

Summary of Findings

- Voters are less than optimistic about the future of the state.** 40% said the state was on the wrong track, while 36.5% said it was headed in the right direction. White voters have a much more positive view of the direction of the state (a net +17%, compared to a net -35% among African-Americans). Younger African-Americans in particular are unhappy with the current trajectory of the state as 66% of black respondents ages 18-54 say we're headed in the wrong direction, compared to just 15% who say we're headed in the right direction.
- Repairing roads and bridges was the most important issue for 27% of respondents, and it was the top issue among both Republicans and Democrats.** Making health care more accessible and affordable was the second most important issue for Democrats, and reducing the size of state government was the second most important issue among Republicans.
- Attorney General Jim Hood is the most popular elected official we polled, with a +27% net approval.** Hood is popular with both Democrats (+39%) and Republicans (+29%). These results are not entirely good news for the attorney general—nearly one-third of African-Americans who said they have an opinion of Hood disapprove of his performance in office. Likewise, 23% of strong Democrats are unsure of Hood, who has served as attorney general since 2004.
- While Lt. Governor Tate Reeves has a net positive approval rating, his name recognition and overall approval rate trail Hood's significantly.** Reeves' net approval overall is at just +6.6%. His net approval among Democrats is at -20%, -2% among Independents, and +39% among Republicans. Nearly a quarter of all strong Republican identifiers say they are unsure of Reeves while over 33% of those who lean Republican express that they are unsure of the sitting lieutenant governor.
- Looking towards a potential 2019 matchup, neither Reeves nor Hood has universal support among members of their party.** Among Democrats who have an opinion of both Hood, the sole statewide elected Democrat, and Reeves, the frontrunner for the 2019 GOP gubernatorial nominee, more than one-quarter disapprove of Hood's performance. Similarly, among Republicans who have opinions of both, 23% disapprove of Reeves. In the chart below, you can see what percentages of each group approve and disapprove of the two 2019 frontrunners.

Approval	GOP	Ind	Dem	All
Approve of Reeves; Disapprove of Hood	22.5%	16.9%	1.0%	12.3%
Approve of both	54.2%	29.6%	35.0%	42.5%
Disapprove of both	9.9%	29.6%	26.0%	21.3%
Approve of Hood; Disapprove of Reeves	13.4%	23.9%	38.0%	23.9%

However, Hood has an advantage over Reeves—the Democrats who don’t like Hood also don’t like Reeves, while most Republicans who dislike Tate Reeves approve of Hood’s performance as attorney general. Additionally, respondents who lean Republican approve of both Reeves—a Republican and Hood—a Democrat about equally. Hood also enjoys a +12% net approval among Independent voters compared to a -1% net approval among Independents for Reeves.

- **Hood is most popular in Northeast Mississippi, where his net approval is at +50%; Reeves is most popular on the Gulf Coast.** However, even in Reeves’ strongest region, he trails Hood in net approval (+23% for Reeves to +27% for Hood). Reeves’ net approval was in the negatives in the Jackson metro area; Hood was in the negatives in northwest Mississippi.

Region	Hood Net Approval	Reeves Net Approval
Coast	+26.6%	+22.8%
Delta	+28.6%	+3.6%
East MS	+16.4%	+1.4%
Jackson Metro	+36.9%	-2.9%
Northeast MS	+50.0%	+21.4%
Northwest MS	-2.6%	+7.7%
Pine Belt	+38.3%	+20.0%
Southwest MS	+17.5%	+7.5%

Note: the regional subsamples are small and we advise against sweeping conclusions based on these numbers.

- **Respondents tended to view their local schools more positively than schools statewide.** 43% of respondents said the local schools in their area were either “Excellent” or “Good,” while only 28% said the same of schools statewide. Only 3% of respondents rated Mississippi’s schools excellent. Opinions about the state’s education system varied by region—north Mississippians and respondents in the Pine Belt and on the Coast tended to have much more positive views of both their local schools and school statewide than respondents in the rest of the state.
- **A majority of Mississippians (56%) believe funding for our public schools is too low.** This includes a strong plurality of Republicans (45% said funding was too low, compared to 10% who said it was too high). Only 21% of respondents overall said that funding for schools was about right.
- **We asked respondents about several potential revenue sources to fund education, and of these, the gasoline tax increase was the least popular funding source we discussed.** Only 21% of respondents said they would support an increase in the tax; 71% opposed it. (It is important to note that this was not a rejection of a gas tax hike in general, but instead an aversion to funding education through this tax increase.)

- **An overwhelming number of voters said they would support the state instituting a lottery to fund education, 70%-23%.** Support was strong across partisan lines, though Democrats tend to be slightly more in favor of the proposal, with 73% supporting a lottery, compared to 65% of Republicans. Independents are also strong lottery supporters with 71% support among that segment of the electorate.
- **Pluralities of voters said they would support increases in the income and corporate tax rates if the money went to fund schools.** African-Americans tended to be more supportive, with 50% of black respondents saying they would support an income tax increase (to 24% who would not) and 47% supporting an increase to the corporate tax rate (to 25% who would not).
- **54% of respondents said they supported allowing parents to send their children to charter schools.** 25% opposed allowing this. 66% of Republicans and 53% of Independents said they would support it, compared to just 31% of Democrats.