Critical Insights on Maine™
Tracking Survey
~ Spring 2020 ~

Voters’ Views on
Issues Facing
Maine and the Nation
Introduction
Background & Methodology

- Each spring and fall, Critical Insights, a division of Digital Research, Inc. conducts the Critical Insights on Maine™ tracking survey, a comprehensive, statewide public opinion survey of registered voters that covers a variety of topics of interest to businesses, government, and the general public.
- Critical Insights on Maine™ has been documenting the attitudes, perceptions, and preferences of Maine’s residents for more than 20 years, making it the longest-running consistently-administered tracking survey in the Northeast.
  - In addition to the general-interest items presented in this report as a public service, the survey also includes a number of proprietary items for sponsoring entities; results of those items are released only to those sponsors.

- This wave of the survey included a total of 600 respondents across the state who were surveyed by phone or online in March of 2020.
  - With a total sample of 600 respondents, results presented here have a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
  - All survey respondents were registered voters who live in Maine. Final data were statistically weighted to reflect the demographics of the state’s population and to ensure that those responding by phone or online had equal impact on the overall results.
  - On average, the entire survey instrument was 20 minutes in administrative length – including both general-interest items and all proprietary subscriber items.

- Several of this survey’s questions – those related to the coronavirus – were included in a separate survey of American consumers through NationWise On-demand™, the DRI/Critical Insights national omnibus survey.
  - This online survey includes 1,200 respondents (reflective of consumers across the country on key demographic qualities), and is run on demand, throughout the year. More information about this national survey is included on page 35.
Views Toward

the Economy and the Direction of
Maine and the Nation
Four out of ten voters in Maine now believe the state is headed in the *right direction* – slightly higher than the recent historical average.

Democrats (42%) remain more likely than Republicans (30%) to feel the state is headed in the *right direction*, though the gap has lessened since last fall, with greater shares of Republicans now feeling the state is headed in the *right direction*.

*All in all, do you think things in Maine are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are off on the wrong track?*
Half of voters in Maine volunteer some aspect of the coronavirus specifically as the most pressing issue facing the state (most often the economic impacts). No other issue comes close.

In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Maine today?

Asked without prompts. Only issues mentioned by 3% of respondents or more in the spring of 2020 are shown.
One out of four Mainers believe the nation as a whole is heading in the right direction – remaining closely aligned with the average since President Trump’s election.

All in all, do you think things in the nation are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are off on the wrong track?
A clear majority of Mainers now believe the economy will be worse in the next twelve months – doubling since last fall, and reaching the peak of the 2008 financial crisis.

Optimism About the Economy

% predicting the economy will be:

- Better
- About the Same
- Worse

Republicans (36%) much are more likely than Democrats (20%) to feel the nation is headed in the right direction.

One-third believe the economy will be much worse in the next 12 months (32%).
Half of Mainers mention some aspect of the coronavirus as a top economic concern for the next six months. Many also mention either general economic concerns or job loss specifically – a large increase from last fall that is no doubt related to the virus.

As you think about the next 6 months, what economic or financial situations concern you the MOST?

Top responses in the spring of 2020 are shown. Multiple responses accepted.
Opinions of Politicians
Roughly one out of three voters in Maine approve of President Trump’s job performance, consistent with his historical average.
Half of Chellie Pingree’s constituents approve of her performance, rebounding after a drop last fall. Four out of ten constituents of Jared Golden approve of his performance, holding steady since his election.

Approval of Congressional Representatives
(Among those in the relevant districts)

Chellie Pingree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Approve</th>
<th>Disapprove</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jared Golden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Approve</th>
<th>Disapprove</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three out of four Democrats in the first congressional district approve of Chellie Pingree’s performance (74%) compared to 30% of Republicans. Her approval has grown among both Democrats and Republicans since last fall.

More than half of Democrats in his district approve of Jared Golden’s performance (55%), compared to 21% of Republicans. Representative Golden’s approval has held steady among Democrats and decreased among Republicans since last fall.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Chellie Pingree is handling her job as Representative in the U.S. Congress? In the Fall 2016 wave of the survey, we measured “approval” on a five-point scale. The net approval ratings reflect an adjustment for the use of this scale.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Jared Golden is handling his job as Representative in the U.S. Congress?
Six out of ten voters approve of Governor Mills’s performance, a strong increase from last fall, thanks to broader support among Republicans.

Approval of Janet Mills

The governor’s approval rating has held steady among Democrats (78% in the spring and 75% in the fall) but has increased among Republicans in that time (rising from 25% to 36%).

Governor LePage’s highest approval rating was 47%, shortly after taking office.
Half of voters in Maine now approve of the state legislature’s performance – notably higher than at any point over the past several years.

Approval of the State Legislature

Almost seven out of ten Democrats in Maine now approve the legislature’s performance (67%), compared to four out of ten Republicans (41%). Approval of the legislature has increased among both Republicans and Democrats.
Only about four out of ten Mainers overall currently approve of the way Susan Collins is handling her job as U.S. Senator. This relatively low approval rating has been consistent for the past year, and is about half of what it was at its peak.

Approval of Senator Collins

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Susan Collins is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

In the fall 2016 wave of the survey, we measured “approval” on a five-point scale. The net approval ratings reflect an adjustment for the use of this scale.
Six out of ten voters approve of the job Angus King is doing as U.S. Senator, on par with the historical average.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Angus King is handling his job as U.S. Senator?

In the fall 2016 wave of the survey, we measured "approval" on a five-point scale. The net approval ratings reflect an adjustment for the use of this scale.
Reactions to the **Coronavirus** & its Impacts
Almost all polled Mainers are closely following developments related to the coronavirus in the news, including seven out of ten who are following such developments very closely.

**Interest in Coronavirus Developments**

- **Very Closely**: 72%
- **Somewhat Closely**: 23%
- **A Little**: 4%
- **Not at All / Never Heard of It / Not Sure**: 2%

Among those who are aware of the coronavirus: (n=596)

Mainers are more likely than consumers across the country to be following news about the virus very closely (72% vs. 63%).
Eight out of ten Mainers say the coronavirus is having a *large* or *moderate* impact on their day-to-day life now.

Little change is expected overall in the next 60 days.
Half of Mainers believe that they or someone in their household will contract the novel coronavirus within the next 60 days.

The perceived likelihood of contracting the virus decreases with age: 22% of those under age 35 believe they are very or somewhat likely to contract the virus, falling to just 10% of those age 65 or older.

There is no difference in expected likelihood of contracting the virus across the state's congressional districts or across parties.
Nearly all Mainers have changed some aspect of their behavior as a result of the coronavirus.

Behavior Changes

- Nine out of ten Mainers have avoided public places as a result of the coronavirus (88%), and eight out of ten say they are washing their hands more now (84%) or refraining from shaking hands (81%).
- At least seven out of ten have avoided a public event they otherwise would have attended (75%), or have started following the news more closely (70%).
- Six out of ten have visited a government website (58%), and about half have cancelled a trip they had planned (53%).
- Another 49% have purchased products to protect themselves from the virus, and 47% claim to have overbought personal or other household items.
- Finally, one out of ten have sold stocks (8%).

Mainers are less likely to than consumers nationally to have started washing their hands more, to have started following the news more, or to have overbought household items. Mainers are more likely to have visited a governmental website.

Among those who are aware of the coronavirus:
- Maine (n=596)
- National (n=1,196)
Mainers have a variety of concerns related to the coronavirus situation. By far the most prevalent concern is that the national economy will deteriorate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Extremely Concerned</th>
<th>Very Concerned</th>
<th>Total Highly Concerned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That the economy will experience a major downturn</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That the healthcare system in Maine will not be able to cope with the</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of coronavirus patients who require treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That another member of your household will experience a severe illness</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if they contract the coronavirus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That you will lose income</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That you will experience a severe illness if you are infected by the</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coronavirus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That you will be unable to leave your home, due to your own illness or</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a general limit on movement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among those who are aware of the coronavirus: (n=596)

- Seven out of ten Mainers are concerned that the coronavirus situation will cause a major economic downturn (70%), including four out of ten who are extremely concerned about a severe downturn (38%).
- Fewer, but still about half of Mainers, are highly concerned that the healthcare system in the state will be unable to cope with the number coronavirus patients (52%), that someone else in their household will experience a severe illness as a result of the coronavirus (45%), or that they will lose income as a result of the virus (45%).
- Closer to three out of ten are highly concerned that they will personally experience a severe illness (35%) or that they will be unable to leave home as a result of the virus (29%).
By a three-to-one margin, Mainers would rather deal with the economic impacts of the virus than with the virus itself.

Among those who are aware of the coronavirus and provide one of the responses shown: (n=489)

- Take Your Chances With the Economic Fall-out: 74%
- Take Your Chances With the Virus: 26%

Mainers are very similar to American consumers more broadly in their preference for taking their chances with the virus.

Republicans in Maine (34%) are almost twice as likely as Democrats (18%) to be willing to take their chances with the virus.
Many Mainers believe the country as a whole is striking the right balance in addressing the health impacts of the coronavirus while minimizing its economic or social impacts. Only a relative few believe the country is too worried about the health impacts of the virus.

Balancing the Impacts of the Virus

Health vs. Economy

- Too Worried About the Economy: 34%
- Striking the Right Balance: 38%
- Too Worried About Minimizing the Health Risks: 14%
- Not Sure: 13%

Health vs. Social Disruption

- Too Worried About Maintaining Day-to-Day Social Order: 25%
- Striking the Right Balance: 47%
- Too Worried About Minimizing Health Risks: 14%
- Not Sure: 13%

Mainers are less likely than other Americans to believe the nation is too worried about minimizing the health impacts.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats in Maine to believe the country is striking the right balance between the health and other priorities. Democrats, in contrast, feel the country is too worried about the non-health impacts.

Overall, how well do you believe the country today is balancing the need to MINIMIZE THE HEALTH IMPACT of the coronavirus with the need to have a HEALTHY ECONOMY/ MAINTAIN THE DAY-TO-DAY ORDER OF SOCIETY? If you had to choose, would you say the country is...
One out of three Mainers believe they will be most impacted by the social effects of the coronavirus, and another one out of three believe they will be most impacted by its economic effects. Fewer – about two in ten – say they will be most impacted by the health impacts of the virus.

Most Likely Personal Impacts of the Virus

- The social disruption from the virus (like schools closing, workers being asked to work from home, cancelled events) - 36%
- The economic disruption from the virus (a decline in the stock market, a general recession, loss of your job or income) - 35%
- The impact of the disease on your own, personal health or that of a family member - 22%

Mainers are less likely than others to believe they will be most impacted by the economic disruption (35% vs. 42%), and are more likely to say they will be most impacted by the health impacts of the virus (22% vs. 17%).

Among those who are aware of the coronavirus: (n=596)
Almost six out of ten Mainers believe the state will be hit harder than other states by the *economic* impact of the coronavirus, but only three out of ten believe the state will be hit harder than other states by the *health* impacts of the virus.
Three out of four Mainers believe the federal government should cover any lost wages if they can’t work, and half believe the state government should make up for their lost wages. One out of four believe their employer should cover their lost wages.

![Financial Assistance for Lost Wages](chart)

The federal government: 74%
The state government: 46%
Your employer: 28%
None of the above: 6%

Among those who are aware of the coronavirus, are employed full- or part-time, and who provide a response shown: (n=278)

Mainers are just as likely as residents of other states to say the state government should make up their lost income, but Mainers are more likely to believe that the federal government should contribute (74% vs. 68%).
Roughly half of Mainers have a positive rating of the federal government’s response to the coronavirus situation, including one out of four who rate the federal response as excellent or very good.

**Views Toward the Federal Government’s Response**

- **Excellent:** 9%
- **Very good:** 16%
- **Good:** 19%
- **Fair:** 20%
- **Poor:** 19%
- **Terrible:** 15%

Mainers are no different from consumers overall in their ratings of the federal government’s response to the crisis.

Maine Republicans are more than twice as likely as Democrats to rate the federal government’s response to the crisis as good or better (69% vs. 32%).

All in all, how would you rate the overall quality of the federal government’s response to the coronavirus up to this point? All things considered, would you say that the federal government’s response to the coronavirus has been...
Four out of ten Mainers rate the state government’s handling of the coronavirus situation as **excellent** or **very good**. Americans overall have generally similar reviews of their own states’ handling of the situation.

How would you rate the overall quality of [the Maine government’s / your state government’s] response to the coronavirus to this point? All things considered, would you say that the state government’s response to the coronavirus has been...

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**Rating of State Government Responses to Coronavirus Situation**

**Ratings of Maine**

- Excellent: 13%
- Very Good: 28%
- Good: 33%
- Fair: 16%
- Poor: 6%
- Terrible: 2%

**Ratings of Other States**

(by American consumers evaluating their own states)

- Excellent: 12%
- Very Good: 26%
- Good: 27%
- Fair: 19%
- Poor: 10%
- Terrible: 4%

**Total Highly Positive:**

- Among those who are aware of the coronavirus: 41% (Maine) 38% (National)

Republicans and Democrats have similar ratings of Maine’s response overall.
Only one out of three Mainers have a great deal or good amount of trust in the federal government’s ability to manage the coronavirus situation in a way that minimizes the impact it has on society. Four out of ten trust the federal government a little, and three out of ten do not trust the federal government at all.

**Trust in the Federal Government’s Management of the Coronavirus Situation**

- **Not At All**: 29%
- **A Little**: 38%
- **A Good Amount**: 23%
- **A Great Deal**: 9%

Maine Republicans are more than twice as likely as Democrats to have a good amount or great deal of trust in the federal government’s ability to manage the crisis (57% vs. 23%).

Mainers are less likely than Americans overall to have trust in the federal government’s ability to manage the coronavirus crisis (32% vs. 43%).

**Total Trusting**: 32%

How much do you trust the federal government to manage the coronavirus in a way that minimizes the impact it has on our society? Overall, do you trust the federal government...
Two out of three Mainers have a *great deal* or a *good amount* of trust in the state government’s ability to deal with the coronavirus – very similar to how consumers across the country rate their own states.

Among those who are aware of the coronavirus:

**Ratings of Maine**

- **Not At All**: 7%
- **A Little**: 28%
- **A Great Deal**: 15%
- **A Good Amount**: 47%

**Total Trusting**: 62%

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**Ratings of Other States**

(by American consumers evaluating their own states)

- **Not At All**: 3%
- **A Little**: 32%
- **A Great Deal**: 15%
- **A Good Amount**: 39%

**Total Trusting**: 54%

Among those who are aware of the coronavirus:

Although Democrats and Republicans in Maine have similar ratings of the state government’s handling of the coronavirus situation, the parties differ in their level of trust in Augusta. 74% of Democrats trust the state government to handle the crisis, compared to 50% of Republicans.

Trust in state governments is not split across party lines among consumers nationally.
Six out of ten Mainers believe the media has contributed to panic about the coronavirus situation, and about half believe that reactions to the virus are worse than the virus itself. At the same time, just three out of ten believe Americans are overreacting to the dangers of the virus generally or feel that the virus has been politicized to hurt the president.

**Politicization of the Virus**

1. I believe the media bears responsibility for widespread panic and panic buying, based on its reporting on the coronavirus and COVID-19: 31% Agree Strongly, 31% Agree Somewhat, 62% Total Agree.
2. I believe that peoples' reactions to the virus will have a worse overall impact on the world than the virus itself: 23% Agree Strongly, 31% Agree Somewhat, 54% Total Agree.
3. I believe that Americans are overreacting to the dangers posed by the coronavirus: 11% Agree Strongly, 22% Agree Somewhat, 33% Total Agree.
4. I believe COVID-19 has been deliberately politicized, specifically to hurt the president: 13% Agree Strongly, 16% Agree Somewhat, 29% Total Agree.

Mainers are less likely than consumers across the country to feel the virus has been politicized in these ways.

Among those who are aware of the coronavirus: (n=596)

Maine Republicans are much more likely than Democrats to agree with each of these statements.
Four out of ten Mainers have *a great deal or good amount* of trust that the media will cover the coronavirus situation in an appropriate and responsible way.

**Mainers are more likely to have a good amount or a great deal of trust in the media (42% vs. 35%).**

Democrats in Maine are much more likely than Republicans to trust the mainstream media’s reporting on the coronavirus (58% vs. 27%).

How much do you trust the mainstream media, generally, to report on the coronavirus in an appropriate and responsible way? Do you trust the media...
To learn more about this survey or its findings, contact:

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About the DRI/Critical Insights National Omnibus Survey

NationWise

What is NationWise™ On-demand?
NationWise™ On-demand is a survey service that allows you to obtain valuable insights quickly, economically, and on your own timeline.

What are the benefits?
Wide population reach, lower costs, and speed of data collection and processing.

What questions can be included?
You can use NationWise™ to ask any type of question on any topic you want. For example:
- Messaging effectiveness;
- Brand awareness and advertising recall;
- Public opinion or consumer behavior;
- Demographics or other characteristics of your target market.

What are the deliverables?
We provide the responses to your questions analyzed by standard demographic subgroups, as well as a full demographic profile of respondents.

How much does it cost?
That depends on how many questions you ask. The more questions you ask, the better the value.

Who is DRI?
- Digital Research Inc. (DRI) is a leader in custom marketing research. We serve a wide range of private-sector and public-sector organizations, providing exceptional research and consultation on a variety of issues.
- DRI brings large company capability with the flexibility and service of a boutique firm, to aid the value you demand from your research investment.
- DRI was founded in 1992 on the principles of partnership, adaptability, innovation, and responsive service - all of which remain hallmarks of our firm's culture today.

How do I get started?
If you have questions about NationWise™ On-demand, or if you would like to discuss other market research solutions, please contact:

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