

Illinois Issues

IN-DEPTH

Methodology

The University of Illinois Springfield Survey Research Office (SRO) is dedicated to the principles of transparency in research and is a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) [Transparency Initiative](#). Membership entails adherence to AAPOR's code of ethics as well as a commitment to promoting the understanding of survey methodology and how it relates to survey quality. For more information about project methodology, please contact the UIS Survey Research Office at sro@uis.edu.

The 2019 *Illinois Issues Survey* was designed and analyzed by the staff of the Center for State Policy and Leadership, the Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies, and the Survey Research Office at the University of Illinois Springfield. This project is co-sponsored by the Center for State Policy and Leadership, NPR Illinois, and the Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies at the University of Illinois Springfield. The study was conducted in English by the Survey Research Office via the Qualtrics Research Suite. The online panel was provided by Qualtrics.

The survey was fielded from **September 13-September 23, 2019** among a sample of **1,012 registered voters, all at least 18 years or older, in Illinois**. For **all respondents the credibility interval** is plus or minus **3.5**. While a margin of error is often used to express uncertainty in polling, for online surveys credibility intervals are used to measure the accuracy, or uncertainty, of the survey. When examining subgroups, the credibility interval will increase. The survey includes quotas for gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, and region of the state. The sample was weighted based on the demographic composition of these groups in Illinois using the most recent population estimates provided by the U.S. Census Bureau's 2017 American Community Survey. For additional information on weighting, please click [here](#). All sample surveys and polls may be subject to multiple sources of error, including but not limited to sampling error, coverage error, and measurement error.

The survey included various checks to ensure the validity of the data collected from respondents. Click [here](#) for an extended explanation for all the checks Qualtrics does for their panels.

Notes for reading the results:

- Percentages may not always add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
- Values less than 0.5 percent are indicated by an asterisk (*).

Survey Sample Compared to Illinois

Group	Weighted Sample	Illinois
Male	48%	49%
Female	52%	51%
18 to 34	24%	24%
35 to 44	18%	18%
45 to 59	29%	29%
60 and Older	29%	29%
Cook County	40%	40%
Collar Counties	25%	25%
Downstate	35%	35%
White	62%	62%
Black	14%	14%
Hispanic	13%	17%
Other	10%	7%
High School Diploma or Less	31%	34%
Between a HS Diploma and Four-Year Degree	33%	32%
Four-Year Degree or More	36%	34%
Under \$45,000	46%	46%
\$45,001 and \$100,000	30%	30%
Greater than \$100,001	24%	24%
Democrat/Democrat Leaning	53%	
Non-Leaning Independent	15%	
Republican/Republican Leaning	30%	

A Majority of Illinois Voters Support the Proposed Graduated Income Tax Amendment, are Following News Around it Closely, and Think it Will be Good for the Financial Health of the State

Support for the graduated income tax increased in 2019 to 67% compared to 57% in 2018. However, there is a vast difference in partisan support for the proposal. Democrats/Democratic-leaning voters (79%) are much more likely to support the graduated state income tax than Republican/Republican-leaning voters (49%) and non-leaning independents (59%). About two-thirds of both male (67%) and female respondents (67%) are in support of the tax. The age group most likely to support the proposed graduated income tax constitutional amendment is respondents ages 18 to 34 (71%), a slight contrast with the lowest supporting age group, those ages 45 to 59 (64%). Across regional lines, results are quite similar among Cook County (69%), the collar counties (63%), and downstate counties (67%). There are differences in support among race groups, with blacks (79%) favoring the tax more than any other group, while whites (63%) and Hispanics (67%) responded more similarly. There are similar rates in support from an education perspective. 70% of college-educated individuals with a four-year degree or more are in support of the graduated income tax, as compared to those with a high school diploma or less (66%) and those with an education level between high school and a four-year degree (68%). In regards to income, support for the tax is at 70% for those with incomes under \$45,000 and drops to 65% for household incomes between \$45,000 and \$100,000. Support drops further to 62% for individuals reporting a household income over \$100,000.

A majority of Illinois voters are closely following news surrounding the proposed graduated state income tax constitutional amendment (57%). There is some variation between regions, specifically between Cook County (62%) and downstate (52%), with collar counties (58%) resting in the middle. Male respondents are more likely to report they are closely following news of the proposed income tax (62%) than women (54%) on the survey. By age, those 60 and up (62%) are more likely to report following the news around the amendment relative to other age groups, while those ages 35 to 44 (54%) are least likely to report following news on the proposition closely. Some of the most substantial disparities in responses come from racial and ethnicity differences. White voters (67%) are far more likely to be following the news on the proposed graduated income tax closely, with Hispanic voters (42%) being least likely. The survey found substantial differences between those who have a four-year degree or more (68%) and voters who have something in between an HS diploma or degree (52%) or a high school diploma or less (53%). There is similar diversity in reported attention across income groups. Respondents reporting a household income of less than \$45,000 (49%) are far less likely to follow news of the graduated income tax than those earning a household income greater than \$100,000 (75%). While there is a higher variance when considering other demographics, partisan affiliation showed only slight differences. Democrat and Democratic-leaning independents (56%) are slightly more likely than Republican-leaning voters (54%) to report following the news closely. These results compare to non-leaning independents (51%).

Slightly less than a third (29%) of respondents believed they would pay more with the proposed tax, with a plurality (46%) thinking they would pay about the same. Roughly, the same amount of male and female respondents (29%) believe they would pay more in taxes. More substantial differences appear for respondents who think they would pay less. Female respondents (28%) are

more likely to report that they believe they will pay less in taxes than male respondents (21%). There are also slight differences across age groups. Those under the age of 35 (25%) are least likely, and respondents between 45 and 59 (32%) most likely to report they thought their state income taxes would increase. About a third of Illinois voters living in Cook County (30%) and the collar counties (31%) believe they would pay more in taxes. This result compares to 26% of downstate voters. Almost half of white (47%) and just over half of black (51%) respondents believe they would pay about the same, while Hispanic voters are much less likely (37%). When looking at education, the highest percentage of those who believe they will pay more with the graduated income tax came from voters with a four-year degree or more (35%). This differs from those with an education level of a high school diploma or less (25%) or something in between high school and a four-year college degree (25%). Moreover, a sizeable difference arises between voters who report a household income of \$100,000 or more (42%) and those who state they earn less than \$45,000 (22%) or something in between \$45,000 and \$100,000 (29%). A vast difference is also present between party lines. Slightly less than a quarter of Democrat/Democratic-leaning voters (21%) believe they will pay more with the graduated income tax, compared to nearly four in ten Republican/Republican-leaning voters (38%).

There is some optimism surrounding the impact the graduated income tax could have on the state. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents believe it will have a positive effect on the financial health of the Illinois government. Both male (66%) and female voters (65%) have similar beliefs. About three quarters (74%) of voters under 35 believe the effects of the proposed tax would be favorable as compared to their older counterparts, especially those ages 45-59 who only had 56% say the same. A larger difference lies between the sentiments of Cook County (70%) and the Downstate (62%) and Collar counties (63%), where only about two-thirds of respondents believe the tax will help the financial health of Illinois. Of the racial groups, only whites (61%) had under two-thirds respond that they thought the tax would have a positive impact. Coincidentally, while a significant portion of voters with at least a four-year degree (35%) believe they would pay more with the tax, they are also the group most likely to state that the graduated income tax would help the state (70%). There was little deviation when looking at income, as around two-thirds of respondents in each age group believe the tax would improve the financial health of the state. Once again, a substantial difference in opinion was evident through a partisan lens. Democrats/Democratic-leaning voters (80%) had the largest amount of respondents who believe the tax would have a positive impact. Non-leaning independents (57%) and Republican/Republican-leaning voters (43%) are the least likely to believe in the positive effects the tax would have on Illinois.

As you may know, in November of 2020 Illinoisans will vote on if they want to amend the Illinois constitution to allow for a graduated tax system – that is, a system where tax rates would be lower for lower-income taxpayers and higher for upper-income taxpayers.

How closely have you been following news stories related to the proposed graduated state income tax?

Group	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Too Closely	Not at All
All Respondents	16%	41%	31%	12%
Male	20%	42%	28%	10%
Female	13%	41%	33%	14%
18 to 34	24%	34%	28%	15%
35 to 44	11%	43%	33%	13%
45 to 59	13%	42%	32%	13%
60 and Older	17%	45%	31%	7%
Cook County	20%	42%	29%	9%
Collar Counties	15%	43%	33%	9%
Downstate	14%	38%	31%	17%
White	15%	42%	29%	13%
Black	18%	35%	36%	11%
Hispanic	12%	40%	42%	6%
Other	30%	41%	19%	11%
High School Diploma or Less	11%	42%	32%	15%
Between a HS Diploma and Four-Year Degree	15%	37%	36%	12%
Four-Year Degree or More	22%	46%	26%	7%
Under \$45,000	13%	36%	34%	17%
\$45,001 and \$100,000	16%	39%	34%	11%
Greater than \$100,001	22%	53%	20%	5%
Democrat/Democrat Leaning	16%	40%	33%	11%
Non-Leaning Independent	10%	41%	29%	21%
Republican/Republican Leaning	19%	45%	27%	8%

Do you support or oppose amending the Illinois Constitution to allow for a graduated income tax?

Group	Net Support	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Net Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
All Respondents	67%	25%	42%	33%	19%	14%
Male	67%	26%	41%	33%	18%	15%
Female	67%	24%	43%	33%	21%	12%
18 to 34	71%	31%	40%	28%	20%	8%
35 to 44	69%	25%	44%	31%	19%	12%
45 to 59	64%	22%	42%	36%	23%	13%
60 and Older	66%	23%	43%	35%	15%	20%
Cook County	69%	30%	39%	31%	21%	10%
Collar Counties	63%	19%	44%	37%	19%	18%
Downstate	67%	23%	44%	33%	18%	15%
White	63%	22%	41%	36%	20%	16%
Black	79%	34%	45%	21%	18%	3%
Hispanic	67%	29%	38%	34%	20%	14%
Other	70%	24%	46%	30%	16%	14%
High School Diploma or Less	66%	23%	43%	33%	22%	11%
Between a HS Diploma and Four-Year Degree	68%	29%	39%	32%	20%	12%
Four-Year Degree or More	70%	25%	45%	30%	15%	15%
Under \$45,000	70%	29%	41%	30%	19%	11%
\$45,001 and \$100,000	65%	23%	42%	35%	21%	14%
Greater than \$100,001	62%	20%	42%	38%	19%	19%
Democrat/Democrat Leaning	79%	33%	46%	21%	16%	5%
Non-Leaning Independent	59%	17%	42%	41%	19%	22%
Republican/Republican Leaning	49%	14%	35%	52%	27%	25%

And under a proposed graduated tax system, do you think you would pay more in state income taxes, about the same, or less than you currently do?

Group	Would Pay More	Would Pay Same	Would Pay Less
All Respondents	29%	46%	25%
Male	29%	50%	21%
Female	29%	43%	28%
18 to 34	25%	46%	29%
35 to 44	27%	43%	30%
45 to 59	32%	46%	22%
60 and Older	30%	49%	22%
Cook County	30%	45%	26%
Collar Counties	31%	47%	22%
Downstate	26%	47%	27%
White	29%	47%	23%
Black	24%	51%	25%
Hispanic	32%	37%	32%
Other	31%	41%	28%
High School Diploma or Less	25%	51%	25%
Between a HS Diploma and Four-Year Degree	25%	42%	33%
Four-Year Degree or More	35%	44%	21%
Under \$45,000	22%	45%	33%
\$45,001 and \$100,000	29%	49%	22%
Greater than \$100,001	42%	45%	13%
Democrat/Democrat Leaning	23%	47%	30%
Non-Leaning Independent	31%	44%	25%
Republican/Republican Leaning	38%	46%	17%

What impact do you think a graduated tax system would have on the financial health of the state government?

Group	Net Positive	Very Positive	Somewhat Positive	Net Negative	Somewhat Negative	Very Negative
All Respondents	66%	17%	49%	35%	23%	12%
Male	66%	19%	47%	33%	21%	12%
Female	65%	15%	50%	36%	25%	11%
18 to 34	74%	26%	48%	26%	19%	7%
35 to 44	66%	14%	52%	34%	23%	11%
45 to 59	56%	13%	43%	44%	27%	17%
60 and Older	67%	14%	53%	33%	22%	11%
Cook County	70%	19%	51%	30%	20%	10%
Collar Counties	63%	14%	49%	38%	26%	12%
Downstate	62%	16%	46%	37%	24%	13%
White	61%	15%	46%	39%	26%	13%
Black	77%	23%	54%	23%	15%	8%
Hispanic	71%	19%	52%	29%	19%	10%
Other	73%	21%	52%	27%	15%	12%
High School Diploma or Less	61%	14%	47%	40%	29%	11%
Between a HS Diploma and Four-Year Degree	68%	18%	50%	33%	22%	11%
Four-Year Degree or More	70%	19%	51%	30%	19%	11%
Under \$45,000	68%	20%	48%	33%	23%	10%
\$45,001 and \$100,000	63%	15%	48%	37%	25%	12%
Greater than \$100,001	63%	12%	51%	37%	22%	15%
Democrat/Democrat Leaning	80%	23%	57%	20%	15%	5%
Non-Leaning Independent	57%	9%	48%	42%	31%	11%
Republican/Republican Leaning	43%	10%	33%	56%	33%	23%