



University of Connecticut  
*Center for Survey Research & Analysis*

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**PRESS RELEASE**

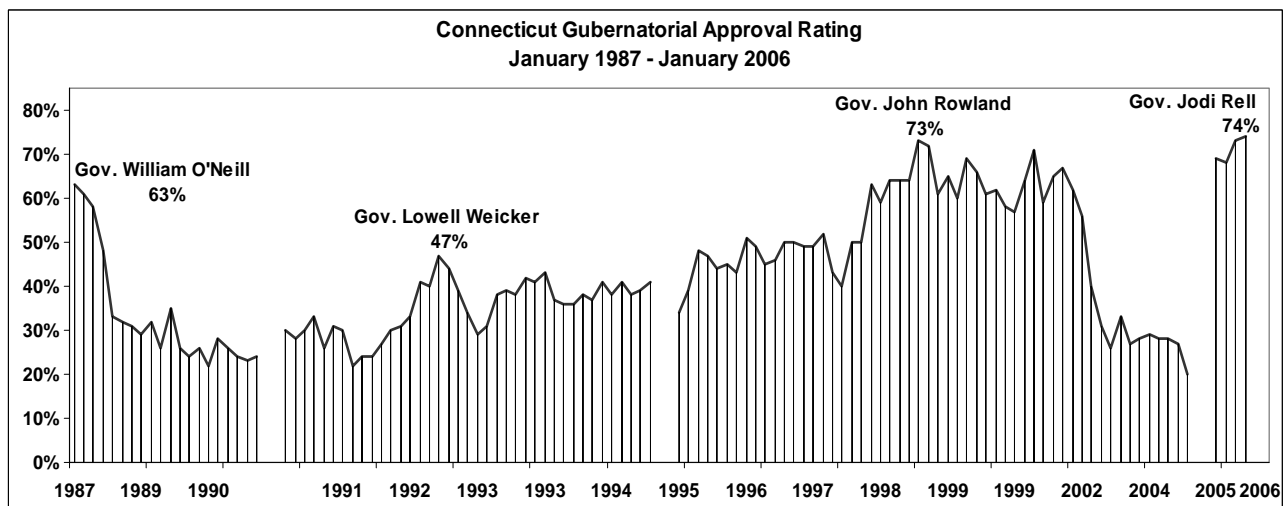
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**RELL'S RATINGS REMAIN STRONG; TRAFFIC AND ECONOMY RECEIVE LOW MARKS**

*The following poll summary is based on a survey of residents of Connecticut conducted by the Center for Survey Research and Analysis (CSRA) at the University of Connecticut. The survey was administered by telephone to a scientific sample of 503 residents from across the state. Interviews were conducted from Thursday January 26 through Sunday January 29, 2006. Sampling error is 4% at the 95% level of confidence. Attached to this summary is the questionnaire used for the survey.*

**APPROVAL RATINGS**

A new statewide survey finds that Governor Jodi Rell's job ratings remain very strong. Seventy-four percent of Connecticut residents evaluate Rell as doing a "good" or "excellent" job, virtually the same as the 73% positive job rating she received in November 2005. Her support remains high regardless of party affiliation. Eighty percent of Republicans say Rell is doing a "good" or "excellent" job (combined), as well as 75% of Independents and 70% of Democrats.



Rell's support stands in stark contrast with that of President George W. Bush. Only 25% of Connecticut residents evaluate Bush's performance as "good" or "excellent" (combined), while 73% of residents rate the president's performance as "fair" or "poor".

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“Despite Nutmegers’ distaste for President Bush’s performance, fellow Republican Governor Rell remains enormously popular. She has been able to forge her own identity, one that is quite resistant to national political forces,” says Professor Samuel Best, Director of the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut.

Residents are also generally satisfied with the direction of the state. Fifty-eight percent say Connecticut is headed in the right direction; only 31% think things are off on the wrong track. Optimism cuts across party lines: 70% of Republicans, 58% of Independents, and 53% of Democrats say the state is headed in the right direction.

As for the challenges confronting Governor Rell and the legislature, jobs/economic growth tops the list of public concerns – 37% of residents mention it as the most important problem in the state. Other issues trail well behind: 12% of Connecticut residents feel taxes are the most important problem, 11% cite education, and 7% feel crime is the most important problem in the state. No other issue was named by more than 5% of the public.

#### OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE

Residents of Connecticut give the state strong marks for the overall quality of life; comparable to the marks they give their own town. Employing the traditional rating scale used in American schools, 63% grade the quality of life in Connecticut an ‘A’ or a ‘B’, while only 6% grade the quality of life a ‘D’ or an ‘F’. By comparison, 60% give the quality of life in their own communities an ‘A’ or a ‘B’, while 16% give it a ‘D’ or an ‘F’.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>Public Assessments of the Quality of Life</b>			
Area	‘A’ or ‘B’	‘C’	‘D’ or ‘F’
In Connecticut	63%	31%	6%
In the particular town where you live	60%	23%	16%

While half of Connecticut residents feel that these good times will continue, some are concerned with what the future holds. Among those who think times will change, more think life will get worse rather than better. A third of residents think the quality of life in Connecticut is getting worse, while 15% think the quality of life in Connecticut is getting better. Residents feel marginally better about where things are headed in their own communities than in the state as a whole. 28% feel the quality of life is getting worse in the town where they live, while 19% feel the quality of life is getting better.

<b>Table 2</b>			
<b>Perceived Direction of the Quality of Life</b>			
Area	‘Getting Better’	‘Staying the Same’	‘Getting Worse’
In Connecticut	15%	50%	33%
In the particular town where you live	19%	50%	28%

There are stark differences, though, in perceptions of the quality in life in the state between different partisan groups, although majorities of all groups give the state above average marks. Ninety percent of Republicans, 60% of Independents, and 55% of Democrats, grade the quality of life in Connecticut an ‘A’ or a ‘B’. Eighteen percent of Republicans, 14% of Independents, and 14% of Democrats say the quality of life in the state is getting better, while 27% of Republicans, 36% of Independents, and 30% of Democrats say the quality of life is getting worse. These marginal partisan differences remain even after controlling for the impact of individual income.

## QUALITY OF LIFE IN VARIOUS PUBLIC DOMAINS

The survey also asked Connecticut residents to evaluate specific areas of the public domain. There was considerable variation in their grades, with some areas receiving very high marks and others receiving very low ones.

The highest marks are given to recreational offerings and the environment in the state. Fifty-eight percent of residents give the recreational offerings available in Connecticut – meaning the fun and interesting things to do in the state – an ‘A’ or a ‘B’, while only 12% give them a ‘D’ or an ‘F’. Similarly, 56% of residents give the environment – meaning the cleanliness of the air, water and preservation of open space – an ‘A’ or a ‘B’. A mere 10% of residents give the environment a ‘D’ or an ‘F’, the lowest proportion of marks given any public domain.

Connecticut residents give middling grades to public safety, health care, and public schools. Forty-nine percent give public safety an ‘A’ or a ‘B’, compared to 47% for the health care system and 42% for the public school system. Conversely, 23% of residents give health care a ‘D’ or an ‘F’. Similarly, 17% of residents give low marks for public safety and 16% for the public school system.

Grading the ethics in state government yielded little agreement among state residents. Thirty-eight percent of Connecticut residents give ethics an ‘A’ or a ‘B’, 35% rate it a ‘C’, and 22% assign it a ‘D’ or an ‘F’.

Low marks are given to traffic and the economy. Less than a quarter of state residents give the traffic situation on major roads and highways, the availability of jobs, and the cost of living in the state an ‘A’ or a ‘B’. Conversely, nearly half give the traffic situation and the cost of living a ‘D’ or an ‘F’, while 30% give the availability of jobs poor grades.

Area	‘A’ or ‘B’	‘C’	‘D’ or ‘F’
Recreational Offerings	58%	28%	12%
Environment	56%	33%	10%
Public Safety	49%	33%	17%
Health Care System	47%	25%	23%
Public School System	42%	33%	16%
Ethics in State Government	38%	35%	22%
Traffic	23%	29%	47%
Availability of Jobs	22%	40%	30%
Cost of Living	20%	31%	48%

Once again there were noteworthy differences between partisans, with Republicans typically awarding higher grades in all areas than do Democrats. Again these differences were independent of citizens’ income levels.

In three issue areas – the environment, the health care system, and the public school system – significantly more Republicans than Democrats give grades of an ‘A’ or ‘B’. Seventy percent of Republicans give the environment an ‘A’ or ‘B’, compared to 48% of Democrats. Fifty-eight percent of Republicans give the health care system an ‘A’ or ‘B’, compared to 46% of Democrats. And, 48% of Republicans give the public school system an ‘A’ or ‘B’, compared to 36% of Democrats.

In only one domain – the traffic situation on major roads and highways in the state – do considerably more Democrats give higher grades than Republicans. Thirty percent of Democrats give traffic an ‘A’ or ‘B’, compared to only 12% of Republicans.

Conversely, in four of the domains examined, Democrats give considerably lower grades than Republicans. Twenty-three percent of Democrats rate public safety a ‘D’ or an ‘F’, compared to 13% of Republicans. Twenty-eight percent of Democrats rate the health care system a ‘D’ or an ‘F’, compared to 7% of Republicans. Thirty-five percent of Democrats rate the availability of jobs a ‘D’ or an ‘F’, compared to 23% of Republicans. And, forty-nine percent of Democrats rate the cost of living a ‘D’ or an ‘F’, compared to 37% of Republicans.

There were no instances in which the difference in the proportion of Republicans awarding a ‘D’ or an ‘F’ exceeded the proportion of Democrats awarding a ‘D’ or an ‘F’ by 10 percentage points.

**Table 4**  
**Public Assessments of Specific Qualities of Life in Connecticut, by Party Identification**

Area	‘A’ or ‘B’			‘C’			‘D’ or ‘F’		
	Rep	Indp	Dem	Rep	Indp	Dem	Rep	Indp	Dem
Recreational Offerings	64%	54%	58%	30%	27%	31%	6%	14%	9%
Environment	70%	61%	48%	24%	30%	40%	6%	9%	11%
Public Safety	60%	39%	52%	27%	45%	24%	13%	13%	23%
Health Care System	58%	45%	46%	33%	26%	20%	7%	20%	28%
Public School System	48%	47%	36%	33%	27%	42%	10%	14%	16%
Ethics in State Government	40%	35%	42%	36%	35%	38%	18%	26%	16%
Traffic	12%	22%	30%	47%	23%	26%	41%	52%	43%
Availability of Jobs	28%	21%	20%	45%	38%	38%	23%	31%	35%
Cost of Living	21%	15%	24%	41%	31%	26%	37%	51%	49%

As for what the future holds, Connecticut residents generally feel that the performance in the state is not likely to change much in most issue areas, with three notable exceptions: ethics, traffic, and the economy.

Thirty-seven percent of Connecticut residents feel that ethics in state government are getting better.

Conversely, 60% of Connecticut residents feel the state’s traffic situation is getting worse. Similarly, many residents feel the state’s economy is going downhill. Forty-eight percent of residents say that the availability of jobs is getting worse, while a whopping 77% of residents say the cost of living is getting worse.

**Table 5**  
**Perceived Direction of Specific Qualities of Life in Connecticut**

Area	‘Getting Better’	‘Staying the Same’	‘Getting Worse’
Recreational Offerings	25%	64%	8%
Environment	18%	56%	24%
Public Safety	19%	54%	24%
Health Care System	18%	44%	31%
Public School System	18%	50%	24%
Ethics in State Government	37%	40%	18%
Traffic Situation on Major Roads & Highways	12%	26%	60%
Availability of Jobs	7%	39%	48%
Cost of Living	2%	20%	77%

There are also partisan differences in the perceived direction in which policy domains are headed. Republicans more often perceive specific domains are getting better, whereas Democrats more often perceive specific domains are getting worse. In certain instances, these differences are substantial (greater than 10%)

In two policy domains – public safety and ethics – Republicans are considerably more likely to have a positive outlook. Twenty-six percent of Republicans think public safety is getting better, compared to 15% of Democrats. Forty-five percent of Republicans think ethics in state government are getting better, compared to 31% of Democrats.

In one domain – recreational offerings – Democrats are considerably more likely to have a positive outlook. Thirty-four percent of Democrats think the recreational offerings in the state are getting better, compared to 22% of Democrats.

In one domain – cost of living – Republicans are considerably more likely to have a negative outlook. Eighty-two percent of Republicans think the cost of living is getting worse, compared to 72% of Democrats.

In three domains – health care system, traffic, and availability of jobs – Democrats are considerably more likely to have a negative outlook. Thirty-six percent of Democrats think the health care system is getting worse, compared to 26% of Republicans. Fifty-nine percent of Democrats think the traffic situation on major roads and highways in the state is getting worse, compared to 41% of Republicans. And, fifty-five percent of Democrats think the availability of jobs is getting worse, compared to 43% of Republicans.

**Table 6**  
**Perceived Direction of Specific Qualities of Life in Connecticut, by Party Identification**

Area	'Getting Better'			'Staying the Same'			'Getting Worse'		
	Rep	Indp	Dem	Rep	Indp	Dem	Rep	Indp	Dem
Recreational Offerings	22%	20%	34%	72%	66%	58%	4%	8%	7%
Environment	21%	20%	16%	58%	57%	58%	21%	20%	26%
Public Safety	26%	18%	15%	57%	53%	56%	18%	26%	27%
Health Care System	27%	14%	18%	44%	50%	39%	26%	27%	36%
Public School System	12%	21%	18%	54%	48%	57%	28%	22%	19%
Ethics in State Government	45%	40%	31%	36%	36%	48%	14%	18%	18%
Traffic	12%	9%	12%	47%	26%	28%	41%	62%	59%
Availability of Jobs	10%	6%	5%	42%	41%	36%	43%	46%	55%
Cost of Living	2%	1%	4%	15%	20%	24%	82%	77%	72%

“Despite Governor Rell’s enormous popularity, the economy could prove to be her Achilles heel. If prices continue to climb and jobs are harder to come by, the public overall, and particularly Democrats, could begin to blame the governor, pulling down her sky high rating and making her re-election efforts more difficult.” says Professor Best.

**Hartford Courant/CSRA Poll**  
 January 2006 (n=503)  
*Results rounded to nearest whole number*

Hello, my name is [INTERVIEWER NAME] and I am calling from the University of Connecticut's Center for Survey Research. We are conducting a survey of people's attitudes about current issues. May I please speak to the person in this household who is at least 18 years of age or older and has had the most recent birthday?

Q1. How would you rate the job George W. Bush is doing as President – Excellent, good, fair, or poor?

Excellent.....	6%
Good.....	19%
Fair.....	31%
Poor.....	42%
Don't know.....	1%
Refused.....	*

Q2. How would you rate the job Jodi Rell is doing as Governor of Connecticut – Excellent, good, fair, or poor?

Excellent.....	26%
Good.....	48%
Fair.....	20%
Poor.....	2%
Don't know.....	5%

Q3. All in all, do you think things in the state of Connecticut are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are off on the wrong track?

Right direction.....	58%
Wrong track.....	31%
Both/Neither (vol).....	8%
Don't know.....	3%

Q4. What do you think is the most important problem facing Connecticut today?

Job Creation and Economic Growth.....	37%
Taxes.....	12%
Education.....	11%
Crime.....	7%
Transportation.....	5%
Health Care.....	5%
Integrity in government.....	5%
Poverty.....	4%
High Cost of Living.....	3%
Fuel Prices.....	2%
City Crowding and Overdevelopment.....	2%
Balanced Budget.....	1%
Illegal Immigration.....	1%
Housing.....	1%
Miscellaneous Issues.....	5%
Don't Know.....	0%
Refused.....	0%

IQ5A. Next, I'd like to ask you the some questions about the overall quality of life here in Connecticut.

Q5A. Using letter grades like you would receive in school, where an A is excellent, B is above average, C is average, D is below average, and F is failing, in general, how would you rate the quality of life in the state of Connecticut — Would you give it a grade of an A, B, C, D, or F?

A (excellent).....	12%
B (above average).....	51%
C (average).....	31%
D (below average) .....	4%
F (failing) .....	2%
Don't know .....	1%
Refused.....	*

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Q5B. Right now, do you think that the quality of life in Connecticut is getting better, getting worse, or is staying the same?

Getting better .....	15%
Getting worse.....	33%
Staying the same.....	50%
Don't know (vol).....	2%
Refused (vol) .....	0%

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Q6A. Again, using letter grades like you would receive in school, in general, how would you rate the quality of life in your particular town in Connecticut – Would you give it a grade of an A, B, C, D, or F?

A (excellent).....	21%
B (above average).....	39%
C (average).....	23%
D (below average) .....	9%
F (failing) .....	7%
Don't know .....	*
Refused .....	0%

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Q6B. Right now, do you think that the quality of life in your particular town in Connecticut is getting better, getting worse, or is staying the same?

Getting better .....	19%
Getting worse.....	28%
Staying the same.....	50%
Don't know (vol).....	3%
Refused (vol) .....	*

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IQ7A. Now, I'd like to ask you the same questions about specific areas of life here in Connecticut. For each of these, think about the state as a whole. [ORDER OF QUESTION SETS RANDOMIZED]

Q7A. In general, how would you rate the public school system in Connecticut — Would you give it a grade of an A, B, C, D, or F?

A (excellent).....	8%
B (above average).....	34%
C (average).....	33%
D (below average) .....	13%
F (failing) .....	3%
Don't know .....	9%
Refused .....	*

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Q7B. Right now, do you think public school system in Connecticut is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Getting better .....	18%
Getting worse.....	24%
Staying the same.....	50%
Don't Know (vol).....	7%
Refused (vol) .....	*

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Q8A. In general, how would you rate the cost of living in Connecticut - Would you give it a grade of an A, B, C, D, or F?

A (excellent).....	3%
B (above average).....	17%
C (average).....	31%
D (below average) .....	28%
F (failing) .....	20%
Don't know .....	2%
Refused .....	*

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Q8B. Right now, do you think the cost of living in Connecticut is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Getting better .....	2%
Getting worse.....	77%
Staying the same.....	20%
Don't Know (vol).....	1%
Refused (vol) .....	1%

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Q9A. In general, how would you rate the traffic situation on major roads and highways in Connecticut— Would you give it a grade of an A, B, C, D, or F?

A (excellent).....	3%
B (above average).....	20%
C (average).....	29%
D (below average) .....	25%
F (failing) .....	22%
Don't drive or ride in vehicles (vol).....	1%
Don't know .....	1%
Refused .....	0%

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Q9B. Right now, do you think traffic situation on major roads and highways in Connecticut is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Getting better .....	12%
Getting worse.....	60%
Staying the same.....	26%
Don't Know (vol).....	2%
Refused (vol) .....	1%

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Q10A. In general, how would you rate the availability of jobs in Connecticut — Would you give it a grade of an A, B, C, D, or F?

A (excellent).....	4%
B (above average).....	18%
C (average).....	40%
D (below average).....	22%
F (failing).....	8%
Don't know.....	8%
Refused.....	*

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Q10B. Right now, do you think the availability of jobs in Connecticut is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Getting better.....	7%
Getting worse.....	48%
Staying the same.....	39%
Don't Know (vol).....	6%
Refused (vol).....	1%

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Q11A. In general, how would you rate the health care system in Connecticut — Would you give it a grade of an A, B, C, D, or F?

A (excellent).....	11%
B (above average).....	36%
C (average).....	25%
D (below average).....	15%
F (failing).....	8%
Don't know.....	6%
Refused.....	*

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Q11B. Right now, do you think the health care system in Connecticut is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Getting better.....	18%
Getting worse.....	31%
Staying the same.....	44%
Don't Know (vol).....	7%
Refused (vol).....	*

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Q12A. In general, how would you rate the recreational offerings in Connecticut – meaning the availability of fun and interesting things to do in the state — Would you give it a grade of an A, B, C, D, or F?

A (excellent).....	15%
B (above average).....	43%
C (average).....	28%
D (below average).....	9%
F (failing).....	3%
Don't know.....	3%
Refused.....	0%

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Q12B. Right now, do you think the recreational offerings in Connecticut are getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Getting better ..... 25%  
Getting worse..... 8%  
Staying the same..... 64%  
Don't Know (vol)..... 3%  
Refused (vol) ..... 0%

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Q13A. In general, how would you rate the environment in Connecticut— meaning the cleanliness of the air, water and preservation of open space — Would you give it a grade of an A, B, C, D, or F?

A (excellent)..... 8%  
B (above average)..... 48%  
C (average)..... 33%  
D (below average) ..... 7%  
F (failing) ..... 3%  
Don't know ..... 1%  
Refused ..... 0%

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Q13B. Right now, do you think the environment in Connecticut is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Getting better ..... 18%  
Getting worse..... 24%  
Staying the same..... 56%  
Don't Know (vol)..... 2%  
Refused (vol) ..... 0%

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Q14A. In general, how would you rate public safety in Connecticut, meaning safety from crimes in public places -- Would you give it a grade of an A, B, C, D, or F?

A (excellent)..... 10%  
B (above average)..... 39%  
C (average)..... 33%  
D (below average) ..... 13%  
F (failing) ..... 4%  
Don't know ..... 2%  
Refused ..... 0%

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Q14B. Right now, do you think public safety in Connecticut is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Getting better ..... 19%  
Getting worse..... 24%  
Staying the same..... 54%  
Don't Know (vol)..... 2%  
Refused (vol) ..... \*

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Q15A. In general, how would you rate the ethics in Connecticut's state government— Would you give it a grade of an A, B, C, D, or F?

A (excellent).....	3%
B (above average).....	35%
C (average).....	35%
D (below average).....	13%
F (failing).....	9%
Don't know.....	5%
Refused.....	*

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Q15B. Right now, do you think ethics in Connecticut's state government is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Getting better.....	37%
Getting worse.....	18%
Staying the same.....	40%
Don't Know (vol).....	5%
Refused (vol).....	*