

Connecticut Statewide Survey



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

Project #17138

Field Dates: April 26-30, 2017

N=500 Registered Voters Statewide

N=100 Oversample to N=200 in Fairfield County

50% Cell Phones

Statewide N=500 Margin of Error = +4.38

Fairfield County N=200 Margin of Error = +6.93

-
- *An asterisk (*) in a response category means that less than 0.5% of respondents chose that response category and a dash (-) represents no response.*
 - *“Skip base” is the percentage of respondents from each survey population that are asked a question because they meet a criteria based on a response to a previous question, meaning not all respondents received that question.*
 - *“Total base” is the percentage of the total sample.*
 - *Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding*
-

A. Is this _____ (ASK FOR NAME ON FILE)?

74% Yes

26% No

(ASK IF CELL PHONE SAMPLE)

B. Before we begin, I need to know if I have reached you on a cell phone, and if so, are you in a place where you can talk safely without endangering yourself or others?

100% Yes, cell and in safe place

- Yes, cell not in safe place **(SCHEDULE CALLBACK - DO NOT CONTINUE INTERVIEW.)**

- No, not on cell **(THANK & TERMINATE)**

- DK/NA/REFUSED **(DON'T READ) (THANK AND TERMINATE)**

Moving on...

1. Generally speaking, do you think things in Connecticut are moving in the right direction or are they pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

26% RIGHT DIRECTION
 61% WRONG TRACK

 12% DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)
 1% REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

Now, I would like to read you a list of different people and groups here in Connecticut and nationally. For each one, please tell me, whether you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of that person. If I mention someone you have not heard of, just tell me and we'll go on to the next one.

(IF FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE, ASK:) Would that be very (**favorable/unfavorable**) or just somewhat (**favorable/unfavorable**)?

	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Heard Of/ No Opinion	Never Heard	Ref (DNR)
2. Teachers	65%	21%	4%	4%	4%	1%	1%
	86%			8%			
3. State government employees	15%	42%	18%	13%	9%	2%	1%
	57%			31%			
4. Teachers unions	29%	28%	13%	12%	13%	5%	*
	57%			25%			
5. Public employee unions	19%	27%	15%	16%	13%	8%	1%
	46%			31%			

6. Do you think Connecticut's current budget situation is... **(ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP)**

- 53% A crisis
- 36% A problem, but not a crisis
- 6% Not much of a problem
- 5% Don't Know **(DO NOT READ)**
- * Refused **(DO NOT READ)**

(ASK SAMPLE A, N=247)

Thinking now about some actions that the state government might take to deal with the budget situation... please tell me how concerned you would be about taking each of these actions: **(ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP)** very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned...or...not concerned at all.

	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not Too Concerned	Not Concerned At All	DK (DNR)	Ref (DNR)
7. Making budget cuts to education	69%	22%	5%	4%	*	*
	91%			9%		
8. Increasing state taxes	63%	23%	10%	3%	*	*
	86%			13%		
9. Cutting public employees' retirement benefits	45%	30%	10%	13%	2%	*
	74%			23%		

(ASK SAMPLE B ONLY, N=253)

10. Which of the following would give you the most hesitation and you would LEAST want to see happen: **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

- 42% Budget cuts to education
OR
 - 35% Increases to state taxes
OR
 - 13% Cuts to public employees' retirement benefits

 - 5% ALL/MULTIPLE (**DO NOT READ - PROMPT:** But, if you had to select just ONE, which would give you the most hesitation?)
 - 3% DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)
 - 1% REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)
-

11. Now, I'd like to ask you some questions about the retirement system for state government employees and those in the state teacher's retirement system which covers teachers, principals, superintendents, and supervisors. How much, if anything, have you heard about problems with funding for the retirement system for state government employees and teachers in Connecticut? Have you heard... (**ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP**)

- 51% GREAT DEAL/SOME**
 - 48% NOT MUCH/NOTHING**

 - 22% A great deal
 - 29% Some
 - 25% Not too much
 - 23% Nothing at all

 - 1% DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)
 - REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)
-

(ASK IF Q11:1-3, N=379)

12. Based just on what you know... When you think about the retirement benefits that Connecticut state government employees and teachers receive, do you think they are getting **[RANDOMIZE]**... too much, ...too little, ... or ...about the right amount?
[IF TOO MUCH, ASK:] Is that much too much or only somewhat too much?

SKIP BASE:

29% TOTAL TOO MUCH
57% TOTAL ABOUT RIGHT/TOO LITTLE

17% MUCH TOO MUCH
12% SOMEWHAT TOO MUCH
31% ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT
26% TOO LITTLE

13% DON'T KNOW (DO NOT READ)
1% REFUSED (DO NOT READ)

TOTAL BASE:

22% TOTAL TOO MUCH
43% TOTAL ABOUT RIGHT/TOO LITTLE

13% MUCH TOO MUCH
9% SOMEWHAT TOO MUCH
23% ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT
20% TOO LITTLE

10% DON'T KNOW (DO NOT READ)
1% REFUSED (DO NOT READ)

(ASK IF Q11:1-3, N=379)

13. Thinking some more about the current state government employee and teacher retirement system... Based on what you know [**ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM, BOTTOM TO TOP**] do you think that there are major problems with the system, there are minor problems with the system ... or ... do you think there are no problems at all with the current system?
[IF MAJOR PROBLEMS IS GIVEN, ASK:] And do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?

SKIP BASE:

52% TOTAL MAJOR PROBLEMS
40% TOTAL MINOR/NO PROBLEMS

45% Strongly/Major problems
7% Not-So-Strongly/Major problems
35% Minor problems
5% No Problems
8% DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)
* REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

TOTAL BASE:

40% TOTAL MAJOR PROBLEMS
30% TOTAL MINOR/NO PROBLEMS

34% Strongly/Major problems
5% Not-So-Strongly/Major problems
27% Minor problems
4% No Problems
6% DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)
* REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

(ASK SAMPLE A, N=247)

14. As you may know, Connecticut's state government employee and teacher retirement system faces a long-term shortfall of 28 billion dollars. How concerned are you about this shortfall? Are you... **(ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP)**

81% TOTAL CONCERNED
16% TOTAL NOT CONCERNED

55% VERY CONCERNED
26% SOMEWHAT CONCERNED
9% NOT TOO CONCERNED
7% NOT CONCERNED AT ALL

2% DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ)**
- REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**

(ASK SAMPLE B, N=253)

15. As you may know, Connecticut's state government employee and teacher retirement system faces a shortfall of 28 billion dollars. There is not enough money in the fund to cover even half of the promised benefits. That makes Connecticut the fourth worst state in the nation for having the funds needed to cover retirement benefits. How concerned are you about this shortfall? Are you... **(ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP)**

86% TOTAL CONCERNED
12% TOTAL NOT CONCERNED

60% VERY CONCERNED
26% SOMEWHAT CONCERNED
7% NOT TOO CONCERNED
5% NOT CONCERNED AT ALL

1% DON'T KNOW **(DO NOT READ)**
* REFUSED **(DO NOT READ)**

Next, I would like to read you some sources that people say could be responsible for the state government employee and teacher retirement system shortfall. For each one, please tell me how much responsibility you think that source has for the shortfall: **(ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP)** a great deal of responsibility, some, not too much, or no responsibility at all.

	A Great Deal	Some	Not Too Much	No Resp At All	DK (DNR)	Ref (DNR)
<i>(Ranked by A Great Deal/Some)</i>						
16.	The governor and state legislators for not adequately funding the retirement system					
	62%	26%	5%	4%	2%	1%
	88%		9%			
18.	The economic downturn, which caused state budgets and public retirement systems to lose money					
	34%	44%	11%	6%	4%	*
	78%		17%			
19.	The retirement system for making poor investments and mismanaging the fund					
	38%	37%	7%	5%	11%	*
	76%		13%			
17.	Public employee unions, for demanding overly generous benefits for their members					
	31%	37%	15%	13%	4%	*
	68%		28%			

20. With whom do you agree more about why the retirement system faces a 28 billion dollar shortfall? **[ROTATE STATEMENTS]**

(Some/Others) say the governor and legislators are more responsible because they did not follow through on their commitments to fully fund the system. Instead, they raided the retirement fund to cover their own budget deficits.
...while...

(Some/Others) say public employee unions are more responsible because they demanded overly generous benefits at taxpayer expense.

[AFTER RESPONSE, ASK] Do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?

66% TOTAL GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATORS

16% TOTAL UNIONS

56% Strongly/Governor and legislators

10% Not-So-Strongly/Governor and legislators

5% Not-So-Strongly/Unions

11% Strongly/Unions

11% BOTH (**DO NOT READ - PROMPT:** But, if you had to select just ONE, with whom do you agree more?)

2% NEITHER (**DO NOT READ**)

5% DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)

1% REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

As you may know, some are proposing reform to the public employee retirement system. Now I am going to list some goals for reforming the public employee retirement system. After each, please tell me how important it is as a goal for legislators to consider when reforming the retirement system. Is it one of the most important goals, very important, only somewhat important, or not that important as a goal for reform of the public employee retirement system?

	One Of The Most	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not That Important	DK (DNR)	Ref (DNR)
<i>(Ranked by One of the Most Important/Very Important)</i>						
24.	Making the retirement system financially sustainable					
	19%	62%	14%	3%	1%	*
	81%		17%			
21.	Providing state employees and teachers a secure retirement					
	15%	52%	25%	7%	1%	*
	67%		32%			
26.	Protecting taxpayers from future tax increases					
	15%	49%	23%	12%	1%	*
	64%		35%			
25.	Making the state government employee and teacher retirement systems more like retirement plans in the private sector					
	13%	38%	30%	12%	6%	1%
	51%		42%			
22.	Protecting the state from big losses when the stock market does badly					
	7%	42%	36%	11%	3%	1%
	49%		47%			
23.	Reducing the cost of the retirement system to the state by reducing benefits to state government employees and teachers					
	8%	29%	31%	27%	4%	1%
	37%		58%			

Now I am going to read some proposals that have been made to address this shortfall in the retirement system for state government employees and teachers in Connecticut. After each, please tell me if you support or oppose that proposal.

[IF SUPPORT/OPOSE, ASK] Do you **(support/oppose)** it strongly or not so strongly?

	Strongly Support	Not Strongly Support	Not Strongly Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK (DNR)	Ref (DNR)
<i>(Ranked by % Support)</i>						
32. Require the state to make full annual payments to the retirement system	55%	24%	7%	9%	5%	1%
	78%		15%			
33. Switch state government employees and teachers to individual retirement accounts such as 401(k)s like they have in the private sector	51%	19%	9%	13%	6%	1%
	71%		22%			
34. Increase the amount state government employees and teachers pay towards their retirement	46%	23%	13%	11%	7%	1%
	69%		24%			
29. Increase the amount local governments contribute to the state government employee and teacher retirement system	24%	28%	14%	28%	5%	1%
	52%		42%			
30. Reduce retirement benefits for future state government employees and teachers	32%	17%	15%	32%	4%	2%
	49%		46%			
27. Increase the retirement age for state government employees and teachers	28%	19%	15%	26%	11%	1%
	47%		41%			
31. Reduce retirement benefits for current state government employees and teachers	20%	16%	16%	42%	5%	1%
	36%		58%			
28. Increase taxes to fund the retirement system	10%	16%	17%	54%	3%	*
	26%		71%			

35. When it comes to addressing the shortfalls in the retirement system, which is the most important priority? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Preventing tax increases

...OR...

Making sure state government employees and teachers get the retirement funds they have already earned

...OR...

Making sure pension costs do not crowd out and make it harder to fund education, public safety, and other services.

[AFTER RESPONSE, ASK] Do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?

27% TOTAL PREVENTING TAX INCREASES

38% TOTAL GET RETIREMENT THEY EARNED

30% TOTAL PENSION COSTS DO NOT CROWD OUT FUNDING

24% Strongly/Preventing tax increases

4% Not-So-Strongly/Preventing tax increases

33% Strongly/Making sure employees get the retirement they have earned

5% Not-So-Strongly/Making sure employees get the retirement they have earned

24% Strongly/Making sure pension costs do not crowd out funding for other services

6% Not-So-Strongly/ Making sure pension costs do not crowd out funding for other services

2% ALL/MULTIPLE (**DO NOT READ - PROMPT:** But, if you had to select just ONE, which is a more important priority?)

* NONE (**DO NOT READ**)

2% DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)

* REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

(ASK SAMPLE A ONLY, N=247)

36. Which comes closer to your point of view? **[ROTATE STATEMENTS]**

In order to deal with this problem, everything should be on the table, including cuts to state government employee and teacher retirement benefits that have already been earned
...OR...

State government employees and teachers were promised retirement benefits when they were hired and have paid into the system their whole career. Any retirement benefits that workers have already earned should be off limits from cuts.

[AFTER RESPONSE, ASK] Do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?

29% TOTAL BENEFIT CUTS

68% TOTAL BENEFITS OFF LIMITS

20% Strongly/Include benefit cuts

9% Not-So-Strongly/Include benefit cuts

11% Not-So-Strongly/Benefits off limits

57% Strongly/Benefits off limits

1% BOTH (**DO NOT READ - PROMPT:** But, if you had to select just ONE, which comes closer to your point of view?)

* NEITHER (**DO NOT READ**)

1% DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)

* REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

Now, I'd like to read you some statements about addressing the shortfall in the retirement system. After I read each statement, please tell me if you AGREE or DISAGREE with that statement.

(IF AGREE/DISAGREE, THEN ASK) And do you STRONGLY (agree/disagree) or just SOMEWHAT (agree/disagree) with that statement?

	STR AGREE	SMWT AGREE	SMWT DISAGREE	STR DISAGREE	DK (DNR)	REF (DNR)
<i>(Ranked by % Agree)</i>						
38.	There needs to be some kind of shared sacrifice including some combination of budget cuts, tax increases and changes to the retirement system.					
	36%	32%	14%	17%	1%	*
	67%		31%			
37.	The state cannot increase taxes, even if it means the state reducing benefits for state government employees and teachers.					
	32%	18%	22%	24%	3%	1%
	49%		46%			
39.	The state cannot reduce benefits for state government employees and teachers, even if it means raising taxes.					
	26%	22%	17%	30%	3%	*
	48%		48%			

D1. And, in what year were you born?

9%	18 to 24
18%	25 to 34
19%	35 to 44
14%	45 to 54
19%	55 to 64
19%	65 and over
1%	REFUSED (DO NOT READ)

D2. Gender. (**RECORD BY OBSERVATION**)

48%	MALE
52%	FEMALE

D3. What was the last grade you COMPLETED in school, thus far? (DO NOT READ CHOICES)

- 20% HIGH SCHOOL OR LESS**
 - 23% SOME COLLEGE**
 - 57% COLLEGE+**

 - 1% SOME GRADE SCHOOL
 - 5% SOME HIGH SCHOOL
 - 14% GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL
 - 4% TECHNICAL OR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
 - 19% SOME COLLEGE
 - 40% GRADUATED COLLEGE
 - 17% GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL
 - * REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)
-

D4. Regardless of how you may feel now, are you REGISTERED to vote as... (**ROTATE**)
a Republican, a Democrat, or something else?

(IF REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT, ASK) Would you call yourself a STRONG
(Republican/Democrat) or a NOT-SO-STRONG **(Republican/ Democrat)**?

(IF SOMETHING ELSE, ASK) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or to the
Democratic party?

- 27% TOTAL REPUBLICAN**
 - 40% TOTAL DEMOCRAT**

 - 15% STRONG REPUBLICAN
 - 12% NOT-SO-STRONG REPUBLICAN

 - 4% LEAN TO REPUBLICANS
 - 16% SOMETHING ELSE/INDEPENDENT
 - 8% LEAN TO DEMOCRATS

 - 17% NOT-SO-STRONG DEMOCRAT
 - 23% STRONG DEMOCRAT

 - 2% DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)
 - 2% REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)
-

D5. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be **(ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM, BOTTOM TO TOP)** conservative, moderate ...or... liberal on most issues?

(IF CONSERVATIVE/LIBERAL, ASK) And would you say you are VERY **(conservative/liberal)**, or just SOMEWHAT **(conservative/liberal)**?

27%	TOTAL CONSERVATIVE
30%	TOTAL LIBERAL
10%	VERY CONSERVATIVE
16%	SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE
39%	MODERATE
15%	SOMEWHAT LIBERAL
15%	VERY LIBERAL
3%	DON'T KNOW (DO NOT READ)
1%	REFUSED (DO NOT READ)

D6. And again, for statistical purposes only, other than being an American, what is your main ethnic or racial heritage? **(READ LIST, ACCEPT ONE ANSWER)**

9%	AFRICAN AMERICAN OR BLACK
74%	WHITE
8%	HISPANIC OR LATINO AMERICAN
3%	ASIAN AMERICAN
1%	AMERICAN INDIAN
5%	OTHER (DO NOT READ) (IF PUNCH, THEN ASK:) Now I realize you just said your main ethnic or racial heritage does not fall into any of the categories I just mentioned...but if you had to choose JUST ONE of these categories, which ONE would you choose?
1%	REFUSED (DO NOT READ)

D7. Are you or is anyone in your household a member of a labor union?

[IF YES:] Is that you personally or someone in your household?

22% TOTAL YES

10% Yes, Self
9% Yes, Household
4% Yes, Both
76% No

1% DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)
1% REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

D8. Do you or does anyone in your household work for the state government, local county government, city government, or school district?

[IF YES:] Is that you personally or someone in your household?

25% TOTAL YES

10% Yes, Self
12% Yes, Household
3% Yes, Both
75% No

* DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)
* REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

(ASK IF D8:4-6)

D8X. Have you ever in the past or has anyone in your household worked for the state government, local county government, city government, or school district?

[IF YES:] Is that you personally or someone in your household?

22% TOTAL YES

11% Yes, Self
10% Yes, Household
1% Yes, Both
77% No

* DON'T KNOW (**DO NOT READ**)
1% REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

D9. How would you describe your economic circumstances (**ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM/BOTTOM TO TOP**)

- 6% Poor
- 26% Working class
- 43% Middle class
- 20% Upper middle class
- ...or...
- 3% Well-to-do

- 2% NOT SURE/REFUSED (**DO NOT READ**)

D10. And last, what is your zip code? (**RECORD EXACT RESPONSE. USE 99999 FOR DK/REF**)
