

# **2002 Mayoral Runoff Survey**

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- It appears that Ray Nagin continues to enjoy a substantial lead over Richard Pennington in the election for Mayor of New Orleans. In spite of the flurry of negative campaigning immediately following Mardi Gras, there does not appear to be very much movement in aggregate voter preferences. These results are similar to Verne Kennedy's results from a survey taken Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> to Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> in which he found Nagin's support to be 48% and Pennington's 29%.
- The most positive news for Ray Nagin is that he has significantly expanded his support from the primary election, while Richard Pennington's support has increased much less.
- As we would expect from the primary election results, preferences are related to race, with white voters overwhelmingly favoring Nagin and African American voters evenly divided. The number of undecided among black voters is particularly high, 35%, indicating the difficulty some are having making a decision.

**Vote for Mayor**  
(All Registered Voters)

|            | All | Blacks | Whites |
|------------|-----|--------|--------|
| Pennington | 25% | 33%    | 12%    |
| Nagin      | 44  | 32     | 67     |
| Undecided  | 31  | 35     | 21     |
| N          | 453 | 279    | 162    |

- The high number of undecided, both overall and among African Americans, probably portends a lower than normal turnout in the runoff, as was the case in the primary.
- Among those most likely to vote in the runoff, Nagin's lead expands to 23%. Using a smaller sample of likely voters always creates a more upscale electorate, and it is these voters who favor Nagin.

**Vote for Mayor**  
(Likely Voters)

|            | All | Blacks | Whites |
|------------|-----|--------|--------|
| Pennington | 28% | 37%    | 11%    |
| Nagin      | 51  | 39     | 75     |
| Undecided  | 21  | 24     | 14     |
| N          | 320 | 198    | 114    |

Likely voters are those individuals who can identify the candidate (if any) for whom they voted in the primary election. These voters comprise 71% of our total sample.

- Ray Nagin appears to have benefited from the numerous endorsements he has received from the other candidates in the primary election. Among those who voted for a candidate other than Nagin or Pennington in the primary, 49% indicate they intend to vote for Nagin in the runoff election. At the same time, Richard Pennington has received very little support (14%) from other candidates' voters.

- This is not to say that candidates have "delivered" their supporters to Nagin. Rather, we believe it is the accumulation of endorsements that has helped other primary candidates' voters make a decision for Nagin in the runoff.
- Also contributing to the Nagin lead is the "softness" of some of Pennington's support. Pennington is holding on to 77% of those who said they voted for him in the primary, while Nagin is retaining 91%.

**Vote for Mayor by Primary Election Vote**  
(All Registered Voters)

|            | Pennington | Nagin | All Others | DK/RF |
|------------|------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Pennington | 77%        | 0     | 14%        | 9%    |
| Nagin      | 7          | 91    | 49         | 12    |
| Undecided  | 16         | 9     | 37         | 79    |
| N          | 96         | 115   | 110        | 51    |

**Black Voter Analysis**

- On of the most striking aspects of this election is the division of African American vote preferences based upon socio-economic status. Black voters with a high school or less education favor Pennington over Nagin by nearly two to one, but black voters with a college degree favor Nagin over Pennington by nearly three to one. A similar pattern exists when examining African Americans of various income levels.
- This status division among blacks may indicate a growing potential for economic differences to characterize elections in New Orleans in the future. **The economic division among black voters is comparable to the racial division in the sample as a whole, both averaging approximately 28%.**
- African American voters in New Orleans are more cynical about government in City Hall than they were four years ago, and this cynicism is benefiting Ray Nagin. Seventy-one percent of the blacks we interviewed said that City Hall is run by a few interests, compared to 52% four years ago. Part of this is the normal distrust of government that we would observe anywhere in America. Another part is simply economic frustration and disappointment. But some of the increase may be a result of the patronage allegations that have characterized the last few years of this administration.

**Vote for Mayor By Education**  
(Black Voters Only)

|            | High School or Less | Some College | College Degrees |
|------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Pennington | 43%                 | 30%          | 17%             |
| Nagin      | 23                  | 32           | 48              |
| Undecided  | 34                  | 38           | 35              |
| N          | 123                 | 77           | 77              |

### Vote for Mayor By Income

(Black Voters Only)

|            | Less than<br>\$40,000 | \$41,000 - \$80,000 | More than<br>\$81,000 |
|------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Pennington | 48%                   | 19%                 | 10%                   |
| Nagin      | 21                    | 50                  | 65                    |
| Undecided  | 31                    | 31                  | 25                    |
| N          | 107                   | 62                  | 20                    |

### Vote for Mayor by Confidence in City Government

(Black Voters Only)

|            | Run by Few Interests | Run for Benefit of All |
|------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Pennington | 29%                  | 47%                    |
| Nagin      | 38                   | 18                     |
| Undecided  | 32                   | 35                     |
| N          | 199                  | 49                     |

### Confidence in City Government, 1997 and 2002

(Black Voters Only)

|                          | 1997 | 2002 |
|--------------------------|------|------|
| Run by Few Big Interests | 52%  | 71%  |
| Run for Benefit of All   | 39   | 17   |
| N                        | 452  | 279  |

### Profile of Undecided

- Because the undecided voters constitute such a large proportion of the survey, it is worthwhile to take a look at who they are. The most obvious point is that 58% of the undecided voted for a candidate other than Pennington or Nagin. Beyond that, this group is more female and more black than the sample as a whole.

N = 140

66% Female

70% Black

58% Voted for another candidate in the primary

## **Sample Information**

N= 453 Registered Voters

Dates of Interviewing: February 14 - 19, 2002

Racial Distribution:

White 35%

Black 63%

Refused 2%

Gender Distribution:

Female 58%

Male 42%

Sampling error: +/- 4.6%