



Idaho Election Pulse Survey of 50+ Voters

May, 2010

The report was compiled by AARP Idaho. **All media inquiries can be directed to (208) 855-4004.**

Introduction: People age 50 and older are the largest voting population across the nation and in Idaho, where in 2008, 93% of registered voters 50 plus cast a ballot in the state. This election year, the majority (56%) of Idaho voters are expected to be 50 plus. Roughly 90% of all AARP members are registered to vote.

AARP Idaho recently conducted the following pulse survey to find out what's on 50 plus voters' minds this election year, and what issues they want the candidates to address, both on the campaign trail and once elected to office. Those surveyed were asked to rank a few priority issues and add any that weren't included in the questions. AARP will include the issues in candidate voter guides for the Governor's race and every state legislative race in Idaho.

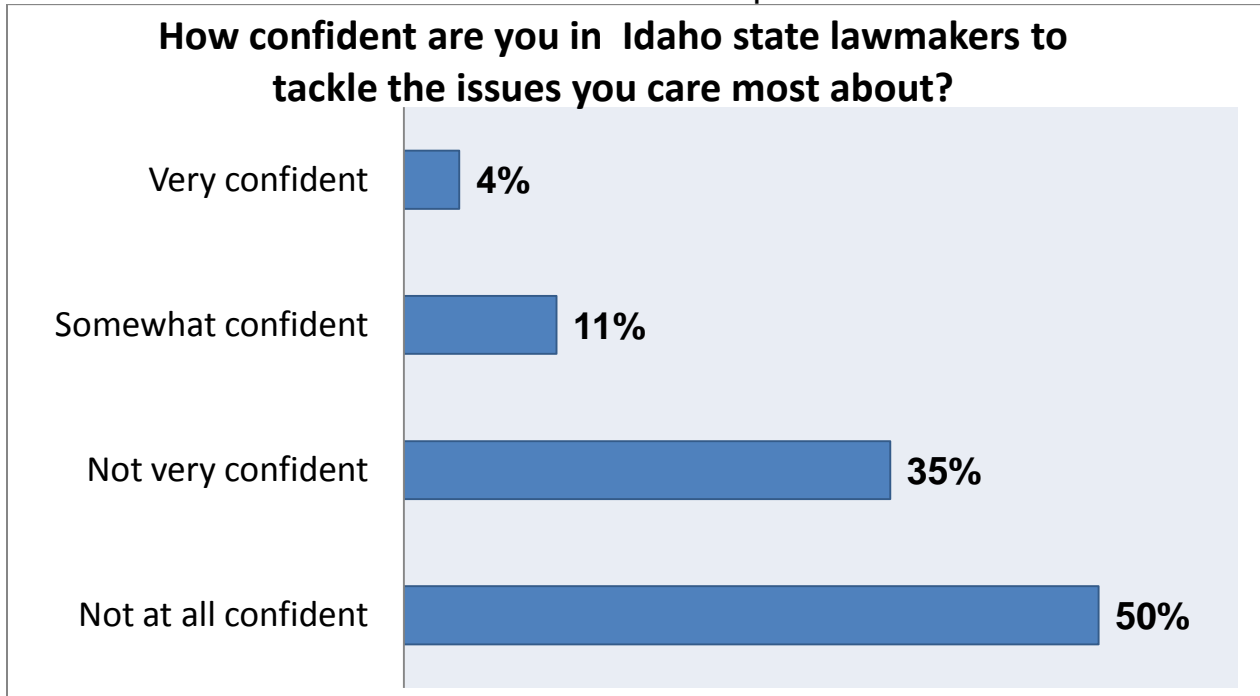
Methodology: The results are based on 531 responses to an email survey sent by AARP Idaho to members across the state - responses were compiled between April 28th and May 17th.

Idaho Survey-in-brief:

- 85% of those surveyed report they are not very confident or not at all confident in Idaho State Lawmakers to tackle the issues the respondent cares most about.
- The top issue respondents want to hear from the candidates on is how they'll work to resolve Idaho's budget problems, followed by where the candidates stand on ensuring health care workers honor living wills and advanced directives (and whether they'll correct Idaho's new Health Worker's Conscience law to address this issue).
- A surprising third priority issue emerged – the majority of those surveyed (55%) want to know where candidates stand on taking big campaign contributions from special interests out of Idaho politics through a number of measures.
- AARP members were disappointed in the massive cuts to education spending this year, and want candidates to commit to fixing the problem and restoring the budgets.

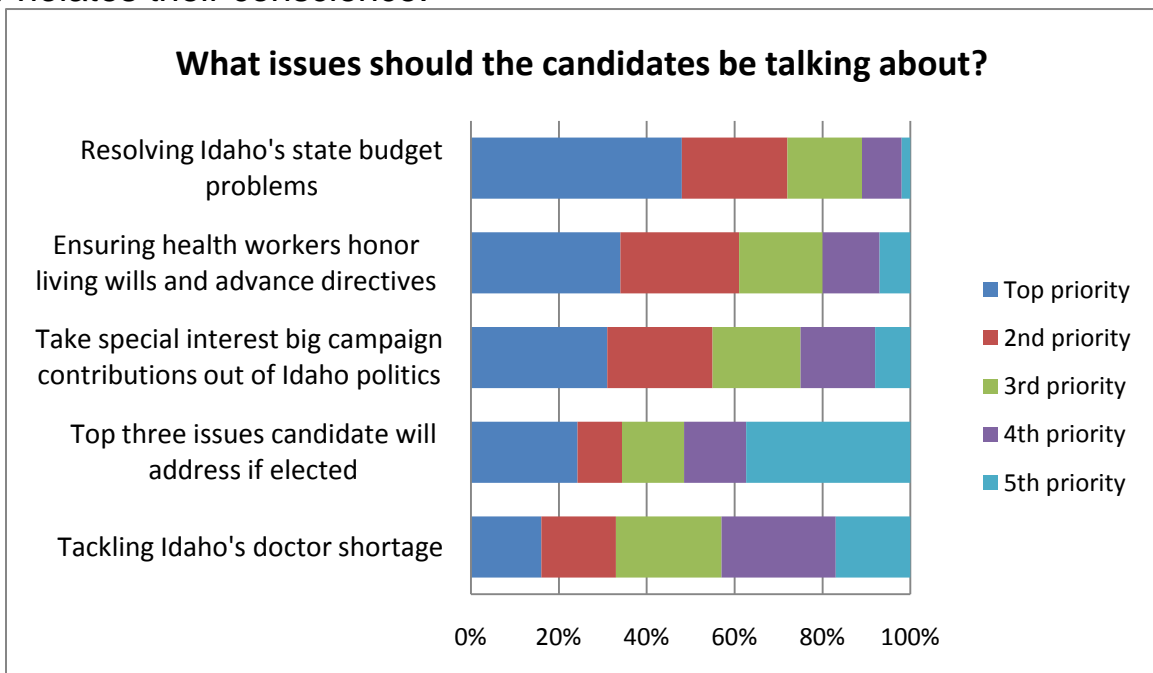
Detailed findings:

Crisis of Confidence in Idaho State Lawmakers: Over 8 in 10 AARP members surveyed said they had little to no confidence in state lawmakers to tackle the issues that mattered most to the respondent.

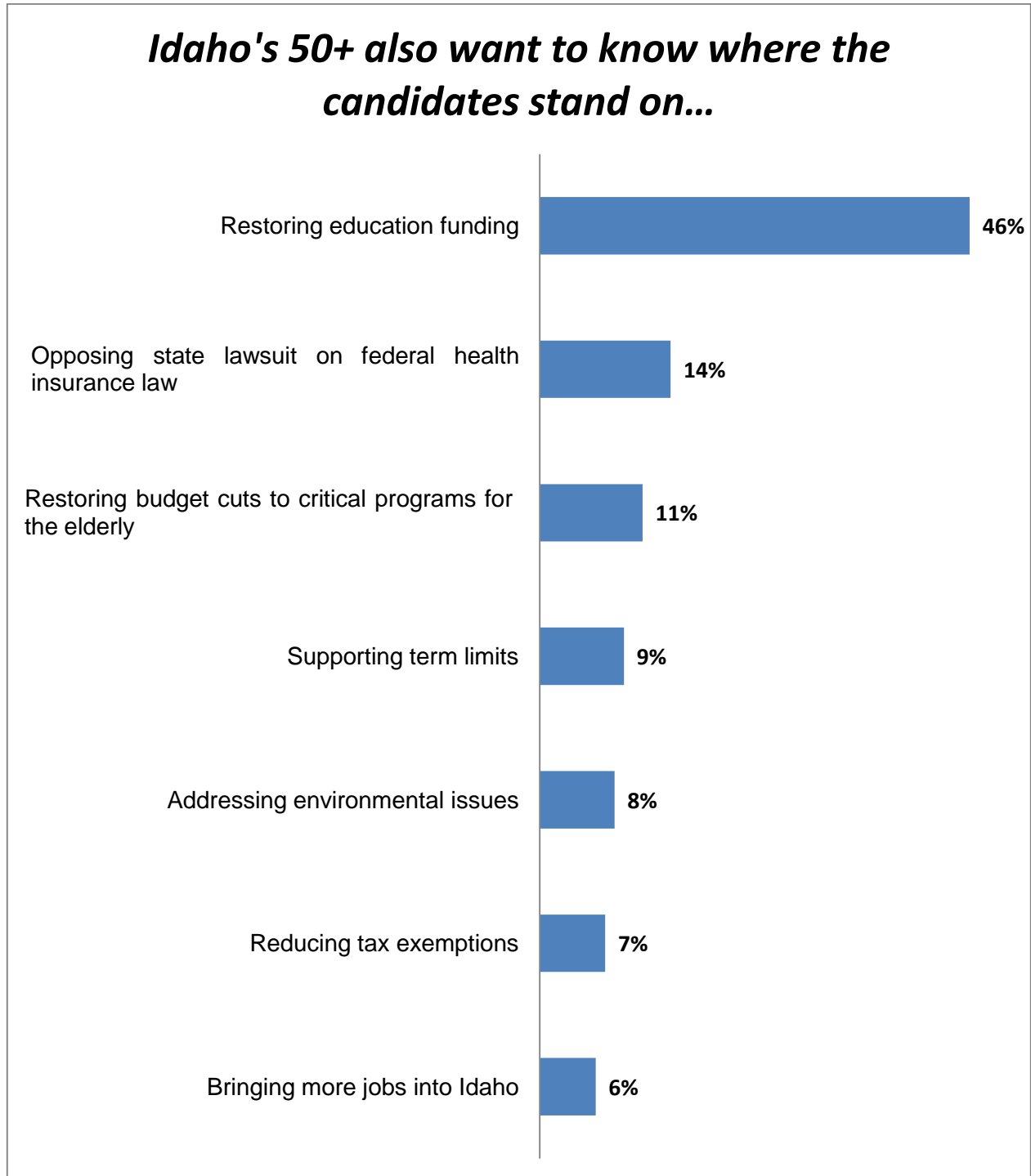


What issues AARP members want to hear from the candidates on:

When AARP members were asked to prioritize the issues they want the candidates to address, how they'll resolve Idaho's state budget crisis was a clear front runner, followed by where they stand on ensuring health care workers honor living wills and advance directives – namely repealing the new Idaho law allowing health care workers to refuse to provide end of life care that violates their conscience.



What else we heard: From jobs and tax exemptions to education funding, AARP members in Idaho also named several other issues they'd like the candidates to address on the campaign trail. Here are the top issues and the percentage of respondents who said they wanted to hear the candidates' position on them:



AARP Idaho State Survey: April 28th – May 17th 2010

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E-survey

N=531 sampling error \pm 3%

AARP members in Idaho age 50 and older

Dear AARP Member –

Election season in Idaho and across the nation is here! With races for Congress, Idaho Governor and every state legislative position in the state underway– there's a lot going on and you're probably already hearing a lot from the candidates. **Now they need to hear from you!**

They are asking for your vote – ask them where they stand on the issues that matter most to you. And with that in mind, here's your chance: AARP is undertaking a statewide effort to find out where each candidate for Governor and the Idaho State Legislature stands on YOUR **PRIORITY ISSUES**; we'll include their positions in voter guides for every race in Idaho.

How do we know what questions and issues to ask them about? **They'll be coming from you – that's right, we're counting on you to tell us what issues you want to hear from the candidates about.** Below are just some of the issues we've heard already from AARP members across the state - *if we're missing something, please let us know!*

Please respond by May 14 so we can contact the candidates and complete the voter guides in plenty of time for the election in November.

First a quick question: How confident are you in Idaho State Lawmakers to tackle the issues you care the most about? (Please put an **X** next to the answer that best describes how your answer).

N=531

- 4% Very confident
- 11% Somewhat confident
- 35% Not very confident
- 50% Not at all confident

Now, on to the voter guide questions: Please rank the following issues in order of priority using 1 (highest priority) to 5 (lowest priority), and be sure to add any issues at the bottom we've missed and that you would like candidates to address.

____ Candidate's top three priorities – what are the top three issues they're going to address if elected?

N=291

Priority Rank	1	2	3	4
	24.39%	10.3%	14.08%	14.43%

____ Budget - How they'll work to resolve Idaho's worsening state budget problems (This past year Idaho had one of the worst budget years in recent history. As more people lose jobs, they need help with the basic necessities, but massive funding cuts to critical programs and services left state agencies unable to help the growing number of people in need, while Idaho – **we think Idaho can do better**).

N=503

Priority Rank	1	2	3	4
	48.1%	24.25%	16.5%	9.54%

____ Your rights - Where they stand on ensuring health care workers honor your living will, advance directive or other end of life care and treatment instruction (This year, Idaho lawmakers passed and the Governor allowed to become law, the Health Workers Conscience bill, which included language allowing any health care worker--from doctors to nurses to dieticians--to refuse to honor your advance directive, living will or any other end of life care when it violates their "conscience." AARP fought to get the language that would deny you your rights out of the bill. But despite thousands of people across the state who contacted lawmakers to remove the end of life care language, the Conscience bill became law. **In the coming year they can correct this issue. We want to make sure they do.**)

N= 499

Priority Rank	1	2	3	4
	33.66%	26.85%	19.43%	12.82%

____ Taking big special interest money out of Idaho politics - Do they support placing limits on out-of-state and out-of-district campaign contributions, which in some cases can be as big as a special interest's bankroll, and giving Idaho voters their voice and influence back at the Capitol? (Large cash contributions from special interests and big business flow through Idaho politics every year, and often times it gives them a louder voice and more influence at the Capitol. Idaho is one of only 13 states that have no limits on how much money can be given to political parties. There are no limits on campaign contributions to Political Action Committees and no restrictions on how many contributions a candidate can accept from special interest groups outside their district--or even outside the state. Idaho **State lawmakers should represent your interests not the special interests.**)

N=498

Priority Rank	1	2	3	4	5
	30.72%	23.69%	19.87	17.06%	8.63%

_____ **Doctor shortage - Addressing Idaho's doctor shortage and ensuring older patients can get to see their doctor when they need to.** (Idaho does not have enough doctors: We have one of the lowest physician-to-patient ratios in the nation. The small numbers of doctors we do have are increasingly refusing new Medicare patients. Nearly 40% of the doctors in Idaho are at retirement age, and we have no new ones coming in to the state to replace them. The doctor problem needs solutions now before it gets even worse).

N=491

Priority Rank

1
16.08%

2
16.7%

3
24.23%

4
26.27%

Your city: _____ (so we know the issues that matter in which parts of the state).

What'd we miss? Let us know here:

N=122

Opposition to Idaho's lawsuit on Fed. Health Care Law: 13.9%

Opposition to education cuts: 45.9%

Support term limits: 9.01%

Jobs: 5.7%

Opposition to budget cuts to programs and services for the elderly: 10.65%

Environmental issues: 8.19%

Reduce tax exemptions: 6.55%

Thank you for taking the time to make your voice heard. Once the candidates have answered your questions and we've compiled the voter guides, we'll send you a notice to go on-line and learn how their priorities match yours.

Sincerely,
AARP Idaho