A decorative graphic is present on the page. It features a large, thin, light-brown arc that starts near the top right and curves down towards the bottom right. A horizontal line and a vertical line intersect at the end of this arc. A small yellow square is placed at the intersection point. Another small yellow square is located at the bottom right corner of a green rectangular area in the top left corner of the page.

Florida's 50+ Population Speaks Out: An Assessment of Important Election Issues

2004



**Florida's 50+ Population Speaks Out:
An Assessment of Important Election Issues**

Report prepared by Curt Davies

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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to making life better for people 50 and over. We provide information and resources; engage in legislative, regulatory and legal advocacy; assist members in serving their communities; and offer a wide range of unique benefits, special products, and services for our members. These include *AARP The Magazine*, published bimonthly; *AARP Bulletin*, our monthly newspaper; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, our quarterly newspaper in Spanish; *NRTA Live & Learn*, our quarterly newsletter for 50+ educators; and our Web site, www.aarp.org We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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Report Summary

In May, of 2004, AARP conducted a mail survey of its members, age 50 and over, in the state of Florida. A total of 1,613 people responded to the survey. AARP wanted to give its Florida members an opportunity to tell both national and state candidates what issues are important to them and affect their voting decisions. AARP also wanted to learn more about how these members, who are more likely to vote, feel about national issues such as affordable health care and prescription drugs, and state issues such as the rise in Florida telephone rates. Furthermore, AARP wanted to remind candidates, for Florida's open U.S. Senate race that these issues are important. Our members confirmed that their voting decisions will be affected by candidates' positions on these topics. AARP hopes to see candidates from across the political spectrum address these issues before the primary on August 31, 2004.

Summary of Highlights

- Eighty-nine percent of all respondents reported they are likely to vote in the November 2004 general election. One-third of respondents (33%) reported they are likely to vote in the Democratic primary and a greater percentage of respondents (37%) reported they are likely to vote in the Republican primary.
- Seventy-seven percent of respondents are in favor of allowing people ages 50-64 who have no health insurance to purchase coverage through the Medicare program at an affordable monthly premium.
- More than 8 in 10 respondents (85%) generally believe the issue of a prescription drug benefit could be a major determinant in how they vote in the November 2004 election. Over three-fourths of all respondents (77%) would like the federal government to be able to negotiate with drug companies for lower prescription drug prices for seniors. Regardless of party affiliation, this sentiment was almost unanimous.
- Approximately 56% strongly favor and 24% somewhat favor the government making it legal to purchase prescription drugs outside of the U.S. A majority of respondents, across party lines, reported strong favorability for this issue.
- Nearly 6 in 10 respondents (58%) believe that Social Security has only minor problems that can be fixed with slight changes to the current system. Exactly 6 in 10 Democrats (60%), 58% of Republicans and 56% of Independents believe Social Security has only minor problems and can be fixed with slight changes.
- A total of 67% of all respondents either strongly support (53%) or somewhat support (14%) repealing the law passed in 2003 that increased basic local telephone rates. Fifty-two percent of both Republican and Independent respondents strongly support repealing this law. While, more than half of Democrats (56%) strongly support repealing this law.

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) reported they are more likely to vote for state and national candidates who support repealing the telephone rate increase law.
- Two-thirds of all respondents (66%) report they are less likely to vote for a state or national candidate who supported the law to increase basic local telephone rates. Respondents who are Democrats (72%), Independents (67%), or Republicans (61%) are less likely to vote for a candidate who supports the law to increase basic local telephone rates.

Introduction

In May, of 2004, AARP conducted a mail survey of its members, age 50 and over, in the state of Florida. AARP wanted to give its Florida members an opportunity to tell both national and state candidates what issues are important to them and affect their voting decisions. AARP also wanted to learn more about how these members, who are more likely to vote, feel about national issues such as affordable health care and prescription drugs and state issues such as the rise in Florida telephone rates.

Furthermore, AARP wanted to remind candidates for Florida's open U.S. Senate race that these issues are important. Our members confirmed that their voting decisions will be affected by candidates' positions on these topics. AARP hopes to see candidates from across the political spectrum address these issues before the primary on August 31, 2004.

Respondents were asked questions about the importance of health care coverage, prescription drugs, and Social Security. Additionally, respondents were asked questions about a bill that was passed in 2003 to increase residential telephone rates in the state of Florida, effective January 1, 2004. While telephone rate increases are not exclusive to Florida, the legislation has resulted in heated political discussions around the state. This issue certainly seems to have an effect on the voting decisions of Florida residents.

The findings in this report are consistent with a national poll conducted by AARP in June, 2004. The report is titled: *An AARP Pre-Election Survey: Older Voters Look at the Election*. A total of 1,484 interviews were completed in a national telephone survey of Americans age 45 or older. This was AARP's first pre-election day poll in 2004.¹ Those findings suggest that of Americans age 45+, the protection of Social Security, and making prescription drugs and health care coverage more affordable are major issues that are currently helping to shape their decision regarding which candidate to support in the 2004 presidential election.²

Findings from the pre-election survey also suggest that Americans age 45+ want to place issues that affect them high on the agenda for the next Congress. Additionally, more than half (54%) want the protection of Social Security given top priority when Congress returns to Washington in January 2005, and another 32 percent want this issue given high priority. Three in four consider passing a law that achieves affordable health care coverage for all Americans to be a top (43%) or high (33%) priority.

Similarly, three in four consider passing a law to make prescription drugs more affordable to be a top (43%) or high (33%) priority. Two-thirds consider passing a law to provide Americans access to high quality long-term care services, especially those given in people's homes and communities, to be a top (32%) or high (35%) priority.

¹ See *An AARP Pre-Election Survey: Older Voters Look at the Election, 2004*

² *Terrorism/war and the economy/jobs were the dominant issues at this point in time in determining which candidate to support in the 2004 presidential election*

The findings presented in this report build on the findings of the national pre-election report. Affordable health care, access to less expensive prescription drugs outside the U.S., and the continuation of Social Security in its present form are important issues to Florida's AARP members. A candidates' position on these topics along with the increase of basic local telephone rates in Florida are going to affect the voting decisions of members in Florida.

Methodology

AARP conducted a mail survey of randomly selected AARP members, age 50 and over in the State of Florida. A total of 1613 people responded to the survey. The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results obtained in the sample would fall in a range of 3 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every AARP member in the state of Florida had been surveyed. For presentation purposes, percentage points have been rounded off to the nearest whole number. As a result, percentages in a given table column may total slightly higher or lower than 100%. For questions that permit multiple responses, columns may total to significantly more than 100%, depending on the number of different responses offered by each respondent. Similarly, when only selected responses are shown, percentages may total to less than 100%.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Voter registration: An overwhelming majority of respondents (92%) are registered to vote. **Party affiliation:** Almost 2 in 5 respondents (38%) are Republican, 34% are Democrat, and 20% are Independent. Eighty-nine percent of all respondents reported they are likely to vote in the November 2004 general election. One-third of respondents (33%) reported they are likely to vote in the Democratic primary and a greater percentage (37%) of respondents reported they are likely to vote in the Republican primary.

Marital status: The majority of respondents in the sample were married (60%) (see Table1). Fourteen percent were divorced or separated. The remainder (3%) of respondents in the sample was single. **Age:** A little more than one-third (34%) of respondents were ages 50-64 and 60% were age 65 and over. Less than 1 in 10 (6%) refused to give their age.

Gender: Slightly more than half of all survey respondents were male (53%), and 44% were female (see Table 1). **Race/Ethnicity:** The majority of the sample was white (92%). Five percent of the sample was Hispanic. Three percent of the sample was Black or African American.

Employment: More than one-quarter of all respondents were employed (29%) (see Table 1). Almost two-thirds (64%) of them were retired and not working. Two percent were unemployed and looking for work. **Education:** One-fifth of the sample (21%) had a high school diploma. Almost 1 in 3 (32%) respondents had a college degree or higher. Four percent of respondents did not complete high school.

Income: Twenty-eight percent of respondents had a household income between \$20,000-\$39,999. Roughly 1 in 10 respondents (11%) had a household income between \$40,000-\$49,999. Thirty-two percent of respondents had household incomes between \$50,000 to \$75,000+. Eighteen percent of them had a household income of less than \$20,000.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents
(n = 1,613)

Marital Status		Employment Status	
Never Married	3%	Retired Not Working	64%
Currently Married	60%	Employed	29%
Divorced/ Separated	14%	Unemployed	2%
Refused	3%	Other such as Homemaker	3%
Age		Education Level	
50-64	34%	Less than High School	4%
65+	60%	High School or equivalent	21%
No Answer	6%	Some College	38%
		College Graduate or Higher	32%
Gender		Annual Household Income	
Male	53%	Under \$20,000	18%
Female	44%	\$20,000 - \$39,999	28%
		\$40,000 – \$49,999	11%
Race/ Ethnicity		\$50,000 - <\$75,000	16%
White	92%	\$75,000+	16%
Black	3%		
Hispanic	5%		
Some Other Race	2%		

Source: Florida’s 50+ Population Speaks Out, 2004

Findings

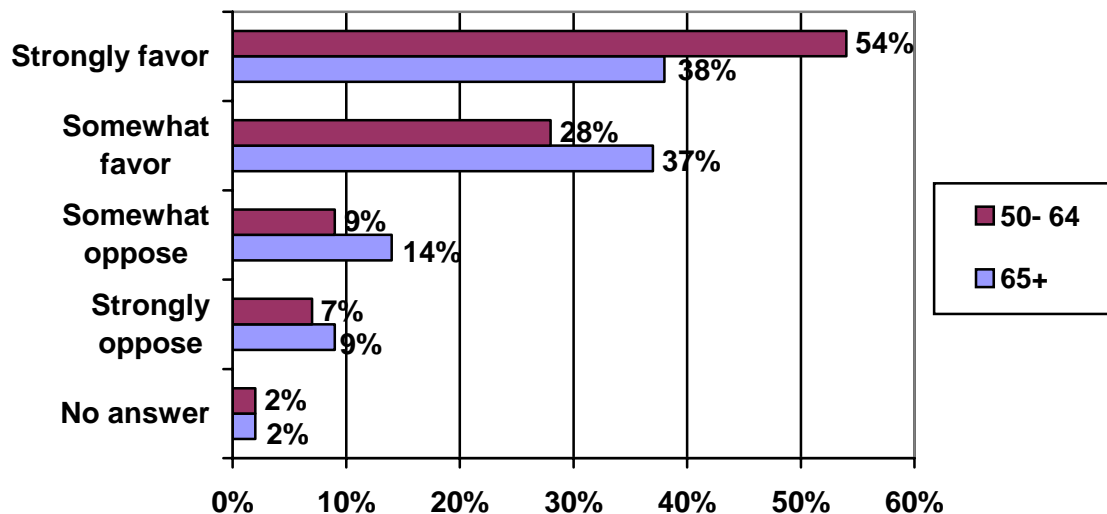
Health Care

Respondents were asked questions about their current health care coverage and the importance of affordable health care in the future. A majority of respondents (53%) were confident in their ability to maintain their current level of health care coverage at an acceptable cost. Less than one-fifth (16%) were very confident and 37% were somewhat confident. Still, slightly more than 2 in 5 respondents (41%) reported they were less confident in their ability to maintain their current health care coverage. Approximately one quarter (26%) reported they were not very confident and 15% were not at all confident.

Although a majority of respondents are confident that they will be able to maintain their present level of health care coverage a far greater majority of respondents believe it is very important to make health care affordable (87%). Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) reported that it is very important that everyone have health care coverage.

Furthermore, 77% of respondents are in favor of allowing people ages 50-64 who have no health insurance to purchase coverage through the Medicare program at an affordable monthly premium. Of these respondents, 44% strongly favor this proposition and 33% somewhat favor it. A total of 21% oppose allowing people with no health care coverage to purchase coverage through the Medicare program; somewhat oppose= 12% and strongly oppose= 9%. More than half of all respondents ages 50-64 (54%) reported they strongly favor this proposition and almost 2 in 5 respondents age 65+ (38%) reported they strongly favor it (see Figure 1).

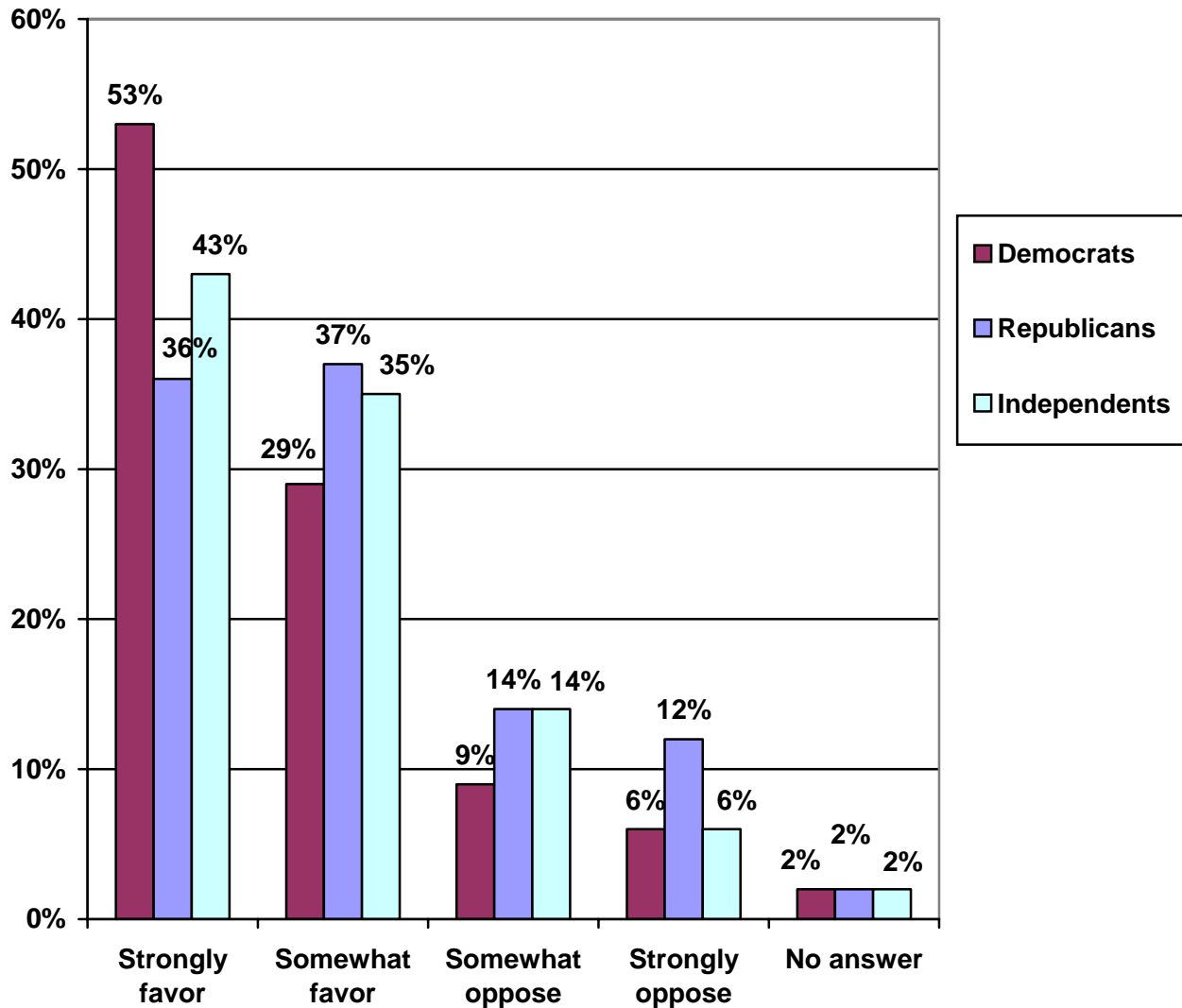
Figure 1
Responses by age for proposal to allow people age 50-64 with no health insurance to purchase health insurance through Medicare



Source: *Florida's 50+ Population Speaks Out, 2004*

Party affiliation does seem to be a factor in determining which respondents will favor or oppose the proposition allowing people ages 50-64 who have no health insurance to purchase coverage through the Medicare program at an affordable monthly premium. Respondents who are Republican are less likely to favor this proposition than Democrats or Independents. Still, a majority of respondents, regardless of party affiliation, favor this proposition (see Figure 2). Eighty-three percent of Democrats favor this proposition; 78% of Independents and 73% of Republican members favor it.

Figure 2
Responses by party affiliation for proposal to allow people age 50-64 with no health insurance to purchase health insurance through Medicare



Source: *Florida's 50+ Population Speaks Out, 2004*

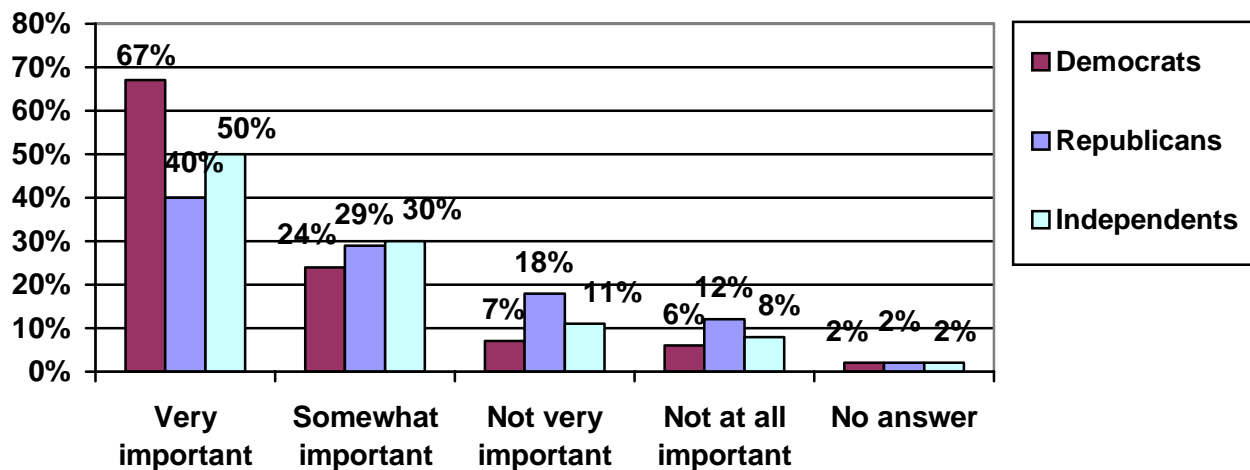
Prescription Drugs

Two major issues concerning prescription drugs could certainly affect the voting decisions of voters 50+. The two issues are: 1) the federal government’s ability to negotiate prescription drug prices, and 2) making it legal to purchase prescription drugs outside of the U.S. More than 8 in 10 respondents (85%) generally believe the issue of a prescription drug benefit will be a major determinant in how they vote in the November 2004 election.

Over three-fourths of all respondents (77%) would like the federal government to be able to negotiate with drug companies for lower prescription drug prices for seniors. Regardless of party affiliation this sentiment was strong; Democrats= 84%, Independents=81% and Republican= 70%. A similar finding occurred across all income levels with the greatest percentage of favorability found in the lower income levels. Eighty-two percent of respondents with incomes between less than \$20K and \$40K want the federal government to be able to negotiate with drug companies for lower prescription drug prices for seniors. Three-fourths of respondents (78%) with incomes between \$40K and \$75K are in favor of price negotiations while two-thirds of respondents (66%) with incomes of \$75K or higher favor price negotiations.

Price negotiations between the federal government and drug companies are an important issue to respondents and will affect how they vote in the November 2004 election. Almost 8 in 10 respondents (79%) consider this an important issue in deciding how they vote. A slight majority (51%) consider price negotiations a very important issue in deciding how they vote and 28% consider it a somewhat important issue. Approximately 9 in 10 respondents (91%) who are Democrats, 80% of all Independents, and 69% of Republicans reported that the issue of price negotiations is an important issue in deciding how to vote in the November 2004 election (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
Importance of price negotiations for prescription drugs in deciding how to vote in the November 2004 election

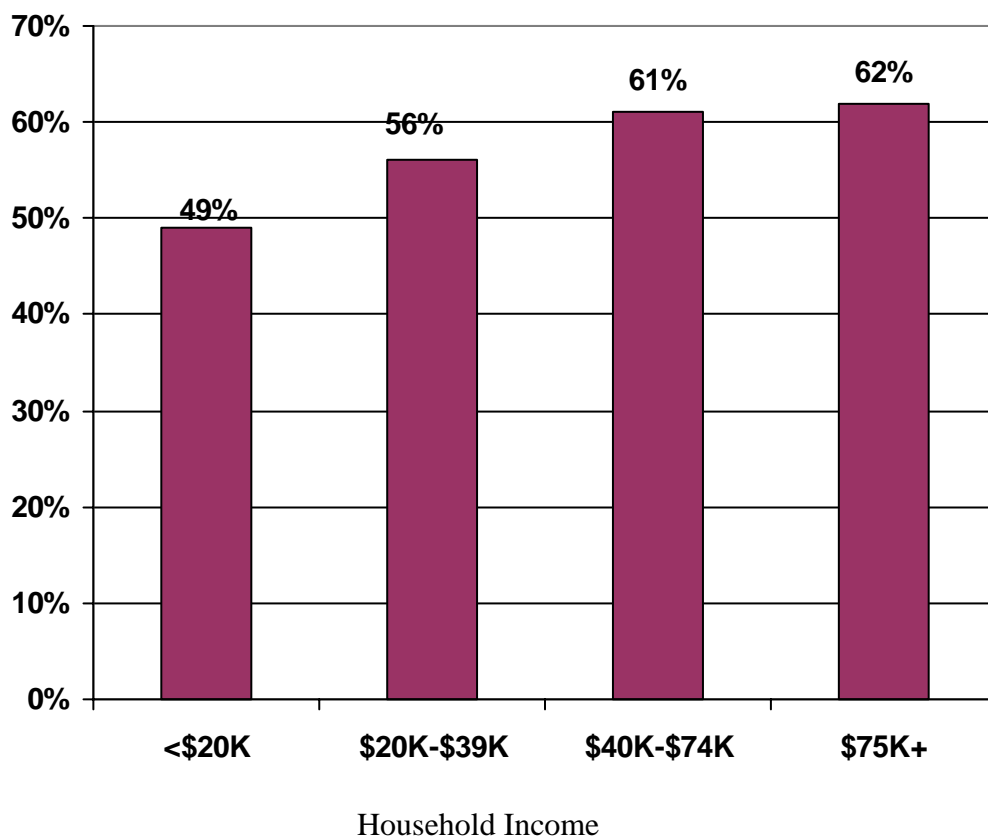


Source: Florida’s 50+ Population Speaks Out, 2004

Another important issue concerning prescription drugs pertains to legally being able to purchase prescription drugs outside of the U.S. A large majority of respondents (80%) are in favor of the federal government making it legal for people to buy prescription drugs from other countries. More than half (56%) strongly favor and 24% somewhat favor the government making such purchases legal. A majority of respondents, across party lines reported strong favorability for this issue. Approximately 62% of respondents who are Independents strongly favor making it legal for people to buy prescription drugs from other countries. Similarly, 61% of Democrats in the sample are strongly in favor of such a measure, while slightly more than half of Republican respondents (52%) strongly favor it.

Respondents with higher incomes were more likely to favor the federal government making it legal to purchase prescription drugs outside of the U.S. Slightly more than half of respondents with incomes less than \$40K (53%) strongly favor making these purchases legal and those with incomes greater than \$40K (61%) strongly favor making such prescription drug purchases legal (see Figure 4). More than two-thirds of respondents (68%) reported that being able to legally purchase drugs outside of the U.S. will be an important issue in deciding how they vote in the November 2004 election.

Figure 4
Strongly favor making it legal to purchase prescription drugs outside of the U.S.

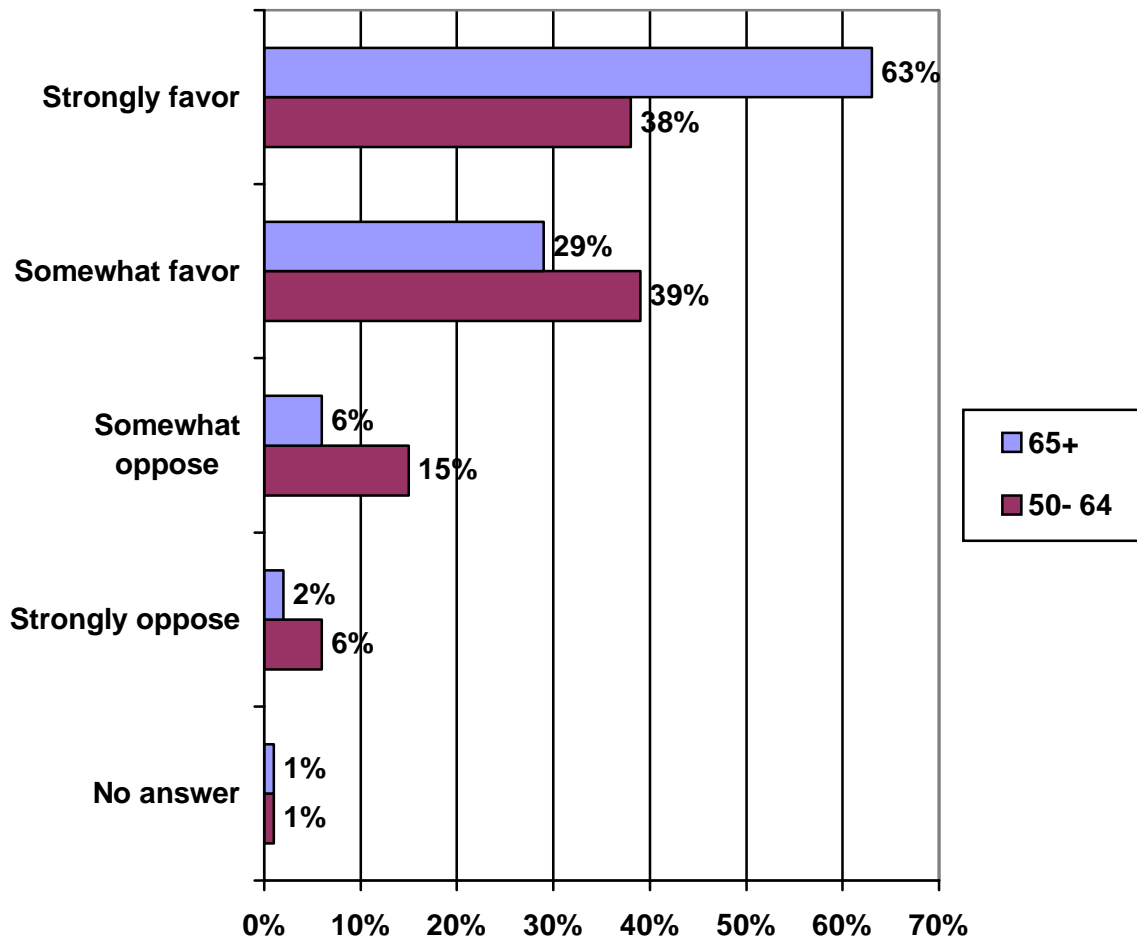


Source: *Florida's 50+ Population Speaks Out, 2004*

Social Security

Social Security is a central issue to voters 50+. Social Security provides a stable income for beneficiaries and enhances retirees 401(K) and/or pension monies. Respondents were asked their general opinion about Social Security and about the severity of problems related to Social Security. Generally, 86% of all respondents favor keeping Social Security as close to the present program as possible. Of these respondents, 54% strongly favor and 32% somewhat favor keeping Social Security as close to the present program as possible. Older respondents are more likely than younger respondents to think this (see Figure 5). Almost two-thirds of respondents age 65+ (63%) reported they strongly favor keeping Social Security in its current form while 38% of respondents ages 50-64 reported they strongly favor keeping Social Security as is.

Figure 5
Responses by age for keeping the Social Security program as close as possible to the present program



Source: Florida's 50+ Population Speaks Out, 2004

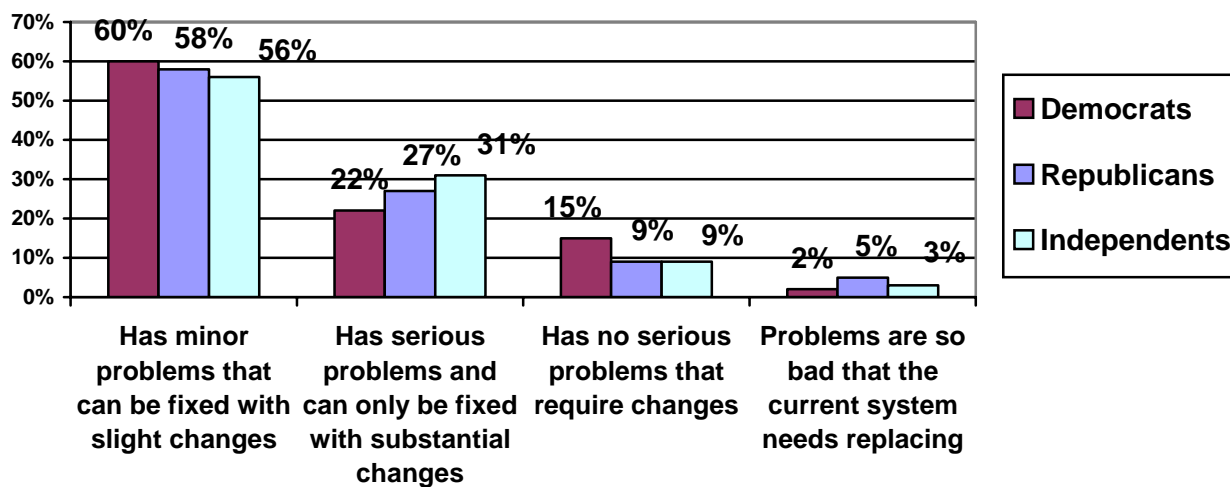
All respondents were read four statements regarding the current state of Social Security. The following four statements were read verbatim to respondents [the percentage of respondents who agree with each statement is included]:

1. The Social Security program has no serious problems that require changing the current system (**11%**)
2. Social Security has minor problems that can be fixed with slight changes to the current system (**58%**)
3. Social Security's problems are serious and can be fixed only with substantial changes to the current system (**26%**)
4. Social Security's problems are so bad that the current system should be replaced (**3%**)

Almost 6 in 10 respondents (58%) believe that Social Security has only minor problems that can be fixed with slight changes to the current system. Another quarter of respondents (26%) believe that Social Security has major problems and 11% reported that Social Security has no serious problems that require changing the current system. A small percentage of respondents (3%) believe Social Security's problems are serious enough to warrant replacing the entire system. While a majority of respondents ages 50-64 and 65+ believe that Social Security has only minor problems there is still a 10% points difference between these two age groups of respondents (52% of those age 50-64 versus 62% of those age 65+).

Conversely, across all party affiliations, a similar percentage of respondents reported they believe that Social Security has only minor problems (see Figure 6). Exactly 6 in 10 Democrats (60%), 58% or Republicans and 56% of Independents believe Social Security has only minor problems and can be fixed with slight changes.

Figure 6
Which statement comes closest to your opinion about the Social Security program?



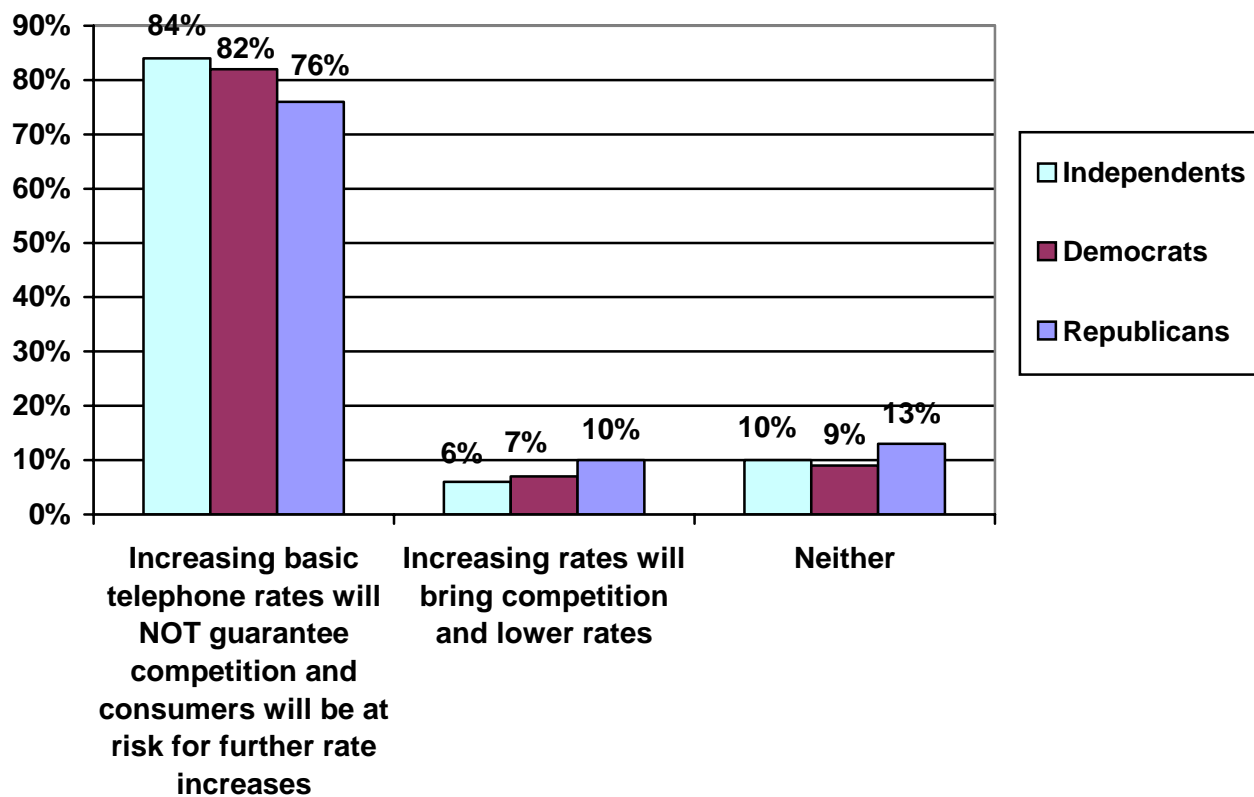
Source: Florida's 50+ Population Speaks Out, 2004

Telephone Rate Increases

In 2003, the Florida Legislature passed a bill that would raise residential phone rates by up to 90% over the opposition of AARP and other consumer groups. Respondents were asked questions regarding this rate increase. Findings suggest that Florida consumers age 50+ are not in favor of telephone rate increases and believe this will be an important issue in deciding how to vote in the November 2004 election.

Respondents were asked if they believe that increasing basic local telephone rates will produce competition among companies and eventually result in lower rates for consumers. Most respondents (80%) reported they do not believe the rate increase will guarantee competition among phone companies and instead may put consumers at risk of further rate increases. More than three-fourths of respondents, regardless of party affiliation, believe that the rate increases will not guarantee competition among phone companies (Independents= 84%, Democrats= 82% and Republicans= 76%) (see Figure 7).

Figure 7
Increased basic telephone rates will ...

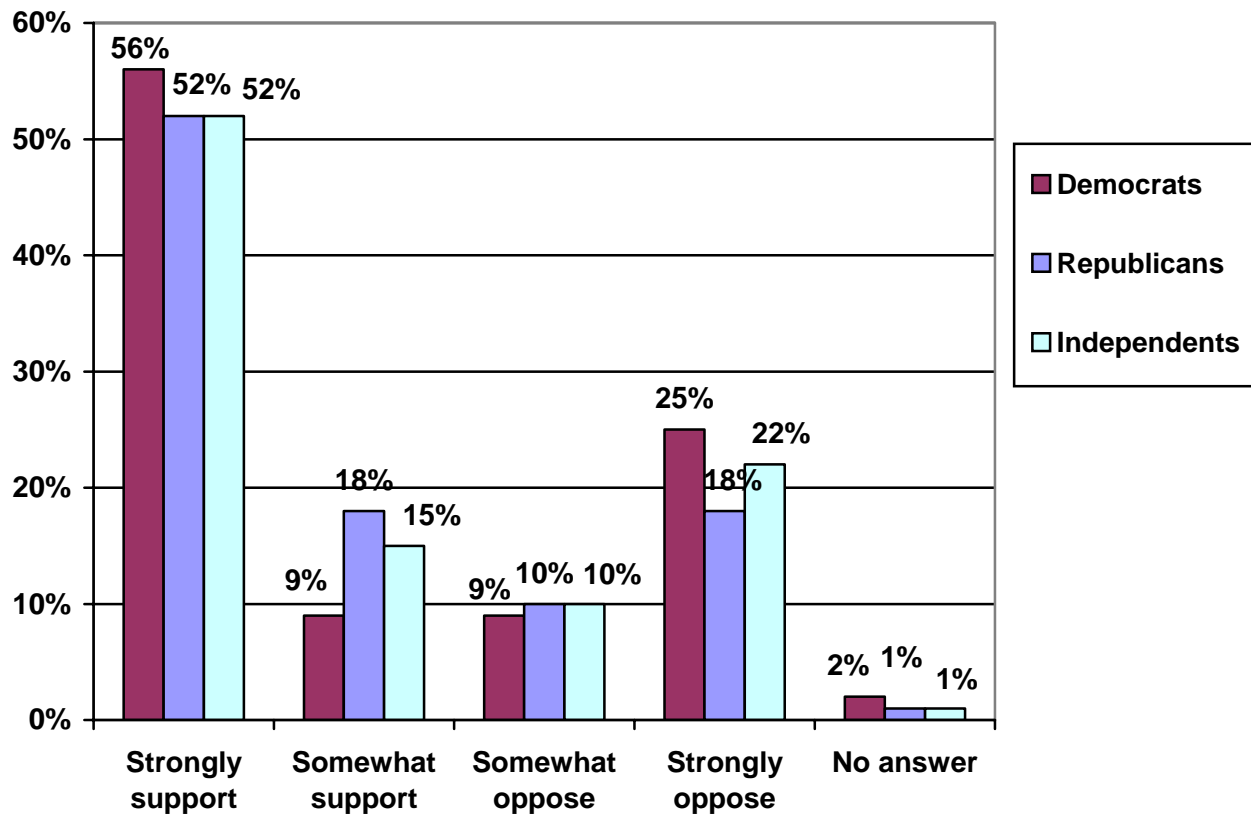


Source: *Florida's 50+ Population Speaks Out, 2004*

Even if respondents were given the opportunity to choose between telephone companies, they are still unwilling to pay more for basic local telephone service. In spite of household income, respondents are not willing to pay more for basic local telephone service. Approximately 80% of respondents with household incomes below \$40K are not willing to pay more. Seventy-five percent of respondents with household incomes between \$40K-\$75K are not willing to pay more for basic local telephone service. While, respondents with household incomes of \$75K+ (71%) reported they are not willing to pay more for basic local telephone service even if they could choose between companies.

A total of 67% of all respondents either strongly support (53%) or somewhat support (14%) repealing the law passed in 2003 that increased basic local telephone rates. Fifty-two percent of both Republican and Independent respondents strongly support repealing this law. While, 56% of Democrats strongly support repealing this law.

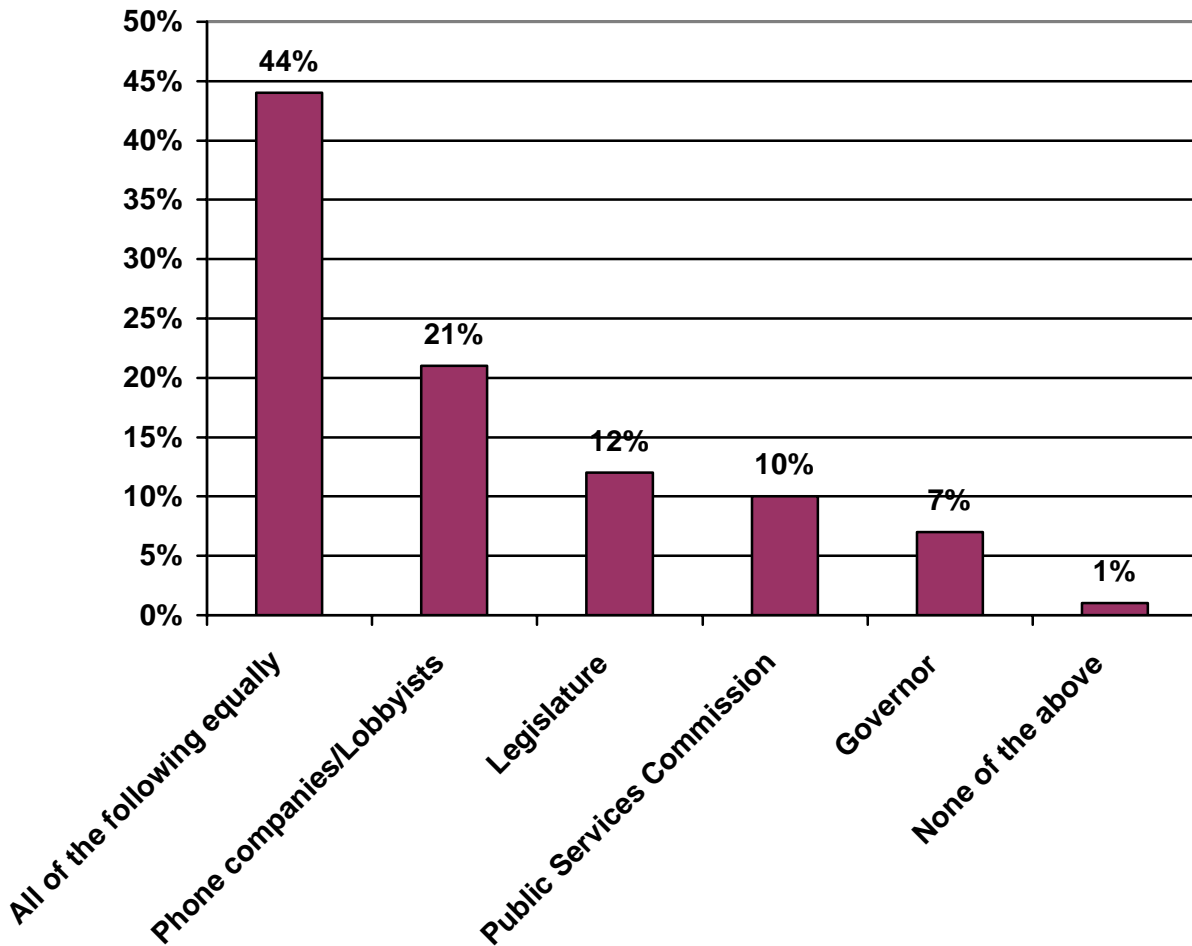
Figure 8
Support or Oppose repealing the law passed in Florida to increase basic telephone rates



Source: *Florida's 50+ Population Speaks Out, 2004*

The Florida 50+ population is opposed to the telephone rate increase and will blame local politicians and public officials if the rate increase is not repealed. A plurality of respondents (44%) will blame equally the Governor, the Florida Legislature, the Public Service Commission, and phone companies/lobbyists for the telephone rate increase (see Figure 9).

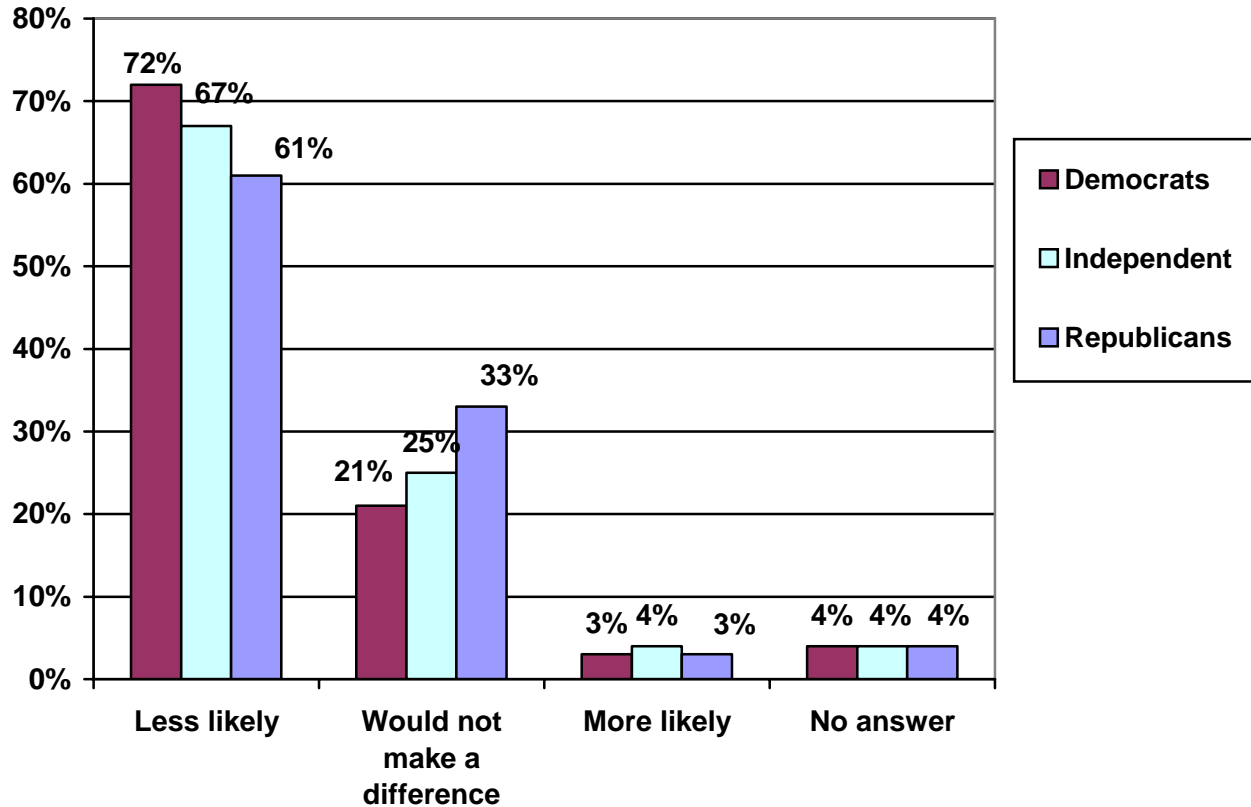
Figure 9
Who is responsible if the law to increase basic telephone rates is not repealed and your rates increase?



Source: *Florida's 50+ Population Speaks Out, 2004*

Two-thirds of all respondents report they are less likely to vote for a state or national candidate who supported the law to increase basic local telephone rates. Democrats (72%), Independents (67%), and Republicans (61%) are less likely to vote for a candidate who supports the law to increase basic local telephone rates.

Figure 10
How likely are you to vote for a state or national candidate who supported the law to increase basic local telephone rates?



Source: *Florida's 50+ Population Speaks Out, 2004*

Respondents are more likely to vote for state and national candidates who support repealing the basic local telephone rate increase. Almost two-thirds of respondents (63%) reported they are more likely to vote for candidates who support repealing the telephone rate increase law. Thirty-one percent reported that it would not make any difference to them. A majority of respondents among all party affiliations reported they are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports repealing the telephone rate increase; Democrats=70%; Independents= 63%; Republicans= 58%.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, Florida's 50+ population will consider a number of factors prior to casting their votes for state and national political candidates. Some of the national issues that will affect their voting decisions include affordable health care, access to low priced prescription drugs and the solvency of Social Security. Certainly, local issues such as increased rates for telephone service will also affect their voting decisions.

The high cost of health care coverage and prescription drugs have always been a concern of high priority among people 50+. Respondents believe that it is very important to make health care affordable and feel that it is also important that all people have some form of health insurance. Most favor allowing people ages 50-64 without health insurance to purchase it through the Medicare program. Furthermore, respondents want legal access to prescription drugs outside of the U.S. They feel this is a very important issue in deciding how to vote in the November 2004 election. They also favor making it possible for the federal government to negotiate prescription drug prices with drug companies.

Most respondents believe that Social Security should remain as close as possible to the present program. Similarly, most of respondents believe that Social Security has only minor problems that can be fixed with slight changes. The afore mentioned issues of affordable health care, low priced prescription drugs, and more importantly Social Security, are all key issues that affect the lives of people age 50+.

Another important issue for Florida's 50+ voters is the increase of basic local telephone rates. Respondents want this law repealed. More than 70% of respondents across all household incomes are unwilling to pay more for basic local telephone service even if they had a choice of telephone companies. Most respondents blame state and local politicians for the passage of the bill that allowed for the telephone rate increase. A majority of respondents across all parties say they are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports repealing the increase.

Clearly, 50+ voters are going to carefully consider where a candidate stands on these critical state and national issues as they head to the polls. Findings suggest that these issues are certainly a concern to the 50+ population regardless of party affiliation. Candidates from all parties would do well to address these issues given that the 50+ population is registered to vote and shows up on Election Day.

APPENDIX-A
[Annotated Survey]

2004 AARP Florida Election Survey

DIRECTIONS: For each survey item below, circle the number or check the box that best represents your opinion.

N= 1613

Health Care

1. How confident are you that you will be able to maintain your present level of health care coverage at an acceptable cost to you over the next few years?

- ₁ Very confident 16%
- ₂ Somewhat confident 37%
- ₃ Not very confident 26%
- ₄ Not at all confident 15%
- ₅ Currently, I do not have health/medical insurance --%
- No Answer 6%

2. How important to you personally, are the items listed below?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	No Answer
a. Making health care affordable	1 (87%)	2 (7%)	3 (1%)	4 (1%)	5%
b. Making sure everyone has health insurance	1 (64%)	2 (20%)	3 (5%)	4 (2%)	9%

3. Some people have proposed that people ages 50-64 who have no health insurance be allowed to purchase coverage through the Medicare program at an affordable monthly premium. How strongly do you favor or oppose this idea?

- ₁ Strongly favor 44%
- ₂ Somewhat favor 33%
- ₃ Somewhat oppose 12%
- ₄ Strongly oppose 9%
- No Answer 3%

Prescription Drugs

4. How important will the issue of prescription drug benefits for senior citizens be to you in deciding how to vote in the November election?

- ₁ Strongly favor 52%
- ₂ Somewhat favor 33%
- ₃ Somewhat oppose 6%
- ₄ Strongly oppose 4%
- No Answer 5%

5. Do you think the federal government should negotiate with drug companies for lower prescription drug prices for seniors, or should drug companies set those prices without government involvement?

- ₁ The government should negotiate with drug companies for lower prescription drug prices for seniors. 77%
- ₂ Drug companies should set those prices without government involvement. 20%
- No Answer 3%

6. How important will the issue of price negotiations for prescription drugs be to you in deciding how to vote in the November election?

- ₁ Very important 51%
- ₂ Somewhat important 28%
- ₃ Not very important 12%
- ₄ Not at all important 7%
- No Answer 2%

7. Some want the federal government to make it legal for people to buy prescription drugs from Canada or other countries at lower cost. Others oppose that, arguing that the safety of prescription drugs from other countries cannot be assured. Do you favor or oppose the federal government making it legal for people to buy prescription drugs from other countries?

- ₁ Strongly favor 56%
- ₂ Somewhat favor 24%
- ₃ Somewhat oppose 10%
- ₄ Strongly oppose 8%
- No Answer 3%

8. How important will the issue of purchasing prescription drugs from outside of the U.S. be in deciding how you vote in the November election?

- ₁ Very important 37%
- ₂ Somewhat important 31%
- ₃ Not very important 19%
- ₄ Not at all important 11%
- No Answer 2%

Social Security

9. Based on what you have heard, read, or experienced with Social Security, what is your overall view of the program?

- ₁ Very favorable 34%
- ₂ Somewhat favorable 46%
- ₃ Not very favorable 15%
- ₄ Not at all favorable 5%
- No Answer 1%

10. Do you generally favor or oppose keeping the Social Security program as close to the present program as possible?

- ₁ Strongly favor 54%
- ₂ Somewhat favor 32%
- ₃ Somewhat oppose 9%
- ₄ Strongly oppose 3%
- No Answer 1%

11. Please check which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about the Social Security program.

- ₁ The Social Security program has no serious problems that require changing the current system 11%
- ₂ Social Security has minor problems that can be fixed with slight changes to the current system 58%
- ₃ Social Security's problems are serious and can be fixed only with substantial changes to the current system 26%
- ₄ Social Security's problems are so bad that the current system should be replaced 3%
- No Answer 2%

Basic Telephone Rates

12. Basic local telephone service rates in Florida are currently about \$12 to \$14 per month depending on where you live. This amount does not include taxes, fees, or charges for additional services. How important is it to you that your basic local telephone rate does not increase?

- ₁ Very important 74%
- ₂ Somewhat important 18%
- ₃ Not very important 5%
- ₄ Not at all important 2%
- ₅ I do not currently have telephone service --%
- No Answer 1%

13. In 2003, Florida passed a law that will increase current basic local telephone rates by \$3 to \$7 per month (or an additional \$36-\$84 per year) starting at the end of 2004. Are you aware that basic local telephone rates will increase starting in 2004?

- ₁ Yes, aware 55%
- ₂ No, not aware 45%
- No Answer 1%

14. Some people believe that increasing the basic local telephone rates will produce competition among companies and eventually result in lower rates for consumers. Other people think that increasing rates will not guarantee competition but will put consumers at risk for further rate increases. Which argument do you believe?

- ₁ Increasing rates will bring competition and lower rates 8%
- ₂ Increasing rates will NOT guarantee competition and consumers will be at risk for further rate increases 80%
- ₃ Neither 11%
- No Answer 1%

15. How willing are you to pay MORE for your basic local telephone service if you can choose between companies that offer that service?

- ₁ Very willing 5%
- ₂ Somewhat willing 17%
- ₃ Not very willing 36%
- ₄ Not at all willing 40%
- No Answer 2%

16. Do you support or oppose repealing (that is, overturning) the law passed in Florida in 2003 that will increase current basic local telephone rates by \$3 to \$7 per month (or an additional \$36-\$84 per year) starting at the end of 2004?

- ₁ Strongly support 53%
- ₂ Somewhat support 14%
- ₃ Somewhat oppose 9%
- ₄ Strongly oppose 22%
- No Answer 2%

17. If the law to increase basic local telephone rates is not repealed and your rates go up, who do you think is most responsible? (Check only one.)

- ₁ Governor 7%
- ₂ Legislature 12%
- ₃ Public Service Commission 10%
- ₄ Phone Companies/Lobbyists 21%
- ₅ All of the above equally 44%
- ₆ None of the above 1%
- No Answer 5%

18. If a candidate for state or national office supported repealing the basic local telephone rate law to stop rates from increasing, how likely would you be to vote for that candidate?

- ₁ More likely 63%
- ₂ Would not make a difference 31%
- ₃ Less likely 2%
- No Answer 4%

19. If you knew that a candidate for state or national office supported the law to increase basic local telephone rates that was passed in 2003, how likely would you be to vote for that candidate?

- ₁ More likely 3%
- ₂ Would not make a difference 27%
- ₃ Less likely 66%
- No Answer 4%

About You

The following questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.

D1. Are you male or female?

- ₁ Male 53%
- ₂ Female 44%
- No Answer 3%

D2. What is your age as of your last birthday? Avg. Age= 69yrs.

- 50-64 34%
- 65+ 60%
- No Answer 6%

D3. What is your current marital status?

- ₁ Married 60%
- ₂ Widowed 20%
- ₃ Divorced 14%
- ₄ Separated --%
- ₅ Never married 3%
- No Answer 3%

D4. What is the highest level of education that you completed?

- ₁ Less than high school 4%
- ₂ High school graduate or equivalent 21%
- ₃ Some college or technical training beyond high school 38%
- ₄ College graduate (4 years) 18%
- ₅ Post-graduate or professional degree 14%
- No Answer 5%

D5. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

- ₁ Employed or self-employed full-time 20%
- ₂ Employed or self-employed part-time 9%
- ₃ Retired and not working 64%
- ₄ Other such as homemaker 3%
- ₅ Unemployed and looking for work 2%
- No Answer 3%

D6. Are you of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin or descent?

- ₁ Yes 5%
- ₂ No 91%
- ₀ Not sure --%
- No Answer 5%

D7. What is your race?

- ₁ White or Caucasian 92%
- ₂ Black or African American 3%
- ₃ Asian --%
- ₄ Native American or Alaskan native 1%
- ₅ Hawaiian or Pacific islander --%
- ₆ Other 1%
- No Answer 3%

D8. What is your 5-digit zip code? (WRITE IN YOUR ZIP CODE.) _ _ _ _ _

D9. What was your annual household income before taxes in 2003?

- ₁ Less than \$10,000 4%
- ₂ \$10,000 to \$19,999 14%
- ₃ \$20,000 to \$29,999 14%
- ₄ \$30,000 to \$39,999 14%
- ₅ \$40,000 to \$49,999 11%
- ₆ \$50,000 to \$74,999 16%
- ₇ \$75,000 or more 16%
- No Answer 12%

D10. Are you registered to vote?

- ₁ Yes 92%
- ₂ No 4%
- No Answer 4%

D10a. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as:

- ₁ A Republican 38%
- ₂ A Democrat 34%
- ₃ An Independent 20%
- ₄ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____ 3%
- ₅ Don't know 2%
- No Answer 3%

D10b. How likely are you to vote in the following?

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not too likely	Not at all likely	No Answer
August Republican primary	1 (31%)	2 (6%)	3 (7%)	4 (--%)	56%
August Democratic primary	1 (28%)	2 (5%)	3 (6%)	4 (21%)	40%
November general election	1 (85%)	2 (4%)	3 (1%)	4 (3%)	7%