

A decorative graphic consisting of a large, thin, light-brown arc that starts near the top right and curves down towards the bottom right. It is positioned behind the title text. There are also two small yellow squares: one at the bottom right corner of a green rectangular area on the left side, and another at the intersection of a horizontal and vertical line in the lower right quadrant.

Prescription Drug Affordability: An AARP Poll of 18+ Idahoans

January 2006



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**Data Collected by Woelfel Research, Inc.
Report Prepared by Jennifer H. Sauer**

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Background

According to the U.S. Census, an estimated 45 million Americans, or 15.6 percent of the population, were without health insurance in 2003 – an increase of about 1.4 million since 2002.¹ Among these uninsured, about 36 million are between the ages of 18 and 64, most are working either full or part-time, and about one-third are adults without children whose household incomes are at or below 200% of the poverty level.^{2 3} A decline in employer-sponsored health coverage and rising health care costs are among the major contributors to this increased number of adults living with little or no health insurance coverage.⁴

Given that health insurance coverage is often coupled with prescription drug coverage, the growth of uninsured Americans becomes even more disconcerting. While many Americans are frustrated by the escalating costs of their prescription drugs, undoubtedly lower-income and uninsured persons are among those most adversely affected. In fact, research has shown that the lack of prescription drug coverage and cost of drugs can influence a patient's decision to not fill a prescription or skip doses to make the medication last longer, as well as increase the risk of a decline in health.^{5 6} It is not surprising then, that as one of the fastest growing components of health care, prescription drug costs remain an important focus for national and state level legislative consideration.

The purpose of this survey was to gauge support for public posting of prescription drug prices, and for advocates to assist the uninsured in accessing free and low-cost prescription drug programs. A full annotated questionnaire showing the findings to all survey questions is included in the appendix.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Health Insurance Coverage: 2003, Highlights, www.census.gov/hhes/hlthins/hlthin03.

² Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), Notes, *Uninsured Rose in 2003 as Number of Americans with Employment-Based Health Benefits Declined*. October 2004, Vol. 25, No.10.

³ Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, *Health Insurance Coverage in America: 2003 Data Update Highlights*, Chartpack and Tables, September 27, 2004.

⁴ Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, *The Economic Downturn and Changes in Health Insurance Coverage, 2000-2003*. Executive Summary by John Holahan and Arunabh Ghosh of the Urban Institute. September, 2004.

⁵ Kaiser Family Foundation, Trends and Indicators in the Changing Health Care Marketplace 2004 Update. *Prescription Drug Trends*, October 2004, www.kff.org.

⁶ Heisler, M., et al. *The Health Effects of Restricting Prescription Medication Use Because of Cost*. Medical Care, Volume 42, Number 7, July 2004.

Findings

Prescription Drug Coverage and Costs

One-third of all Idahoans ages 18 and older say they do not have insurance coverage that will help pay for prescription drugs, and among the majority taking prescription drugs, one in four estimate spending \$100 or more each month out-of-pocket on medications.

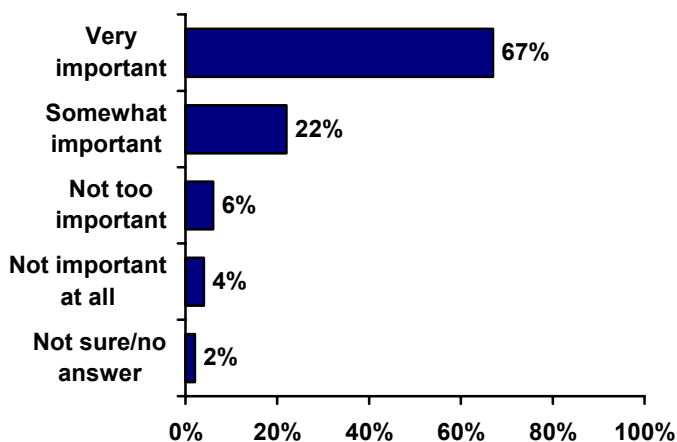
Although most (67%) Idahoans say they have some form of insurance coverage to help pay for prescription drugs, one in three (33%) say they do not. Moreover, among the majority (68%) who have taken prescription medication in the last 12 months, one-quarter (24%) report spending at least \$100 per month of their own money out-of-pocket on prescription drug purchases with about one in eight (13%) spending \$200 or more (see Appendix, Annotated Questionnaire, Question 3).

Comparative Prescription Drug Pricing Information

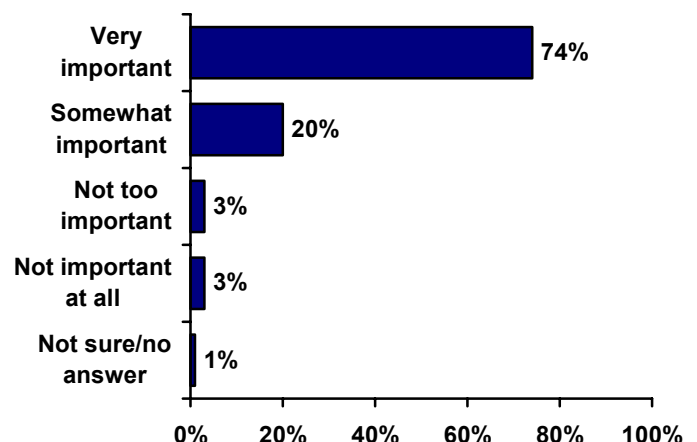
Most Idahoans age 18+ say it is very important that comparative drug pricing information be made available to consumers.

The survey informed respondents that the retail prices of brand name prescription drugs can vary from pharmacy to pharmacy, and generic drugs can often times cost less than brand name drugs. When asked how important they thought it was for consumers to have information available that compares the prices of brand name drugs at different pharmacies in their community, the majority felt such information was very important to have. Likewise, most Idahoans say that it is very important to have information made available to all consumers that compares the price of generic drugs to brand name drugs.

**Being Able to Compare Pharmacy Prices of Brand Name Prescription Drugs:
Level of Importance
(n=803)**



**Being Able to Compare Pharmacy Prices of Generic to Brand Name Prescription Drugs :
Level of Importance
(n=803)**

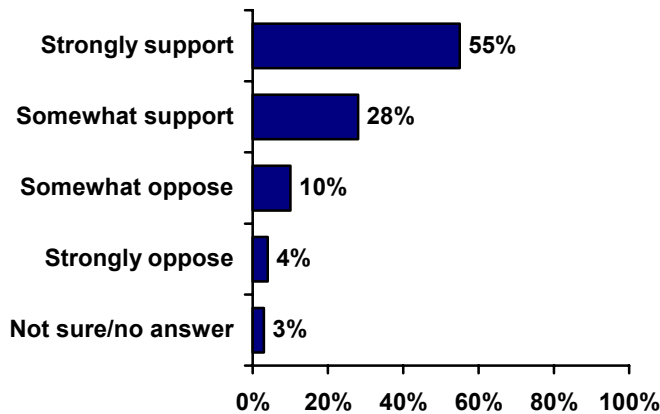


Proposed State Prescription Drug Assistance Programs

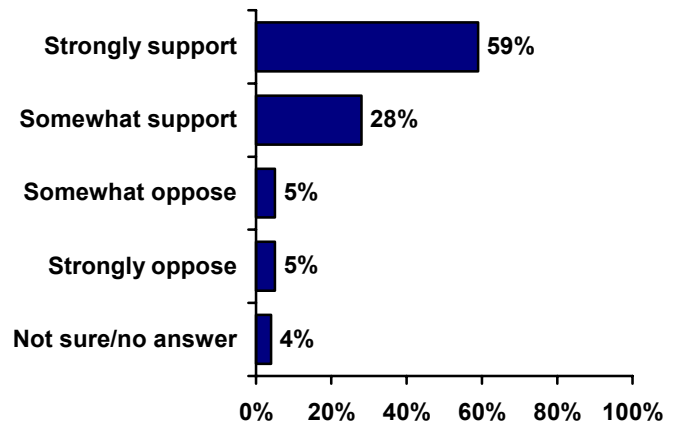
Support for Disclosing Pharmacy Prices for Prescription Drugs

Currently the state is considering requiring pharmacies to post the price of prescription drugs in their store for all customers to see. Idaho is also considering requiring the retail prices of prescription drugs at community pharmacies to be posted on a website. This would enable all residents to search and compare the costs of prescription drugs in their area and then decide at which pharmacy they would want to purchase their medications. Eighty three percent of Idahoans support the state requiring pharmacies to post the prices of prescription drugs in their store for all to see. And even more (87%) support legislation requiring the retail prices of prescription drugs at community pharmacies to be posted on a website. Very few indicate opposition to either proposal.

Support for Requiring Pharmacies to Post Prescription Drug Prices in the Store
(n=803)



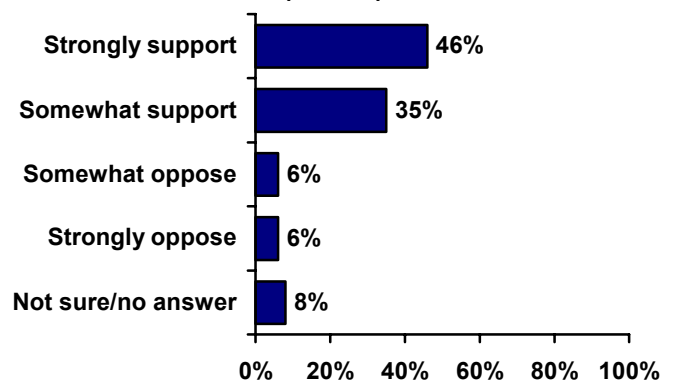
Support for Posting Community Pharmacy Prescription Drug Prices on Website
(n=803)



Support for Funding Patient Assistance Advocates

The state is also considering funding for patient assistance advocates who would help eligible residents enroll in an appropriate drug assistance program. Currently, many eligible people are not sure of how to enroll or are confused by the policies and paperwork causing them to miss out on the very benefits that could help lessen the financial burden of their prescription drug costs. When asked how strongly they would support or oppose the state providing funding for these advocates even if they may not be eligible for this service, almost half say they would strongly support such a program, and another third say they somewhat support it. Very few are opposed to this proposal.⁷

Support for State Funding for Patient Assistance Advocates for Prescription Drug Assistance Programs
(n=803)



⁷ Many programs like these are no longer available to those eligible for the new Medicare prescription drug plan.

Summary of Survey Findings

The data from this survey clearly indicate that Idahoans view the issue of prescription drug affordability as a significant one – most say it is very important that consumers like themselves have comparative prescription drug pricing information available that will allow them to evaluate the price differences among brand name and generic drugs, as well as compare the prices of drugs at different pharmacies in their communities. Given the high importance of having comparative price information available, it is easy to see why Idahoans would support the state requiring pharmacies to post the price of prescription drugs in their stores, as well as on a website. This proposal would enable Idahoans to compare the prices of their prescription drugs at different pharmacies in their community and then decide where they would like to purchase those drugs.

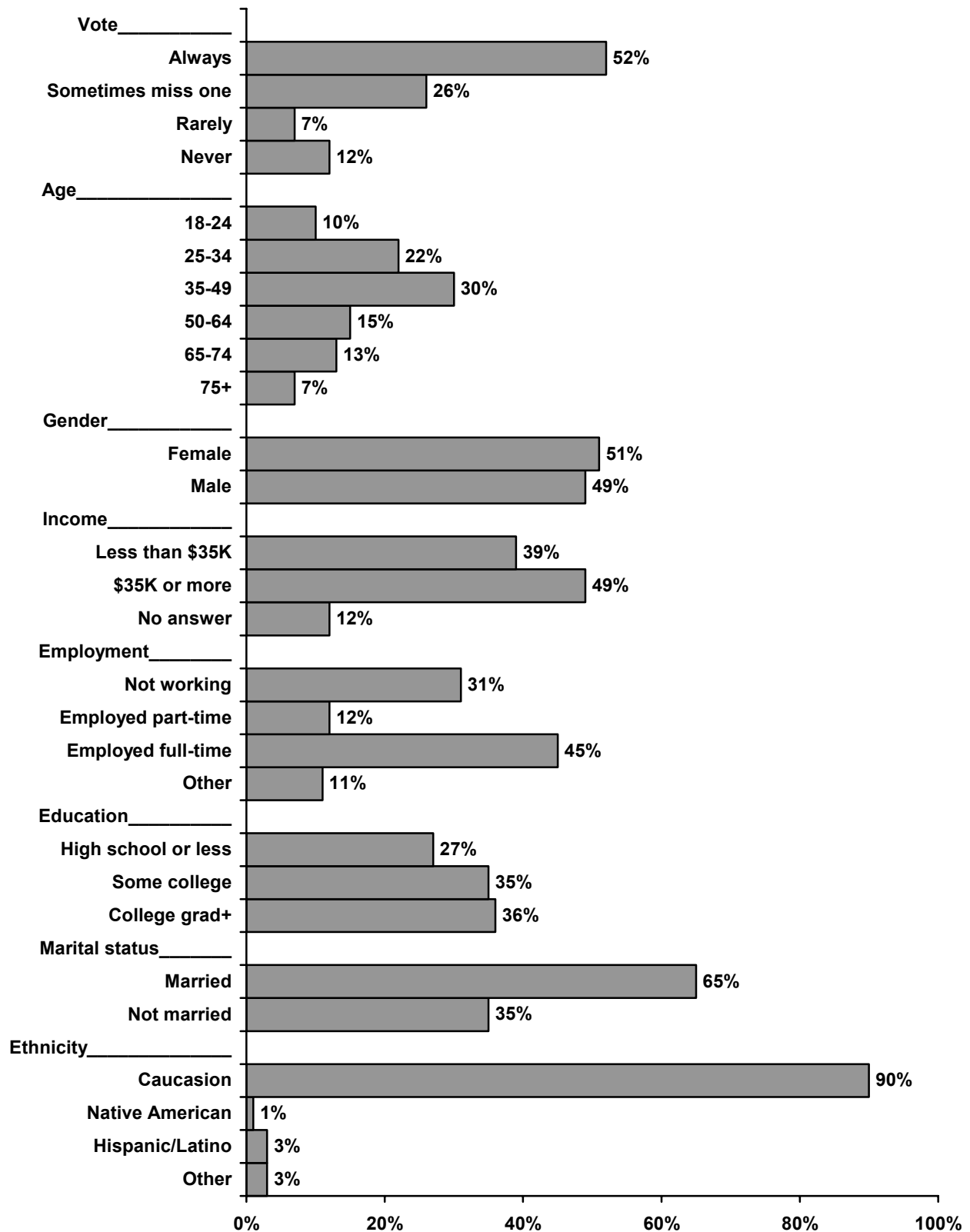
The importance of state involvement in helping residents afford their prescription drugs is further exemplified by residents' support of the state providing funding for patient assistance advocates to help people with limited incomes enroll in the appropriate drug assistance programs. Overall, the data suggest a tremendous opportunity for outreach and advocacy to provide information to residents regarding these proposals and Idaho's prescription drug assistance programs and resources. The State of Idaho would be well supported by residents in their efforts to fund each of these prescription drug affordability measures.

Methodology

This survey was conducted between December 19th and December 28th, 2005. The total sample of 803 residents ages 18 and older yields a maximum statistical error of plus or minus 3.5 percent. Survey responses were weighted to reflect the distribution of age and gender of residents age 18 or older in Idaho. Weighted responses to all survey questions are in the attached annotated questionnaire.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

n=803



APPENDIX

ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE

Prescription Drug Affordability: A Poll of 18+ Idahoans

Weighted N = 803 Idaho Residents Age 18+

1. Do you currently have some form of insurance coverage to help pay for *prescription drugs*(s)?
[INTERVIEWER: if asked for clarity, say “this would include coverage from any private or employee health insurance plan and government programs like Medicare or Medicaid or coverage through your spouse or partner’s plans”. **ALSO IF ASKED IF MEDICARE PART D COUNTS,** say no or this does not include Medicare Part D (it starts in January)]

<u>%</u>	
67	Yes
33	No
<.5	Don’t know [DO NOT READ]
<.5	Refused [DO NOT READ]

2. Have you taken any prescription drugs in the last 12 months?

<u>%</u>	
68	Yes
32	No [SKIP TO Question 4]
0	Don’t know [DO NOT READ]
0	Refused [DO NOT READ]

3. Thinking about all of the prescriptions you had filled in the last 12 months, or since last November about how much have you spent each month out of your own pocket for your prescriptions – that is money you did not get reimbursed for? [READ EACH] (**n=545 Have taken prescription drugs in the last 12 months**)

Was it....:

<u>%</u>	
47	Less than \$50 per month in the last 12 months
18	At least \$50 but less than \$100 in the last 12 months
8	At least \$100 but less than \$150 in the last 12 months
5	At least \$150 but less than \$200 in the last 12 months
4	At least \$200 but less than \$300 in the last 12 months
9	\$300 or more in the last 12 months
6	Nothing - \$0
3	Don’t know [DO NOT READ]
<.5	No answer/Refused [DO NOT READ]

4. There are a variety of programs in Idaho – both government and private – that help people with limited incomes pay for prescription drugs. Many eligible people don't know how to enroll in them. The state is considering a proposal to provide patient assistance advocates who would help eligible residents enroll in the appropriate drug assistance programs. How strongly would you support or oppose the state providing funding for these patient advocates even if you may not be eligible to benefit from this service? *Would you say you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose it...the state funding patient assistance advocates?*

<u>%</u>	
46	Strongly support
35	Somewhat support
6	Somewhat oppose
6	Strongly oppose
7	Not sure [DO NOT READ]
<.5	Refused [DO NOT READ]

5. As you may know, the retail price of prescription drugs can vary from pharmacy to pharmacy. How important do you think it is for consumers like yourself to have information available to them that compares the prices of brand name prescription drugs at different pharmacies in your community? *Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all?*

<u>%</u>	
67	Very important
22	Somewhat important
6	Not too important
4	Not important at all
1	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
<.5	No answer/Refused [DO NOT READ]

6. The retail price of generic drugs can sometimes be less than the price of brand name drugs. How important do you think it is to have information available that compares the price of generic prescription drugs to brand name drugs? *Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all?*

<u>%</u>	
74	Very important
20	Somewhat important
3	Not too important
3	Not important at all
1	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
0	No answer/Refused [DO NOT READ]

7. Currently in Idaho, pharmacists are not required to post the price of prescription drugs in their store. How strongly would you support or oppose legislation requiring pharmacists in the state to post the prices of prescription drugs in their store for all customers to see?

7. (Continued) *Would you say you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose it...*

<u>%</u>	
55	Strongly support
28	Somewhat support
10	Somewhat oppose
4	Strongly oppose
3	Not sure [DO NOT READ]
<.5	Refused [DO NOT READ]

8. Idaho is also considering requiring the retail prices of prescription drugs at pharmacies to be posted on a *website*, allowing consumers to search the pharmacies within their community and compare the costs of prescription drugs. How strongly would you support or oppose this proposal? *Would you say you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose it...*

<u>%</u>	
59	Strongly support
28	Somewhat support
5	Somewhat oppose
5	Strongly oppose
3	Not sure [DO NOT READ]
<.5	Refused [DO NOT READ]

Demographics

D1) How old were you on your last birthday? _____

<u>%</u>	
10	18-24
22	25-34
30	35-49
15	50-59
13	60-74
7	75 or older
3	Refused

D2) Do you have access to the internet at home, at work, or some other place?

<u>%</u>	
40	Home
5	Work
34	BOTH [VOLUNTEERED]
6	Some Other Place [Please Specify: _____]
<.5	DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
1	REFUSED
14	DOES NOT HAVE INTERNET ACCESS

D3) Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?

<u>%</u>	
4	Less than high school graduate
23	High school graduate
35	Some college or technical school
24	College graduate
12	Post-graduate or professional degree
0	Not Sure [DO NOT READ]
1	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D4) Which of the following best describes your marital status?

<u>%</u>	
65	Married
15	Single, never married
18	Divorced/widowed/separated
2	Not married, living together
0	Not Sure [DO NOT READ]
1	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D5) Are you currently...(Read List. Record One RESPONSE)

<u>%</u>	
45	Employed full time
12	Employed part-time
19	Retired, not working
10	Homemaker
2	Unemployed and looking for work
11	Something else
0	Not Sure [DO NOT READ]
1	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D6) What is your race?

<u>%</u>	
90	White/Caucasian
1	Black/African American
1	Native American
1	Asian American
3	Hispanic/Latino/Spanish
<.5	Other: (please specify): _____
0	Not Sure [DO NOT READ]
4	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D7) Which of the following best represents your household income in 2004?

<u>%</u>	
12	Less than \$15,000
14	\$15,000 – but less than \$25,000
14	\$25,000 - but less than \$35,000
17	\$35,000 - but less than \$50,000
16	\$50,000 - but less than \$75,000
16	\$75,000 or more
3	Not Sure
9	Refused (Do not read)

D8) Are you a member of AARP? [ASK OF THOSE AGES 50 AND OLDER]
(n=281 Respondents 50+)

<u>%</u>	
47	Yes
53	No
<.5	Not Sure [DO NOT READ]
0	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D8a) Have you enrolled or are you planning to enroll in the new Medicare Part D program? [ASK OF THOSE AGES 65 AND OLDER] (n=121 Respondents 65+)

<u>%</u>	
20	Yes,
42	No
21	Planning to
16	Not Sure [DO NOT READ]
1	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D9) Thinking about your state elections for Idaho Governor and Legislators in the last ten years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior? Would you say you always vote, sometimes miss one, rarely vote, or never vote?

<u>%</u>	
52	Always vote
26	Sometimes miss one
7	Rarely vote
12	Never vote
1	Not Sure [DO NOT READ]
1	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D10) What is your zipcode? _____

D11) What county do you live in? _____

<u>%</u>		<u>%</u>	
19	Ada	<.5	Lincoln
<.5	Adams	2	Madison
5	Bannock	1	Minidoka
1	Bear Lake	2	Nex Perce
1	Benewah	<.5	Oneida
3	Bingham	<.5	Owyhee
1	Blaine	2	Payette
1	Boise	1	Power
3	Bonner	1	Shoshone
8	Bonneville	1	Teton
1	Butte	5	Twin Falls
<.5	Camas	<.5	Valley
12	Canyon	1	Washington
1	Caribou	<.5	Banam
1	Cassia	<.5	Chester
1	Clearwater	<.5	Eagle
<.5	Custer	<.5	Emmett
2	Elmore	<.5	Kenyon
<.5	Franklin	<.5	Lewisville
1	Fremont	<.5	Meridian
1	Gem	<.5	Nampa
1	Gooding	<.5	Nez Pierce
2	Idaho	<.5	Ponner
2	Jefferson	<.5	Rexburg
1	Jerome	<.5	Sand Point
8	Kootenai	<.5	Vannam
3	Latah	<.5	Wiser
1	Lemhi	2	Don't know
1	Lewis		

D12) Gender (**Do not ask, simply record.**)

<u>%</u>	
49	Male
51	Female

AARP

Knowledge Management

For more information contact Jennifer H. Sauer (202) 434-6207