

Subject: Dec 2003
From: SCIndex <scindex@bellsouth.net>
Date: Wed, 10 Nov 2004 15:32:38 -0500
To: Carl Clark <carl@southernpolitics.net>



Volume 1, Number 3

December 22, 2003

<>

We thought adding a little seasonal data to our final survey of 2003 would be a nice way to say HAPPY HOLIDAYS to everyone who has supported the inaugural year of the SCIndex. We have had so much fun with the effort that you can expect to see more of the SCIndex next year as we count down to the 2004 elections. So from all of us at the Index - enjoy a safe and peaceful holiday season.

<>

*The SCIndex is sponsored and conducted as a collaborative research project by:
Campaign Systems, Crantford & Associates and the Southern Political Information Network <>*

Christmas Time Down South <>

A whopping majority of South Carolinians – 84% - will celebrate the Christmas season by putting up and decorating a tree this year. However, only 28% of South Carolinians say they will put up a natural Christmas tree in their home. Slightly over 6 out of ten South Carolina households report that they will use an artificial tree during the holidays. <>

This year, South Carolinians are also watching their holiday pocket books. Nearly a third of South Carolinians say they will spend less this holiday season than last year. Almost half of African Americans interviewed by the SCIndex say they plan to spend this season on presents. 60% of whites say they'll spend the same as they did last year. <>

Gearing Up for 2004 <>

2004 will be a big political year in South Carolina and across the country. George W. Bush's leadership the past 4 years will be up for referendum and there are 9 Democrats duking it out to challenge him next November. South Carolina hosts its first ever Democratic Presidential Primary in February. It's going to be a tough fight. So how are South Carolinians reacting to national concerns? <>

46% of South Carolinians think the country is headed in the right direction while 34% think we're on the wrong track. Republican voters are generally more optimistic about the direction of the country. Almost 7 out of ten Republicans believe the country is head in the right direction. <>

State Democrats see things very different. Almost half of all Democratic voters in the state say thy thing the US is head down the worn track. Only 29% of Democratic voters think the country is headed I the right direction. Interestingly (for those who know how important this segment of the vote is to all parties), Independent voters are generally more pessimistic about the county’s direction with 47% saying things are on the wrong track while 34% think things are moving in the right direction. <>

Feelings about the direction of the country are very different across income and racial voting groups. 43% of voters making less than \$35k a year think we are on the wrong track while 69% of those making over \$75k a year like the current direction of the country. African Americans (52%) are unhappy with the current direction while whites (56%) think we should hold a steady course. <>

Almost every political pundit agrees that Bush’s re-election opportunities will be significantly impacted by the president’s handling of the economy and the situation in Iraq. The preceding charts show how South Carolina voter opinions have tracked across 2003 on these issues. (NOTE: The December SCIndex results’ were compiled prior to the capture of Saddam Hussein)

June 2003 SCIndex

| | Bush's Handling of the War in Iraq? | | Bush's Handling of the Economy? | |
|--------|-------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| | Approve | Disapprove | Approve | Disapprove |
| Dem | 19% | 73% | 14% | 79% |
| Rep | 90% | 9% | 71% | 20% |
| Indp | 63% | 29% | 46% | 45% |
| AA | 17% | 72% | 14% | 79% |
| White | 74% | 23% | 56% | 35% |
| Female | 55% | 38% | 41% | 44% |
| Male | 64% | 33% | 49% | 44% |

December 2003 SCIndex

| | Bush's Handling of the War in Iraq? | | Bush's Handling of the Economy? | |
|--------|-------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| | Approve | Disapprove | Approve | Disapprove |
| Dem | 23% | 70% | 22% | 74% |
| Rep | 85% | 14% | 80% | 18% |
| Indp | 59% | 38% | 53% | 40% |
| AA | 16% | 76% | 15% | 79% |
| White | 72% | 25% | 69% | 20% |
| Female | 52% | 43% | 48% | 49% |
| Male | 61% | 34% | 60% | 37% |

<>

“First in the South” Democratic Primary <>

This year, South Carolina Democrats have made national news by moving their Presidential

preference primary to February 3, 2004, making South Carolina an early battleground state for the 2004 Democratic nomination. <>

Since this is the first time South Carolina Democrats have hosted an early primary the level of voter turnout has been a hot topic among political operatives of both parties. The SCIndex found that, of those people who identify themselves as Democrats, 83% say they will definitely participate in the February primary. Of those who will participate, 47% still have not determined which of the 9 candidates seeking the nomination they will support. <>

We'll still call him "Teflon Mark" <>

It's been over a year since Mark Sanford was elected Governor and his popularity among the state's voters still remains high. <>

The SCIndex has monitored Sanford's popularity since April 2003. In our spring survey the SCIndex found that 64% of South Carolinians had a favorable impression of Mark Sanford. The December survey revealed that Sanford's favorability ratings have increased to 71%. Sanford's job approval rating on the December survey found that 55% of all voters think he's doing an excellent or good job as Governor. <>

The fortunes of incumbent may also be improving across the state. In June 2003, the SCIndex reported that more than half of registered voters in thought it was time to elect new faces to local and legislative offices. Currently the number of South Carolina voters who want to "throw the rascals out" has dropped to 43%. Among Independent and Democratic voters the re-elect number still remains high, with 47% and 51% respectively wanting new faces in office. <>

Smoke 'Em if You Can Afford 'Em? <>

When the state legislature reconvenes in January 2004, one of the most contentious issues will likely be whether to raise the tax on cigarettes. The SCIndex found that half (50%) of all registered voters in South Carolina support an increase in the tax on cigarettes, with 36% against the tax and 13% still not sure. Republicans and Independents were highly favorable of raising the tax (56% and 57% respectively) while Democrats were split 44-41% with the majority opposing an increase in cigarette taxes. <>

How to spend the tax revenues from the proposed tax also divides South Carolina voters. When asked where the money from an increase in cigarette taxes should be spent, 41% of all voters like using the money to reduce property taxes and fund education, 31% think the new revenues should be used to fund Medicare, and 12% agree with the governor and think state income taxes should be reduced. <>

Governors of Christmas past <>

The SCIndex used the December survey to take a glance back at some look at how voters feel about the state's previous 4 governors. According to the data below each of the last 4 governors continues to be warmly regarded by a majority of South Carolina voters. However, it is interesting to note that the only two governors reelected to a second term continue to maintain a strong following among Independent voters.

| Governor | % Favorable | Democrats % Favorable | Republicans % Favorable | Independents % Favorable |
|------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Jim Hodges | 57% | 76% | 41% | 47% |
| David Beasley | 55% | 53% | 67% | 56% |
| Carroll Campbell | 61% | 55% | 68% | 60% |
| Dick Riley | 56% | 58% | 51% | 62% |

<>

Look for the next SCIndex in early February. Thanks for all of the support.

<>Seasons Greetings from everyone at the SCIndex <>

The December 2003 SCIndex was compiled from a 400 statewide sample of registered voters over period of December 2-3, 2003, and contains an error of +/- 4%.