registered to vote. This research was conducted using blended sample, mixed mode. Respondents reachable on a home telephone (71 percent of registered voters) were interviewed on their home telephone in the recorded voice of a professional announcer. Respondents not reachable on a home telephone (29 percent of registered voters), were shown a questionnaire on their smartphone, laptop, tablet, or other electronic device. In this research, consistent with findings in other states, cellphone respondents are more Democratic than are landline respondents. Romney leads by 14 points among landline respondents. Obama leads by 22 points among cellphone respondents. When the two groups are proportionally blended, the contest is, as reported here, 46 percent for Romney and 43 percent for Obama. Additional methodological explanation is available at:

<http://www.surveyusa.com/client/methodology6.aspx>

Additional details including crosstabs of these questions are available at the High Point University Survey Research Center website: <http://src.highpoint.edu/>

You can follow the HPU Poll on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/SurveyResearchCenter> and Twitter at <http://twitter.com/HPUSurveyCenter>.

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