

# 2002 United States Senate Runoff Survey



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## *Survey Research Center*

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## Vote for Senate

	Total	White	Black
Landrieu	44%	31%	75%
Terrell	43	56	10
Undecided	13	13	15
(n)	700	497	203

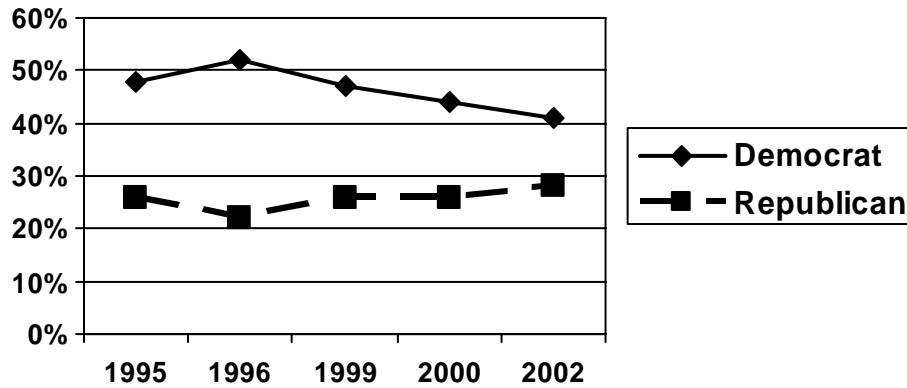
- The race for the U.S. Senate seat is now a dead heat with Landrieu and Terrell separated by only one percentage point in a cross-section of Louisiana registered voters. As expected, Landrieu holds a commanding lead among African American voters, and Terrell is favored by a majority of white voters. As is often the case, the outcome will hinge on a combination of African American turnout and the percent of the white vote Landrieu is able to obtain.

### Vote for Senate by Party Identification (white voters only)

	Democrat	Independent	Republican
Landrieu	59%	31%	10%
Terrell	23	52	83
Undecided	18	17	7
(n)	143	124	192

- Among white voters, as expected, the partisans favor their candidate. However, the white Independents, the “swing voters”, favor Terrell by a large margin.
- There are both long-term and short-term forces working in favor of Suzie Terrell. The long term force is the decline in Democratic identification among white voters in Louisiana. Aside from the temporary increase in Democratic identification accompanying the Clinton landslide in 1996, Democrats have been gradually losing identifiers throughout Mary Landrieu’s term of office.
- The short term forces are the results of the 2002 election and the popularity of President Bush. **This survey and this election are very unusual in that they occur after the national election outcome is known. Thus, the wave of Republican victories and the stories of the Democratic Party having “lost its message” can and do influence this Louisiana election.**

## Republican and Democratic Identifiers 1995-2002



- One effect is the increase in Republican identifiers from 26% in 2000 to 28% in 2002. This increase is probably a temporary “bump” similar to the Democratic “bump” in 1996. But even though this increase may be temporary, it may be enough to help Suzie Terrell in a close election. Running after the national election allows her to ride the wave of pro-Republican enthusiasm.

### Vote for Senate by Approval of the President (white voters only)

	Strongly Approves of Bush	Approves of Bush	Disapproves of Bush	Strongly Disapproves of Bush
Landrieu	12%	56%	64%	72%
Terrell	77	29	22	7
Undecided	11	15	14	21
(n)	305 (61%)	88 (18%)	36	40

- The President enjoys a 66% approval rating in Louisiana among all registered voters, and a 79% approval rating among white registered voters. International threat in combination with domestic victories contributes to these high numbers. The intensity of Bush approval among white voters is unusual; sixty-one percent say that they “strongly approve” of the President. This may be why a majority of white Independents are supporting Terrell.

**Vote for Senate by Age  
(white voters only)**

	18-25	26-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Landrieu	36%	32%	24%	29%	34%	35%
Terrell	53	52	63	61	50	49
Undecided	11	16	13	10	16	16
(n)	45	85	102	97	74	89

- Middle aged white voters favor Terrell more than older and younger white voters. These middle aged white voters are more Republican than the older white voters. However, Terrell still receives a majority of the support of whites in all age groups except those over 65.

**Vote for Senate by Perception of the National Economy  
(white voters only)**

	Economy Got Worse	Economy Stayed the Same	Economy Got Better
Landrieu	38%	25%	17%
Terrell	47	59	79
Undecided	15	16	4
(n)	244	176	70

- Landrieu also has areas of strength. First, she enjoys the solid support of the African American voters. If she can keep black turnout close to white turnout, she can win with a little over a third of the white vote.
- Where are Landrieu's strengths among white voters? Among white voters 49% think that the national economy has gotten worse over the past year. There has been much discussion about how the national Democratic Party has not utilized this issue, and the Louisiana election is no exception. Landrieu has potential for growth among those who are worried about the national economy.

**Vote for Senate by Support for the Tax Cut  
(white voters only)**

	Tax Cut Should Permanent	Haven't Thought about it	Tax cut Should not be Permanent
Landrieu	17%	30%	44%
Terrell	75	49	46
Undecided	8	21	10
(n)	142	202	152

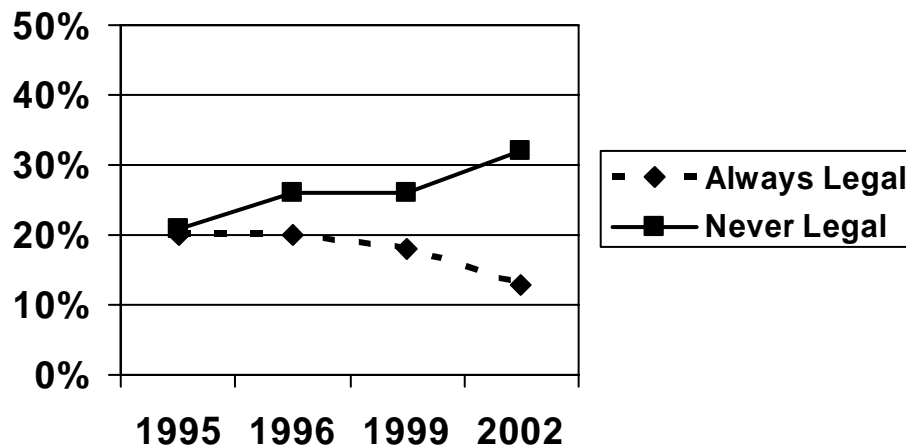
- A second area of strength for Landrieu is among whites who are worried about the negative impact of permanent tax cuts. The potential threat to Social Security helps Landrieu because white senior citizens are the most Democratic (and least Republican) age group.

**Vote for Senate by Support for Abortion  
(white voters only)**

	Always Legal	Sometimes Legal	Never Legal
Landrieu	55%	31%	21%
Terrell	31	58	61
Undecided	14	11	17
(n)	65	242	161

- How is the abortion issue affecting this election? First, almost no candidate, certainly no moderate candidate, wants abortion front and center, but interest groups and reporters will inevitably inject this issue, especially in a conservative state like Louisiana. Pro-choice white voters are solidly in support of Landrieu, but the moderates and strictly pro-life people support Terrell.
- Unfortunately for Landrieu, the trend in abortion attitudes during her term has been an increase in the proportion of Louisiana registered voters opposed to abortion under any circumstances.

**Abortion Attitudes 1995-2002  
(Blacks and Whites Combined)**



Dates of Interviewing: November 24-27, 2002

Total Number of Respondents 700

% Black in Sample 29%

% Female in Sample 55%

Sampling: Error  $\pm 3.7\%$