

North Carolina
Association of County
Commissioners

May 2010

Elon University Poll

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Director

www.elon.edu/elonpoll

Lost in Translation: Rhetoric versus Reality

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All politics is local.

~Thomas P. O'Neill

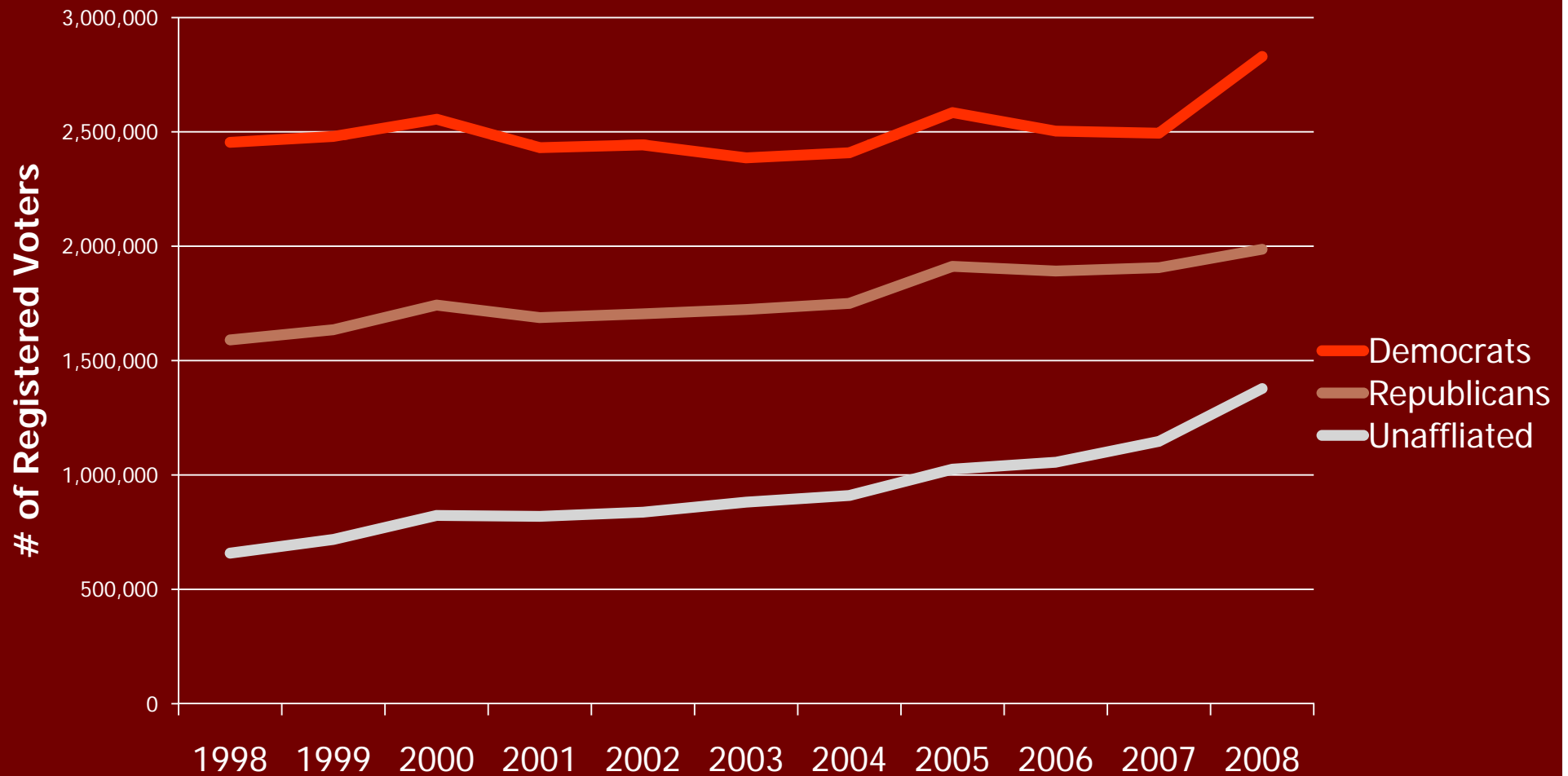
The Public & Politics

- Competition
- Complacency
- Political Environment
- Partisanship

Competition

- More Candidates
- More Challenges
- Incumbent Advantage?

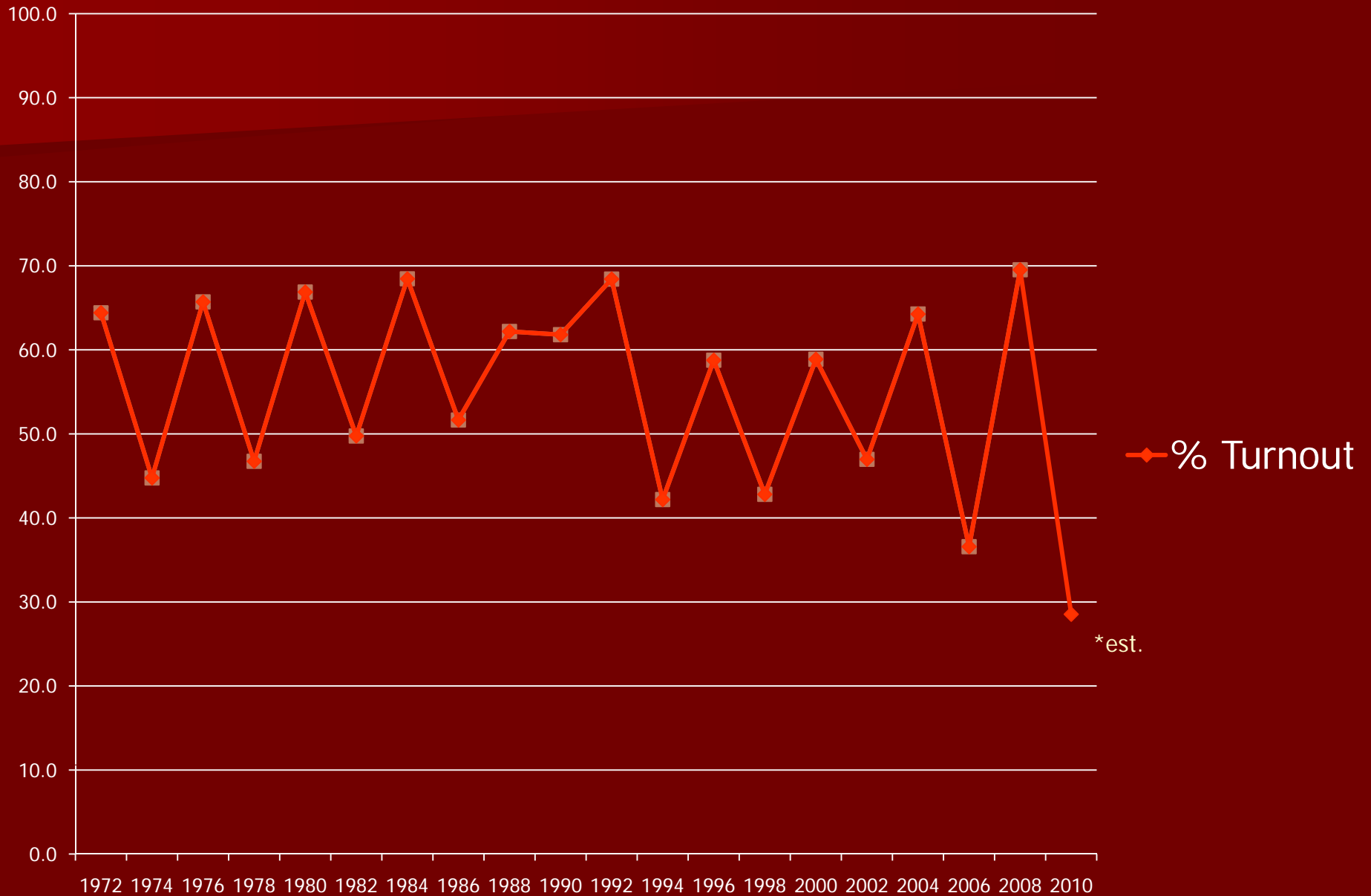
NC Registered Voters by Party



Complacency

- 2008 Election Aberration?
- Anti-Politician Sentiment
- Turnout

NC Voter Turnout, 1972-2010*



How Interested is the Public?

| Interest in Voting | Oct 2008 | | | Feb 2010 | | | April 2010 | | |
|---------------------------|----------|------|------|----------|------|------|------------|------|------|
| | Dem | Ind | Rep | Dem | Ind | Rep | Dem | Ind | Rep |
| Not Interested (0-7) | 6.2 | 17.4 | 9.7 | 47.8 | 52.1 | 35.6 | 56.0 | 46.3 | 34.1 |
| Interested (8) | 13.7 | 19.0 | 16.2 | 22.5 | 15.7 | 15.1 | 18.5 | 11.5 | 23.5 |
| Very Interested (9) | 6.5 | 7.7 | 5.4 | 4.5 | 5.7 | 7.5 | 3.6 | 8.3 | 7.1 |
| Extremely Interested (10) | 73.5 | 56.9 | 68.7 | 25.3 | 26.4 | 41.8 | 22.0 | 33.9 | 35.3 |

Political Environment

- Local Sentiments
- Tea Party
- Education & Local School Systems

Rating of Taxes

| Taxes | Not At All/ Not Fair | Neither Fair or Unfair | Somewhat/ Very Fair | Don't Know (v) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Alcoholic Beverage Tax | 23.5 | 26.0 | 45.7 | 4.7 |
| Tobacco Tax | 32.8 | 20.5 | 42.1 | 4.6 |
| Retail Sales Tax | 29.4 | 40.4 | 29.3 | 0.8 |
| <i>Local Retail Sales Tax</i> | 32.7 | 38.8 | 26.7 | 1.9 |
| Local Property Tax | 48.8 | 25.9 | 22.3 | 2.0 |
| Motor Vehicle Tax | 45.5 | 30.8 | 21.2 | 2.4 |
| Corporate Income Tax | 35.7 | 28.3 | 20.1 | 16.0 |
| Personal Income Tax | 45.4 | 32.0 | 19.7 | 2.9 |
| Personal Inc Tax/Dividends | 33.7 | 29.9 | 17.9 | 18.7 |
| Gas Tax | 64.0 | 17.3 | 17.6 | 1.0 |
| Estate Tax | 45.7 | 29.5 | 14.6 | 10.1 |

Total (N=563, +/-4.2%); scale ranged from 1, Not at All Fair, to 7, Very Fair)

Rating Local Boards

| | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Don't Know |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Mayor | 18.1 | 59.1 | 22.8 |
| County Commission | 25.1 | 58.5 | 16.4 |
| City Council | 24.4 | 56.8 | 18.9 |
| School Board | 36.7 | 52.9 | 10.5 |

Nov. '09; N=563, +/-4.2%)

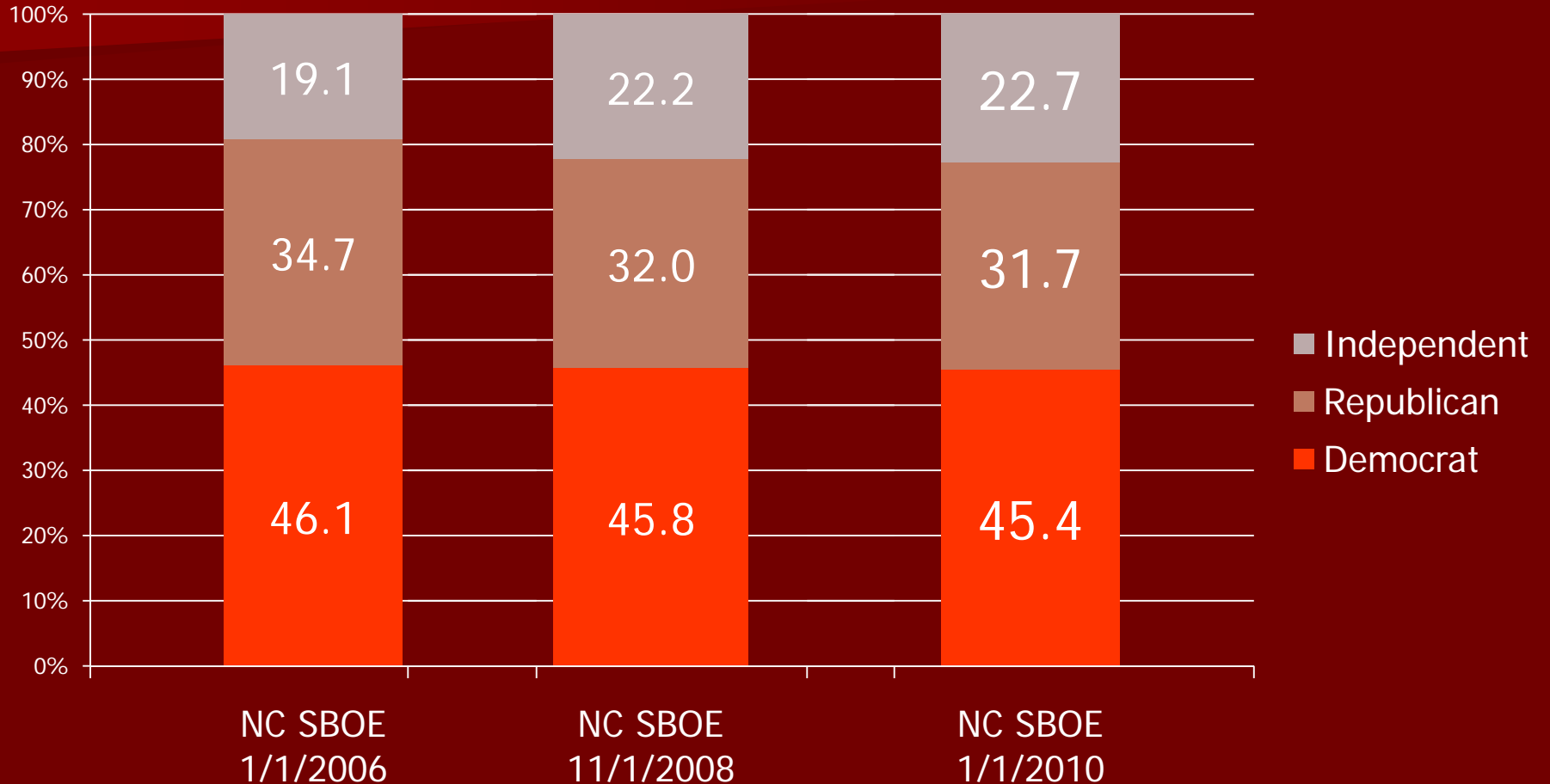
| Characteristic or Service | Very Bad/Bad | Neither Bad or Good | Good/Very Good |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Fire Department | 4.9 | 11.3 | 81.4 |
| Libraries | 6.6 | 16.0 | 77.3 |
| Garbage Collection | 10.8 | 15.3 | 64.1 |
| Parks & Recreation | 10.5 | 24.7 | 61.3 |
| Police Department | 10.9 | 25.2 | 61.5 |
| Sheriff's Department | 11.0 | 29.5 | 52.2 |
| Shopping Amenities | 22.1 | 25.5 | 50.6 |
| License Tag Office | 26.5 | 29.6 | 38.5 |
| Public Schools | 27.5 | 21.7 | 38.2 |
| County Court System | 23.1 | 36.1 | 33.9 |
| Roads & Highways | 31.8 | 36.4 | 31.7 |
| Cable TV Service | 33.4 | 26.8 | 30.8 |
| Driver's License Office | 33.7 | 23.3 | 39.5 |
| Road Maintenance | 35.3 | 35.1 | 29.4 |
| <i>Community Economy</i> | <i>40.2</i> | <i>32.3</i> | <i>25.9</i> |
| <i>Property Tax Rates</i> | <i>46.8</i> | <i>30.0</i> | <i>18.5</i> |

Rating the quality of community characteristics or government services on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being very good & 1 being very bad

Partisanship

- What to Make of Independents
- Population Change/Growth
- Changing /New Groups & Alliances
(e.g., Unions, Latinos, Disaffected, Blacks)

Political Party Registration, 2006-10

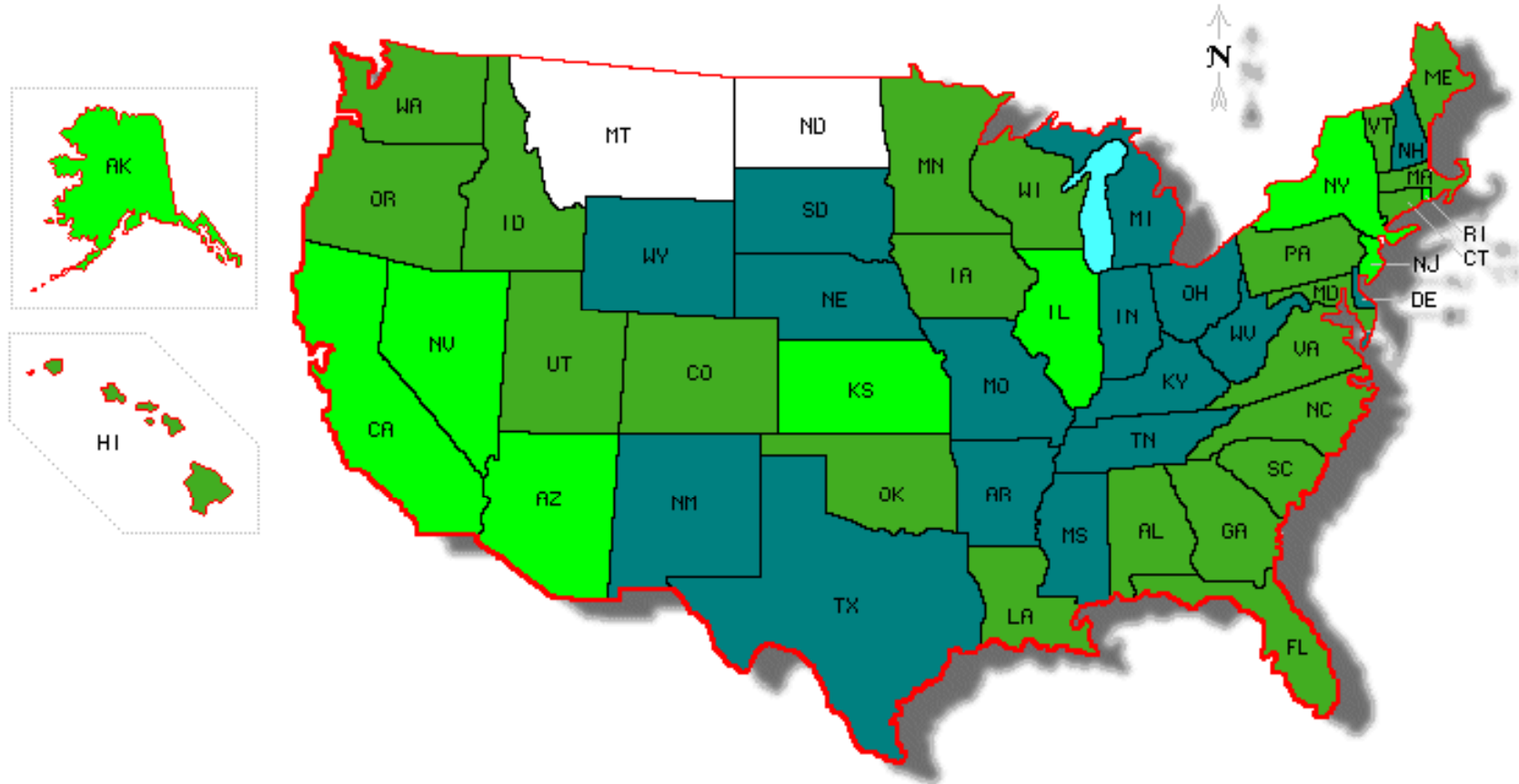


Economy

- Most Pivotal Issue - Affects Everything
- Fiscal Crisis is Vertical & Horizontal
 - government spending up/revenues down
 - local coffers suffer
 - county level unemployment variation
- Poor Economy → Poor Evaluations → Poor Political Climate → Political Changes

State Budget Deficits

- - 30 percent or more
- - 20 to 29 percent
- - 19 percent or less



NOTES:

CBPP Report, 1/29/2010

2-11-10

Trickle Down Effect of State Economy

| Infrastructure | Miscellaneous |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Transportation | ABC System |
| Water & Sewer | Annexation |
| Age Wave | Oil Industry (?) |
| | Local Option Taxes |

Thank You