

2007 Ohio Politics Survey

Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics
University of Akron

Executive Summary

Overall, Ohioans are satisfied with the results of the 2006 election, including the election of Democrat Ted Strickland as governor and the continuing Republican control of the state legislature.

The Ohio public expects their elected leaders to work together in a bipartisan fashion and for the governor to take the lead in solving the state's problems.

Ohioans are cautious in their expectations for state policy success in areas such as job creation and public education. However, these expectations are somewhat higher than in 2005.

The Ohio public has a negative evaluation of the quality of Ohio politics, an evaluation that has become more negative since 2005.

Ohioans say legislative redistricting is a more important issue than legislative term limits. Ohioans have a negative evaluation of the current partisan redistricting process and are likely to support a bipartisan approach. Ohioans have a positive evaluation of the current eight-year term limit, but may be open to a twelve-year limit.

In the early days of the 2008 presidential campaign, the Ohio public prefers former New York City Mayor Rudi Giuliani and Arizona Senator John McCain for the Republican presidential nomination. For the Democratic presidential nominations, Ohioans prefer New York Senator Hillary Clinton, Illinois Senator Barack Obama, and 2004 vice-presidential nominee John Edwards.

The Survey

This report is based on a survey of a random sample of Ohio adults 18 years or older, interviewed by telephone between January 21 and February 21, 2007 by the Center for Marketing & Opinion Research, LLC of Canton, Ohio for the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron. The number of respondents was 1,086, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. The survey responses were weighted to reflect the demographic characteristics of the Ohio public based on the U.S. Census. For ease of presentation, the results are displayed for Democrats, Independents, and Republicans.¹ Most demographic differences in these survey results were captured well by differences in partisanship.

¹ Independents that leaned Democratic were counted as Democrats and Independents that leaned Republican were counted as Republicans; respondents with other political preferences were included with the independents.

Findings

Satisfaction with 2006 Election Results

The Ohio public is on balance satisfied with the results of the 2006 general election (see Table 1). Overall, 27.5 percent of the Ohio public says they are “very satisfied” with Democrat Ted Strickland winning the governorship and another 41.3 percent are “somewhat satisfied.” A total of 22.6 percent report being “not very satisfied” or “not at all satisfied” with this election result (the remaining 8.6 percent have no opinion).

Ohioans are also on balance satisfied with the continued Republican control of the state legislature, but at a somewhat lower level: 17.7 percent report being “very satisfied” and 36.5 percent “satisfied,” and a total of 41.8 percent express a lack of satisfaction with this election result (4.0 percent have no opinion).

Table 1 Satisfaction with 2006 Election Results, Ohio Public

Satisfaction with Democrat Strickland winning governorship:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Very satisfied	27.5	52.3	16.1	6.3
Somewhat satisfied	41.3	39.4	43.4	42.4
Not very satisfied	10.7	1.3	8.7	22.6
Not at all satisfied	11.9	1.6	16.1	21.3
No Opinion	8.6	5.4	15.7	7.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Satisfaction with continued Republican control of the state legislature:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Very satisfied	17.7	2.7	10.7	39.2
Somewhat satisfied	36.5	19.3	47.9	49.1
Not very satisfied	20.7	36.7	15.3	5.8
Not at all satisfied	21.1	38.7	18.2	2.8
No Opinion	4.0	2.6	7.9	3.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

These patterns of satisfaction are explained in part by partisanship: 91.7 percent of Democrats are “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the election of a Democratic governor, compared to 59.5 percent of Independents and 48.7 percent of Republicans. A total of about one-third of Independents and more than two-fifths of Republicans are dissatisfied with the election of Governor Strickland.

Partisan differences also occurred with regard to the continuing Republican control of the legislature. Only about one-fifth of Democrats say they are “very” or “somewhat satisfied” with this election result, compared to 58.6 percent of independents and 88.3 percent of Republicans. A total of 75.4 percent of Democrats are unsatisfied with the continued Republican control of the state legislature.

Party Control of State Government and Expectations of Elected Officials

Overall, the Ohio public supported divided party control of state government, such as resulted from the 2006 election. Respondents were asked:

“Is it better for one political party to control both the governorship and the state legislature in Ohio, or is it better if control of state government is divided between the major parties?”

In response, nearly three-quarters of Ohioans preferred “divided party control” over “one-party control” (Table 2). This opinion varies little by partisanship, with roughly the same proportions of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans favoring divided party control.

The respondents were also asked about how Democratic and Republican leaders should behave toward one another given the divided party control of state government:

“Should Governor Strickland try as best he can to work with the Republican state legislative leaders, even if it means disappointing many of his own supporters? OR ... Should Governor Strickland stand up to the Republican state legislative leaders on issues that are important to his supporters, even if it means less gets done in Columbus?”

“Should the Republican state legislative leaders try as best they can to work with Governor Strickland to accomplish things, even if it means disappointing many of their own supporters? OR ... Should they stand up to Governor Strickland on issues that are important to their supporters, even if it means less gets done in Columbus?”

Overall, the Ohio public expects bipartisan cooperation between elected officials: 59.8 percent say Governor Strickland should work with Republican legislative leaders, and 76.1 percent said Republican legislative leaders should work with the Democratic governor.

There are partisan divisions here as well: 54.3 percent of Democrats say Governor Strickland should “stand up to the Republican state legislative leaders on issues that are important to his supporters, even if it means less gets done in Columbus.”

In contrast, a majority of Independents (57.9 percent) and larger majority of Republicans (81.8 percent) say the governor should “try as best he can to work with the Republican state legislative leaders, even if it means disappointing many of his own supporters.”

Table 2 Party Control and Expectations of Elected Officials

Party control of state government:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
One Party Control	20.5	22.3	14.5	22.3
Divided Party Control	73.0	72.5	76.4	71.1
No opinion	6.5	5.2	9.1	6.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Governor Strickland should:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Work with Republican leaders	59.8	41.4	57.9	81.8
Stand up to the Republican leaders	35.2	54.3	33.1	14.9
No opinion	5.0	4.3	9.0	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Republican legislative leaders should:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Work with Governor Strickland	76.1	82.6	67.8	73.7
Stand up to Governor Strickland	19.8	13.8	24.4	23.8
No opinion	4.1	3.6	7.8	2.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Who should lead in solving Ohio's problems:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Governor Strickland	63.5	82.9	54.5	47.0
Republican legislative leaders	17.7	6.7	14.0	32.5
Both/Neither	14.7	9.1	21.5	17.0
No Opinion	4.1	1.3	10.0	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Large majorities of Democrats (82.6 percent), Independents (67.8 percent), and Republicans (73.7 percent) say that Republican legislative leaders should try to cooperate with Governor Strickland, even if it meant disappointing their own supporters.

Another reason for these differences is public expectations about who should lead in solving Ohio's problems. Overall, 63.5 percent of the Ohio public says Governor Strickland should take the lead, and just 17.7 percent say that Republican state legislative leaders should do so. Here a plurality of Republicans (47.0 percent), a majority of Independents (54.5 percent), and a large majority of Democrats (82.9 percent) say that Governor Strickland should lead in solving Ohio's problems.

Public Expectations for State Government Policy Success

Despite general satisfaction with the results of the 2006 election, Ohioans are cautious in their expectations for policy success by elected officials. For example, less than one-tenth of the public say that Governor Strickland or the Republican legislative leaders will be “very successful” in enacting their policies into law. However, about three-quarters believe that both the governor and the state legislative leaders will be “somewhat successful” in this regard.

Table 3 Confidence in State Government Policy Success, 2007

Strickland will be successful in "turning around Ohio":

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
High Confidence	19.5	32.4	14.0	8.1
Moderate Confidence	66.2	60.9	69.4	70.1
Low Confidence	13.1	5.3	15.7	20.3
No Opinion	1.2	1.4	0.9	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Ohio government will be successful in helping to create good jobs:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
High Confidence	15.8	20.5	15.7	10.6
Moderate Confidence	68.3	68.8	64.0	70.1
Low Confidence	15.5	10.5	19.4	18.7
No Opinion	0.4	0.2	0.9	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Ohio government will be successful in dealing with education:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
High Confidence	17.4	23.4	16.9	10.9
Moderate Confidence	55.5	57.0	48.3	58.0
Low Confidence	26.6	18.9	33.9	30.9
No Opinion	0.5	0.7	0.9	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Ohio government will be successful in handling moral issues:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
High Confidence	17.6	21.3	12.0	16.7
Moderate Confidence	56.4	56.2	57.0	55.9
Low Confidence	24.3	20.9	28.5	25.8
No Opinion	1.7	1.6	2.5	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

This caution can be seen in the degree of confidence Ohioans express for success in a number of policy areas (Table 3).² For example, about one-fifth of the Ohio public has a high degree of confidence that Governor Strickland will successfully “turn around Ohio,” one of his campaign promises. Two-thirds express a moderate degree of confidence and about one-eighth a low degree of confidence in this prospect. More Democrats (32 percent) have a high degree of confidence in this regard than Independents (14 percent) or Republicans (8 percent).

About one-sixth of Ohioans express a high degree of confidence that Ohio government would be successful in helping to create good jobs in the state. More than two-thirds have a moderate degree of confidence, and another one-sixth have low confidence. Here there are some modest partisan differences, with Democrats more confident about the creation of good jobs than the Republicans.

The Ohio public is less confident in success regarding public education, with about one-sixth expressing high confidence, a bit more than one-half moderate confidence, and more than one-quarter low confidence. In this regard, Independents and Republicans are markedly less confident than Democrats. But one-half or more of all three groups have moderate confidence that the state government would successfully deal with public education.

A similar partisan pattern appears on “moral issues,” such as marriage and gambling. On these matters Democrats have modestly higher confidence, while Independents and Republicans have modestly lower confidence. However, a majority of all three partisan groups express a moderate level of confidence that Ohio government would handle “moral issues” successfully.

To put these figures in context, it is useful to compare the last three questions to the results of a poll conducted in the spring of 2005 by the Bliss Institute³ (Table 4).

Table 4 Change in Confidence in Policy Success, 2005 and 2007

Confidence that Ohio Government will be successful:

	<i>Jobs</i>		<i>Education</i>		<i>Moral Issues</i>	
	2007	<i>2005</i>	2007	<i>2005</i>	2007	<i>2005</i>
High Confidence	15.8	<i>10.0</i>	17.4	<i>9.3</i>	17.6	<i>13.2</i>
Moderate Confidence	68.3	<i>55.7</i>	55.5	<i>56.5</i>	56.4	<i>55.2</i>
Low Confidence	15.5	<i>33.4</i>	26.6	<i>33.0</i>	24.3	<i>29.1</i>
No Opinion	0.4	<i>0.9</i>	0.5	<i>1.2</i>	1.7	<i>2.5</i>
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

² Confidence was measured on a ten-point scale, where “1” meant “not at all confident” and “10” was “very confident.” Here, “high confidence” was measure by 8, 9 or 10 on the scale; “moderate confidence” by 4, 5, 6 or 7 on the scale, and “low confidence” as 1, 2, or 3.

³ This poll was conducted in March and April 2005 by the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics and Center for Policy Studies of the University of Akron. The overall sample size was 1517 respondents and a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points.

The major change was a decline in the level of low confidence between 2005 and 2007. For example, the number of Ohioans who expressed a low degree of confidence that Ohio government would successfully address the creation of good jobs declined from 33.4 percent to 15.5 percent. Meanwhile, the percentage of Ohioans with moderate confidence increased from 55.7 to 68.3 percent, and those with high confidence increased from 10.0 to 15.8 percent.

There were smaller shifts on education and “moral issues,” with declines in the percentages of Ohioans with low confidence in state government success (six and five percentage points, respectively) and also increases in the percentage of Ohioans with high confidence (eight and four percentage points, respectively.)

In all three issue areas, the change in low confidence was largest among Democrats, smaller among Independents, and smallest among Republicans.

Evaluating the Quality of Ohio Politics

How does the Ohio public evaluate the quality of Ohio politics after the 2006 campaign? Respondents were asked the following question:

“Thinking about Ohio politics in general... the quality of our elected officials, the way our election campaigns are run and so on... On a scale of one to ten, where TEN is very satisfied... and ONE is really disgusted... how would you rate your feeling about Ohio politics?”

The results show that less than one-tenth of Ohioans express a high level of satisfaction with the quality of Ohio politics, with about one-half reporting a moderate level of satisfaction, and nearly two-fifths claiming a low level of satisfaction.⁴ On this question, there are only small differences by party, but with Independents the most dissatisfied and Republicans the least dissatisfied.

Table 5 Satisfaction with Ohio Politics

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
High Satisfaction	8.4	9.1	5.4	9.4
Moderate Satisfied	52.5	51.0	49.0	56.7
Low Satisfaction	38.4	39.0	44.4	33.9
No Opinion	0.7	0.9	1.2	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

To put these figures in context, it is useful to compare this question to the results of a spring 2005 poll conducted by the Bliss Institute (Table 6).⁵ Between 2005 and 2007, there was an eleven percentage-point increase in the proportion of Ohioans who expressed a low level of

⁴ Here, “high satisfaction” was measured by 8, 9 or 10 on the scale; “moderate satisfaction” by 4, 5, 6 or 7 on the scale, and “low satisfaction” as 1, 2, or 3.

⁵ See note #3 for details of the spring 2005 survey.

satisfaction with the quality of Ohio politics (from 27.6 to 38.4 percent); there was also a decline in the proportion of Ohioans that reported high and moderate satisfaction with the political process.

Table 6 Change in Satisfaction with Ohio Politics, 2005 to 2007

	2007	<i>2005</i>
High Satisfaction	8.4	<i>12.7</i>
Moderate Satisfied	52.5	<i>57.4</i>
Low Satisfaction	38.4	<i>27.6</i>
No Opinion	0.7	<i>2.3</i>
Total	100.0	<i>100.0</i>

The change in low satisfaction with Ohio politics was smallest among Democrats, larger among Republicans, and largest for Independents.

Prospects for Reform: Redistricting and Term Limits

Low levels of satisfaction with the political process in Ohio have often prompted calls for reform. In recent times, two widely discussed topics for reform have been the way legislative districts are drawn and term limits for legislators. In this survey, 27.8 percent of the Ohio public reported having heard or read something about legislative redistricting and 38.7 percent reported having heard or read something about legislative term limits.

When asked which of the two issues is most important, 48.1 percent of the Ohio public choose redistricting and 37.6 percent choose legislative term limits (5.1 percent choose neither and 9.3 percent have no opinion). The 10.5 percentage-point gap between the two issues widens to 18.7 percent for respondents who reported having heard or read something about one or both of these topics.

Table 7 Relative Importance of Potential Topics of Reform: Redistricting and Term Limits

Topic	ALL	<i>Heard about Topic</i>
Redistricting	48.1	<i>54.5</i>
Term limits	37.6	<i>35.8</i>
Neither	5.1	<i>5.6</i>
No Opinion	9.2	<i>4.1</i>
Total	100	<i>100</i>

Evaluation of Redistricting

Respondents were asked two questions evaluating redistricting in Ohio:

“Some people say that the way state legislative districts are drawn has produced poor government in Ohio and has hurt the state. Other people say that the way state legislative districts are drawn has produced good government in Ohio and helped the state. Which position comes closest to your view?”

“Which of the following statements comes closest to your view...The way state legislative districts are drawn has favored the majority of the voters making it easier to solve Ohio's problems OR The way state legislative districts are drawn has made elections less competitive making it harder to solve Ohio's problems.”

The results of these questions reveal considerable dissatisfaction with the way legislative districts are drawn in Ohio (Table 8).

Overall, about one-half of Ohioans agree that the current redistricting process has produced “poor government and hurt the state.” Less than one-quarter say the districting process has produced “good government and helped the state” (more than one-quarter of the public had no opinion on this question).

There are partisan divisions on this question, with three-fifths of Democrats saying the districting process produced “poor government,” and a little more than two-fifths of Independents and Republicans holding this view.

There is more agreement on the second question, where three-fifths of the Ohio public agrees that current redistricting has reduced electoral competition and made it harder to solve the state’s problems. A bit more than one-fifth of Ohioans claims that redistricting favors the majority of voters and made it easier to solve Ohio’s problems (18 percent had no opinion).

Table 8 Evaluation of Legislative Redistricting

How districts are drawn has produced:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Poor government, hurt the state	49.9	60.1	45.0	41.0
Good government, helped the state	22.6	17.8	22.7	28.1
No opinion	27.5	22.1	32.3	30.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

How districts are drawn has:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Favored the majority, easier to solve problems	22.0	18.3	18.2	28.4
Reduced competition, harder to solve problems	59.9	68.4	59.1	51.1
No opinion	18.1	13.3	22.7	20.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Here, too, there is a partisan division, with more than two-thirds of Democrats saying that redistricting reduced electoral competition, and almost three-fifths of Independents and a majority of Republicans agreeing.

What should be done about redistricting in Ohio?

Respondents were asked to choose among three options: leave the system as it is (where redistricting is done by a partisan apportionment board); replace it with a bipartisan panel (with an equal number of Republicans and Democrats); or replace it with nonpartisan technical experts (Table 9).

The status quo with regard to redistricting was unpopular, chosen by about one-tenth of Ohioans. A change to a bipartisan panel is much more popular at 36.8 percent, and the most popular option involved nonpartisan technical experts, with 45.5 percent. Here there is very little difference among Democrats, Independents, and Republicans.

Table 9 What should be done about redistricting in Ohio?

	All	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
It should be kept as is (partisan districting)	11.1	10.2	9.9	12.7
It should be replaced by a bipartisan panel	36.8	38.0	34.7	36.8
It should be replaced by nonpartisan experts	45.5	45.8	45.5	45.2
No opinion	6.6	6.0	9.9	5.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is worth noting that a proposal for a nonpartisan redistricting process was on the ballot in Ohio in the fall of 2005 as part of the “Reform Ohio Now” amendments to the state constitution and was defeated by 69.7 percent of the vote.

Because of this defeat, attention has turned to proposals for a bipartisan redistricting panel. With this possibility in mind, respondents who initially did not choose the bipartisan option were asked if a bipartisan option would be acceptable to them. A total of 83 percent of those asked this question said they would accept a bipartisan panel, even though it was not their first choice.

Table 10 combines these questions to assess the likelihood that a proposal for a bipartisan panel would pass. Just 3.9 percent of the Ohio public supports the current form of redistricting. Another 46.5 percent of Ohioans would accept a bipartisan districting panel (although it was not their first choice). When added to the 36.8 percent with a bipartisan panel as their first choice, the bipartisan option has the potential support of 83.3 percent of Ohioans. Finally, 6.1 percent favor nonpartisan experts (6.6 percent have no opinion).

These data suggest that Ohioans are likely to support a bipartisan panel for redistricting.

Table 10 A Combined Measure of Public Opinion on Changing Redistricting

	ALL
Supporters of current redistricting	3.9
Would accept bipartisan panel	46.5
Support bipartisan panel	36.8
Support nonpartisan experts	6.1
No opinion	6.7
Total	100.0

Evaluating of Term Limits

Respondents were asked two questions evaluating legislative term limits:

“Some people say that term limits have produced poor government in Ohio and have hurt the state. Other people say that term limits have produced good government in Ohio and have helped the state. Which position comes closest to your view?”

“Which of the following statements comes CLOSEST to your view... Term limits have brought new ideas into the state legislature, making it easier to solve Ohio's problems... OR Term limits have removed wisdom and experience from the state legislature, making it harder to solve Ohio's problems.”

The results of these questions show plurality support for the current term limits (Table 11). For example, 49.4 percent of Ohioans say that term limits have produced “good government” and 37.2 percent say that term limit produced “poor government” (13.4 percent had no opinion).

Table 11 Evaluation of Term Limits

Term limits have produced:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Poor government, hurt the state	37.2	43.2	36.5	30.8
Good government, helped the state	49.4	44.3	41.9	59.8
No opinion	13.4	12.5	21.6	9.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Term limits have:

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Brought new ideas, easier to solve problems	48.1	44.3	40.9	57.0
Removed experience, harder to solve problems	38.9	43.2	41.7	32.4
No opinion	13.0	12.5	17.4	10.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Similarly, 48.1 percent of Ohioans say that term limits are good because they have brought “new ideas” into the legislature, and 38.9 percent said they are bad because they have “removed experience” from the legislature (13 percent had no opinion).

There are partisan differences on these matters: a majority of Republicans have positive views of term limits on both questions, while Democrats and Independents are more evenly divided.

The first of these questions was asked in the spring 2005 survey by the Bliss Institute,⁶ and a comparison of the results shows a ten percentage-point decline in the positive evaluation of term limits. In 2005, 59.5 percent of Ohioans said term limits produced “good government” and 29.5 percent said it produced “poor government” (11 percent had no opinion).

What should be done about term limits?

Respondents were asked to choose from three options: keep term limits as it is (an eight-year term limit); change to a twelve-year limit; or repeal term limits entirely (Table 12).

Overall, 61.5 percent of Ohioans favor maintaining the current eight-year term limit; 16.2 percent support a change to a twelve-year limit; and 17.3 percent prefer repealing term limits.

Interestingly, a large minority of supporters of the current eight-year limit also report negative evaluations of term limits in Table 11.⁷ And public support for the current term limit also declined by about 10 percentage points from 2005—from 71.6 to 61.5 percent.

Democrats are the most likely to support the status quo with regard to term limits, but large majorities of Independents and Republicans do as well.

Table 12 What should be done about legislative term limits in Ohio?

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Should be keep as is (an eight-year limit)	61.5	63.7	61.3	59.0
Should be changed to a twelve-year limit	16.2	14.7	12.8	20.0
Should be repealed (no limit)	17.3	17.8	15.2	18.0
No opinion	5.0	3.8	10.7	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Public support for current term limits has largely eliminated discussion of proposals to repeal them, and attention has shifted to proposals for extending the limit to a twelve-year term. With such a possibility in mind, respondents who initially did not favor a twelve-year limit were asked if a twelve-year limit would be acceptable to them. A total of 51.3 percent of those queried said they would accept a twelve-year limit, even though it was not their first choice.

Table 13 combines these questions to assess the likelihood that a twelve-year proposal would pass. Overall, supporters of the current eight-year term limit make up 35.2 percent of Ohioans.

⁶ See note #3 for details of the spring 2005 survey.

⁷ For example 31.6 percent of Ohioans who report supporting the current eight-year term limit agreed that term limits had produced “poor government.”

Another 39.8 percent of Ohioans would accept a twelve-year limit (although it was not their first choice). When added to the 16.2 percent with a twelve-year limit as their first choice, the twelve-year option has the potential support of 56.0 percent of the Ohio public. Finally, 3.8 percent of the public favor repeal of term limits (5.0 percent have no opinion).

Table 13 A Combined Measure of Public Opinion on Changing Term Limits

	ALL
Support current eight-year limit	35.2
Would accept twelve-year term	39.8
Support twelve-year term	16.2
Repeal term limits	3.8
No opinion	5.0
Total	100.0

These data suggest that the Ohio public may be open to changing term limits to twelve years. However, the prospects for such a change appear less likely than for a change to a bipartisan approach to redistricting.

Ohio Presidential Preferences

Respondents were also asked their preferences for the presidency in 2008. These preferences must be viewed with caution: the 2008 campaign is just beginning and the results may simply reflect the initial name recognition of the candidates. Nevertheless, these data provide a baseline for the presidential preferences of Ohioans in the future.

Republican Presidential Candidates

Among the Republican candidates listed (Table 14), former New York City mayor Rudi Giuliani ranked first with 32.3 percent of the Ohio public, followed by Arizona Senator John McCain at 25.8 percent. Both candidates did a bit better among Republicans, but the gap between them remained of comparable size.

The next two individuals have not announced their candidacies for the Republican presidential nomination, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (at 10.4 percent) and former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich (6.4 percent). The remaining names listed garnered only modest support.

Table 14 Preference for Republican Presidential Candidates

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Rudy Giuliani	32.3	30.4	30.2	36.0
John McCain	25.8	27.2	20.2	27.9
Condoleezza Rice	10.4	10.9	8.7	10.9
Newt Gingrich	6.4	3.3	7.9	8.9
Mitt Romney	3.8	3.3	1.7	5.6
Chuck Hagel	1.9	4.0	0.8	0.3
Tommy Thompson	1.4	1.1	1.7	1.5
Mike Huckabee	1.2	1.1	1.7	1.0
Duncan Hunter	1.2	1.1	2.1	0.8
Sam Brownback	0.8	0.4	0.8	1.3
Other, none	14.8	17.2	24.2	5.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Democratic Presidential Candidates

Among the Democratic candidates listed (Table 15), New York Senator Hillary Clinton ranked first with 27.2 percent of the Ohio public, followed by Illinois Senator Barack Obama with 18.4 percent, and 2004 Democratic vice-presidential nominee, John Edwards with 16.6 percent. However, Senator Clinton has much stronger support among Democrats than in the public at large (42.1 percent).

None of the other individuals named have double-digit support in the Ohio public, including the 2000 (Al Gore) and 2004 (John Kerry) Democratic presidential nominees, neither of whom are running for the 2008 Democratic nomination.

Table 15 Preference for Democratic Presidential Candidates

	ALL	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>Republicans</i>
Hillary Clinton	27.2	42.1	24.8	11.9
Barack Obama	18.4	16.3	19.8	20.0
John Edwards	16.6	17.1	12.8	18.2
Al Gore	7.1	9.1	9.5	3.5
Bill Richardson	5.2	2.0	3.3	9.9
John Kerry	4.4	4.9	4.5	3.5
Dennis Kucinich	4.2	2.7	5.0	5.6
Joe Biden	3.2	2.2	0.8	5.6
Christopher Dodd	0.7	0.7	0.4	1.0
Tom Vilsack	0.5	0.0	0.4	1.0
Other, none	12.5	2.9	18.7	19.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0