

# THE GRANITE STATE POLL

## THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

### LYNCH OFF TO MODEST START, BUDGET DEFICIT SEEN AS SERIOUS PROBLEM

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**FOR RELEASE**  
February 17, 2005

DURHAM, NH – Governor John Lynch receives modest approval ratings early in his term as New Hampshire Governor. New Hampshire residents believe the budget deficit is a serious problem.

These findings are based on the latest **Granite State Poll**,<sup>?</sup> conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. The Granite State Poll is sponsored by the University of New Hampshire. Five hundred forty-four (544) randomly selected adults were interviewed by telephone between February 1 and February 8, 2005. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/-4.2 percent.

(For more detailed results, visit the Survey Center web site at [www.unh.edu/survey-center/govapp21705.pdf](http://www.unh.edu/survey-center/govapp21705.pdf))

#### Gubernatorial Approval

After an upset win over Craig Benson in November, and with only a month in office, Democrat John Lynch is getting typical approval ratings for a new governor. In the most recent Granite State Poll, 43 percent of New Hampshire adults say they approve of the job Lynch has done as governor, 6 percent disapprove, and 51 percent are neutral. In February, 2003 after one month in office, 43 percent of New Hampshire adults approved of the job Benson had done, 44 percent were neutral, and 13 percent disapproved. “Granite Staters typically give a new governor the benefit of the doubt,” said Andrew Smith, Director of the UNH Survey Center. “But Lynch is faced with the politically difficult tasks of closing the budget deficit and addressing education funding. These are thorny issues that are sure to please some voters, but turn of others.”

#### Most Important Problem Facing New Hampshire

The problem of how to fund primary and secondary education in New Hampshire remains the most important problem facing the state. In the most recent Granite State Poll, the most important issues in the eyes of Granite Staters are education funding (24%) jobs and the economy (15%), taxes (14%), quality of education (9%), health care issues (6%), and problems with the state budget (2%). Education funding has been seen as the most important problem facing the state for several years.

#### Budget Deficit in New Hampshire

Governor Lynch and the Republican controlled Legislature are faced with closing a \$300+ million gap in the state budget over the next two years. This will require considerable political compromise on both parties and will likely involve a tax or revenue increase of some kind. But it is difficult to increase taxes in New Hampshire, particularly if the public does not see it as absolutely necessary. Currently, Lynch and the Legislature have the support of the New Hampshire public because they see the budget deficit as a serious problem. In the most recent Granite State Poll, 18 percent of New Hampshire adults think the

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<sup>?</sup> We ask that this copyrighted information be referred to as *the Granite State Poll*, sponsored by the University of New Hampshire.

budget deficit is very serious, 56 percent think it is somewhat serious, only 7 percent think it is not very serious or not serious at all and 18 percent don't know.

A key part of Governor Lynch's plan to balance the budget is an increase in the cigarette tax, a plan that receives modest support. When asked about the best way to reduce the budget deficit in New Hampshire, 25 percent said to decrease state spending, 24 percent said increase tax cigarettes, 16 percent said legalize some types of gambling, 11 percent said to increase taxes on beer and alcohol, 6 percent said they would like an income tax. Among the least popular sources of revenue were increasing the room and meals tax, a sales tax, and increasing business taxes.

### **Right Direction or Wrong Track?**

Despite the budget problems facing the state, Granite Staters are much more optimistic about the future of New Hampshire than they were last summer. Seventy-four percent think things in New Hampshire are generally going in the right direction, 13 percent think things are seriously off on the wrong track, and 13 percent say they don't know. In the July Granite State Poll, 59 percent believed things in the state were going in the right direction, 32 percent believed they were off on the wrong track, and 9 percent said they did not know (this question was not asked in Fall 2004).

### **Subgroup Analysis**

Lynch gets similar approval ratings from most New Hampshire residents, but gets his strongest support from Democrats, liberals, people who have never married, and those with post graduate educations.

People with post graduate educations are most likely to think education funding is the most important problem facing the state. Residents of Western and Northern New Hampshire are most concerned about jobs and the economy.

Democrats, liberals and people with post-graduate degrees are most likely to say that the New Hampshire budget deficit is very serious.

Young adults, those who have never been married, and those who make between \$75,000 and \$100,000 are most likely to say New Hampshire is headed in the right direction.

### **Granite State Poll Methodology**

These findings are based on the most recent Granite State Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center from February 1 to February 8, 2005. A random sample of 544 New Hampshire adults was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to plus or minus 4.2 percent. Results reported for other subgroups have potential for somewhat larger variation than those for the entire population.

The data have been weighted to adjust for numbers of adults and telephone lines within households, respondent sex, and region of the state. In addition to potential sampling error, all surveys have other potential sources of non-sampling error including question order effects, question wording effects, and non-response.

### Gubernatorial Approval

“GENERALLY SPEAKING, do you approve or disapprove of the way Governor Lynch is handling his job as governor?”

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Neutral/DK</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>(N=)</u>
<b>Feb. 2005</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>(524)</b>
<b>Feb. 2003 - Benson</b>	43%	44%	13%	(618)

### Most Important Problem Facing New Hampshire

"Let's turn to the State of New Hampshire ... There are many problems facing the STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE today. In general, what do you think is the most IMPORTANT problem facing the STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE today?"

	<u>Jobs, the Economy</u>	<u>Education Funding</u>	<u>Taxes</u>	<u>Health Care</u>	<u>Quality of Education</u>	<u>State Budget</u>	<u>Other / DK</u>	<u>(N)</u>
<b>Feb. '05</b>	15%	24%	14%	6%	9%	2%	30%	(541)
<b>July '04</b>	13	31	11	6	5	2	32%	(504)
<b>Apr. '04</b>	20	20	13	5	7	4	32	(536)
<b>Feb. '04</b>	22	20	14	10	7	5	23	(502)
<b>Oct. '03</b>	19	21	13	5	10	6	26	(490)
<b>June '03</b>	16	27	13	3	6	9	26	(513)
<b>Apr. '03</b>	16	28	14	4	8	6	24	(497)
<b>Feb. '03</b>	16	29	16	2	12	2	23	(644)
<b>June '02</b>	16	31	15	2	12	5	19	(424)
<b>Apr. '02</b>	11	31	24	2	7	1	24	(684)
<b>Feb. '02</b>	12	27	17	0	21	3	20	(312)
<b>Oct. '01</b>	15	42	11	1	4	-	27	(519)

### NH - Right Direction or Wrong Track

“Do you think things in New Hampshire are generally going in the right direction or are they seriously off on the wrong track?”

	<u>Right Direction</u>	<u>Wrong Track</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>(N)</u>
<b>Feb. '05</b>	74%	13%	13%	(535)
<b>July '04</b>	59	32	9	(503)
<b>Apr. '04</b>	65	26	9	(530)
<b>Feb. '04</b>	61	28	11	(500)
<b>Oct. '03</b>	67	26	7	(485)
<b>June '03</b>	62	29	9	(510)

### **Seriousness of Budget Deficit in NH**

“Based on what you have heard or read, how serious is the budget deficit faced by the state of New Hampshire ... very serious ... somewhat serious ... not very serious ... or not serious at all?”

	<u>Feb. '05</u>
<b>Very Serious</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Somewhat Serious</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Not Very Serious</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Not Serious At All</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>(N)</b>	<b>(543)</b>

### **Best Way to Reduce Budget Deficit in NH**

“Again, based on what you have heard or read, what would be the best means of reducing or eliminating the deficit ... to increase taxes on cigarettes ... to increase taxes on beer and alcohol ... to increase taxes on business ... to legalize video gambling ... to increase the room and meals tax ... or to reduce state spending?”

	<u>Feb. '05</u>
<b>Decrease Spending</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Tax Cigarettes/Tobacco</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Legalize Video Gambling</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Tax Beer/Alcohol</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Implement Income Tax</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Implement Sales Tax</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Legalize All Gambling</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Increase Business Taxes</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Increase Rooms/Meals Tax</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Increase All or Combination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>(N)</b>	<b>(541)</b>

### Gubernatorial Approval

STATEWIDE	<u>Approve</u> 43%	<u>Neutral</u> 51%	<u>Disapprove</u> 6%	<u>(N)</u> 524
Registered Democrat	62	36	3	111
Undeclared	36	58	6	173
Registered Republican	36	56	8	146
Not registered	47	46	7	83
Democrat	58	40	3	204
Independent	27	64	9	85
Republican	36	55	9	213
Liberal	51	46	3	109
Moderate	49	48	4	229
Conservative	34	55	11	147
Union household	50	50	0	71
Non-union	42	51	7	450
5 years or less in NH	51	39	10	65
6 to 10 years	39	56	5	40
11 to 20 years	42	50	8	117
More than 20 years	43	52	5	297
18 to 34	49	42	9	92
35 to 49	43	49	8	189
50 to 64	43	54	3	155
65 and over	40	55	5	74
Male	44	51	5	254
Female	43	50	7	270
High school or less	47	47	5	154
Some college	38	53	9	135
College graduate	38	58	4	150
Post-graduate	54	42	4	83
Less than \$30K	41	45	13	83
\$30K to \$60K	48	47	5	128
\$60K to \$75K	40	53	7	60
\$75K to \$100K	48	50	3	59
More than \$100K	43	53	4	77
Married	40	54	6	362
Divorced/separated	44	51	5	82
Never married	57	33	9	75
Protestant	41	53	6	205
Catholic	45	49	6	174
Other	46	47	7	132
Attend 1 or more/week	39	54	7	135
1-2 times a month	48	46	6	77
Less often	45	52	4	149
Never	43	49	8	153
Northern NH	41	54	4	71
Western NH	44	46	10	46
Central/Lakes	50	45	5	83
Hillsborough County	41	54	5	161
Seacoast	42	50	7	163
1st Cong. District	44	50	6	268
2nd Cong. District	42	51	7	256
1st E.C. District	42	52	6	118
2nd E.C. District	53	41	6	111
3rd E.C. District	45	50	5	102
4th E.C. District	35	60	4	77
5th E.C. District	39	53	8	115

**Are Things in NH on Right/Wrong Track**

<b>STATEWIDE</b>	<b><u>Right</u> Direction 74%</b>	<b><u>Wrong</u> Track 13%</b>	<b><u>Don't</u> Know 13%</b>	<b><u>(N)</u> 535</b>
Registered Democrat	72	12	16	113
Undeclared	75	15	10	173
Registered Republican	78	9	13	150
Not registered	71	15	15	84
Democrat	74	14	12	204
Independent	69	19	12	86
Republican	77	9	14	220
Liberal	72	16	12	112
Moderate	78	11	11	228
Conservative	75	12	12	152
Union household	79	7	14	72
Non-union	73	14	13	460
5 years or less in NH	78	10	12	65
6 to 10 years	77	15	8	41
11 to 20 years	74	15	11	122
More than 20 years	73	12	15	301
18 to 34	87	10	4	92
35 to 49	69	15	16	195
50 to 64	76	14	11	158
65 and over	71	12	17	74
Male	74	14	13	261
Female	74	12	14	274
High school or less	76	13	11	158
Some college	70	16	15	136
College graduate	79	10	12	152
Post-graduate	71	15	15	86
Less than \$30K	64	16	21	84
\$30K to \$60K	79	10	10	128
\$60K to \$75K	73	13	14	62
\$75K to \$100K	89	4	7	61
More than \$100K	71	16	13	79
Married	73	12	14	371
Divorced/separated	70	20	10	85
Never married	83	8	9	75
Protestant	75	11	14	209
Catholic	76	12	12	175
Other	72	16	11	138
Attend 1 or more/week	75	10	15	139
1-2 times a month	80	11	10	77
Less often	75	11	13	150
Never	70	18	12	158
Northern NH	79	9	12	71
Western NH	70	13	16	49
Central/Lakes	77	10	14	84
Hillsborough County	72	14	14	163
Seacoast	72	16	12	168
1st Cong. District	72	16	13	274
2nd Cong. District	76	10	14	261
1st E.C. District	76	10	14	119
2nd E.C. District	75	11	14	113
3rd E.C. District	77	12	11	105
4th E.C. District	64	24	13	80
5th E.C. District	74	11	14	117

**Most Important Problem Facing NH**

<b>STATEWIDE</b>	<b><u>Educ. Funding</u> 24%</b>	<b><u>Jobs/Economy</u> 15%</b>	<b><u>Taxes</u> 14%</b>	<b><u>State Budget</u> 2%</b>	<b><u>Quality of Educ.</u> 9%</b>	<b><u>Health Care</u> 6%</b>	<b><u>Other</u> 15%</b>	<b><u>Don't Know</u> 15%</b>	<b><u>(N=)</u> 541</b>
Registered Democrat	29	14	12	2	5	10	13	14	114
Undeclared	29	12	14	2	11	5	15	11	176
Registered Republican	26	12	16	2	10	5	15	14	151
Not registered	8	27	8	0	9	6	17	24	84
Democrat	28	16	12	1	8	8	14	13	208
Independent	17	18	13	1	12	8	15	17	89
Republican	26	12	16	2	9	4	17	14	218
Liberal	28	16	9	1	8	6	13	18	113
Moderate	29	15	14	2	8	5	14	13	230
Conservative	17	13	19	2	10	6	19	15	154
Union household	31	13	8	2	4	10	16	16	72
Non-union	23	16	15	1	10	6	15	14	464
5 years or less in NH	8	20	12	2	10	1	17	30	67
6 to 10 years	42	3	8	3	11	4	12	18	42
11 to 20 years	32	14	11	2	6	5	16	14	122
More than 20 years	23	16	16	1	9	9	14	12	303
18 to 34	9	17	11	1	15	5	19	23	93
35 to 49	27	15	15	2	6	7	15	14	196
50 to 64	32	14	14	2	8	8	14	9	160
65 and over	21	14	12	1	12	4	16	20	75
Male	24	15	18	1	11	5	14	11	264
Female	24	15	10	2	7	8	16	19	276
High school or less	16	17	16	1	8	6	15	22	160
Some college	17	17	16	1	7	8	20	14	136
College graduate	25	14	13	3	12	7	13	13	154
Post-graduate	49	12	6	1	7	5	12	6	88
Less than \$30K	14	20	12	2	7	8	18	19	85
\$30K to \$60K	23	17	10	0	10	7	17	15	131
\$60K to \$75K	26	14	21	3	8	6	15	7	62
\$75K to \$100K	25	12	14	2	8	8	17	13	60
More than \$100K	35	7	19	1	10	5	13	11	80
Married	30	13	13	1	8	7	13	13	372
Divorced/separated	12	19	18	3	9	6	20	14	86
Never married	11	19	12	3	10	4	19	22	77
Protestant	28	13	11	2	10	8	14	14	209
Catholic	19	18	17	0	7	7	16	16	178
Other	27	15	13	2	10	5	16	13	138
Attend 1 or more/week	18	15	16	2	8	5	19	17	139
1-2 times a month	29	17	6	1	9	4	14	19	80
Less often	24	16	18	1	7	10	11	14	152
Never	29	13	13	2	10	6	16	11	159
Northern NH	26	23	10	1	5	2	16	16	72
Western NH	23	27	11	2	3	6	16	12	49
Central/Lakes	23	11	13	3	13	6	20	11	85
Hillsborough County	28	11	12	1	10	8	13	17	165
Seacoast	21	14	18	1	9	7	14	16	170
1st Cong. District	24	12	15	1	10	8	14	15	280
2nd Cong. District	24	18	12	2	7	5	17	15	260
1st E.C. District	24	20	11	1	9	3	18	14	122
2nd E.C. District	29	13	10	4	6	8	17	13	113
3rd E.C. District	17	16	18	1	10	7	14	17	107
4th E.C. District	31	9	15	2	11	8	11	13	82
5th E.C. District	22	15	15	1	9	6	15	18	117

**Seriousness of Budget Deficit in NH**

<b>STATEWIDE</b>	<b>Very Serious 18%</b>	<b>Somewhat Serious 56%</b>	<b>Not Very Serious 6%</b>	<b>Not Serious At All 1%</b>	<b>Don't Know 18%</b>	<b>(N=) 543</b>
Registered Democrat	25	62	2	0	12	114
Undeclared	22	52	4	3	19	177
Registered Republican	11	61	12	2	15	152
Not registered	14	52	6	0	28	85
Democrat	28	53	5	1	13	208
Independent	12	56	5	0	27	89
Republican	13	60	8	2	18	220
Liberal	27	51	3	3	16	112
Moderate	18	61	6	1	15	232
Conservative	13	58	9	1	19	154
Union household	14	62	8	1	15	72
Non-union	19	56	6	1	18	467
5 years or less in NH	9	50	6	0	35	67
6 to 10 years	10	65	11	0	14	42
11 to 20 years	19	54	6	2	19	123
More than 20 years	21	57	5	2	14	303
18 to 34	13	51	6	2	28	93
35 to 49	17	59	6	2	17	198
50 to 64	21	58	6	0	15	160
65 and over	23	59	5	1	12	75
Male	21	55	7	3	15	266
Female	16	57	5	0	21	277
High school or less	21	55	5	1	19	161
Some college	12	59	3	2	23	136
College graduate	14	59	10	1	15	153
Post-graduate	29	52	4	2	13	89
Less than \$30K	26	54	5	0	15	86
\$30K to \$60K	17	60	4	1	19	131
\$60K to \$75K	21	50	7	2	20	62
\$75K to \$100K	16	50	10	1	23	61
More than \$100K	18	58	7	2	15	80
Married	18	58	6	1	17	375
Divorced/separated	28	52	5	0	14	86
Never married	11	52	8	3	26	77
Protestant	17	56	6	1	20	211
Catholic	18	60	8	2	12	178
Other	23	52	3	1	21	139
Attend 1 or more/week	20	56	6	2	17	140
1-2 times a month	16	61	5	0	18	79
Less often	15	56	8	2	19	153
Never	22	56	4	1	17	160
Northern NH	15	67	6	0	12	72
Western NH	21	51	1	2	26	51
Central/Lakes	20	56	9	3	12	85
Hillsborough County	16	57	4	1	22	165
Seacoast	20	53	8	1	18	170
1st Cong. District	20	57	7	2	14	279
2nd Cong. District	16	56	5	1	22	264
1st E.C. District	15	65	5	1	13	124
2nd E.C. District	24	55	7	1	13	113
3rd E.C. District	16	58	6	2	18	106
4th E.C. District	20	49	8	2	21	82
5th E.C. District	17	52	4	1	26	117

**Best Way to Reduce Budget Deficit in NH**

	Increase												(N=)
	Tax Tobacco 24%	Tax Beer/ Alcohol 11%	Increase Business Taxes 2%	Legalize Video Gambling 14%	Rooms/ Meals Tax 1%	Decrease Spending 25%	Sales Tax 2%	Income Tax 6%	Legalize All Gambling 2%	All/ or Combination 3%	Other 3%	Don't Know 7%	
<b>STATEWIDE</b>													<b>541</b>
Registered Democrat	26	13	2	14	3	15	1	15	2	1	3	4	114
Undeclared	22	12	3	16	1	24	2	6	0	4	2	8	177
Registered Republican	22	8	1	15	1	32	3	3	4	3	3	4	151
Not registered	28	13	2	12	0	22	1	2	0	4	4	13	85
Democrat	28	13	3	10	3	18	1	12	1	2	3	7	207
Independent	22	8	1	15	1	28	3	4	1	5	2	10	89
Republican	20	11	1	18	1	30	3	3	3	3	3	5	219
Liberal	25	11	5	12	3	15	2	11	2	1	4	9	113
Moderate	26	9	2	15	2	25	3	7	2	3	3	6	230
Conservative	22	13	0	14	1	33	1	2	2	3	2	7	155
Union household	22	7	3	16	3	25	1	9	1	3	3	8	72
Non-union	24	12	2	14	1	24	2	6	2	3	3	7	466
5 years or less in NH	32	8	3	7	1	25	0	6	2	2	5	9	68
6 to 10 years	31	7	1	11	0	29	0	7	0	6	4	4	42
11 to 20 years	22	12	3	11	1	24	1	8	2	4	3	10	123
More than 20 years	22	12	2	17	2	25	3	6	2	2	2	6	301
18 to 34	26	13	6	14	2	22	1	5	0	2	0	9	93
35 to 49	25	11	2	13	1	24	1	5	4	4	3	7	197
50 to 64	24	10	1	17	2	25	2	10	0	2	3	4	160
65 and over	20	13	0	8	0	28	5	5	2	3	6	11	73
Male	20	8	2	17	1	26	2	6	3	5	3	6	265
Female	27	14	1	11	2	24	2	7	0	1	3	8	276
High school or less	17	15	2	16	2	27	3	2	1	4	2	9	161
Some college	25	9	2	22	0	23	2	3	2	3	3	6	135
College graduate	27	10	3	9	1	24	1	7	3	1	4	8	153
Post-graduate	27	10	1	6	2	23	1	18	0	3	3	4	89
Less than \$30K	20	18	1	16	0	28	1	4	0	1	5	6	86
\$30K to \$60K	16	15	2	16	2	25	1	8	3	2	2	7	129
\$60K to \$75K	32	11	5	16	3	13	2	5	1	2	7	3	62
\$75K to \$100K	34	9	1	14	0	24	0	1	2	4	2	9	61
More than \$100K	24	5	3	10	1	25	4	10	3	5	0	9	80
Married	26	10	1	13	2	24	2	6	2	3	3	8	374
Divorced/separated	22	7	2	17	2	27	2	7	1	4	4	4	86
Never married	17	20	7	14	0	21	1	7	2	2	1	8	77
Protestant	21	16	1	10	1	27	3	7	2	3	3	6	210
Catholic	25	8	2	20	2	27	2	4	2	4	3	3	177
Other	26	10	4	12	1	19	2	8	1	2	4	11	139
Attend 1 or more/week	25	15	1	10	0	28	4	7	0	2	3	6	139
1-2 times a month	25	7	3	12	3	20	1	8	3	3	6	9	80
Less often	20	12	2	18	2	25	2	6	2	4	1	7	153
Never	26	9	3	15	2	24	1	6	2	3	3	7	158
Northern NH	14	12	2	13	3	28	4	6	0	3	5	10	72
Western NH	33	5	3	5	0	27	1	6	0	3	6	12	51
Central/Lakes	18	14	2	17	2	22	4	4	2	4	5	7	85
Hillsborough County	26	13	1	17	1	21	1	6	4	3	1	5	163
Seacoast	26	9	3	13	1	27	1	9	1	2	3	6	170
1st Cong. District	23	11	3	15	1	26	1	7	2	3	3	4	278
2nd Cong. District	25	11	1	13	2	23	2	6	1	3	3	11	263
1st E.C. District	17	11	3	15	2	24	3	4	1	4	6	10	123
2nd E.C. District	22	13	2	8	2	26	2	8	1	2	4	11	113
3rd E.C. District	31	10	3	11	1	26	1	6	0	3	1	6	107
4th E.C. District	21	15	0	22	1	21	0	8	3	3	2	3	80
5th E.C. District	27	8	2	17	1	26	2	6	3	2	1	5	117