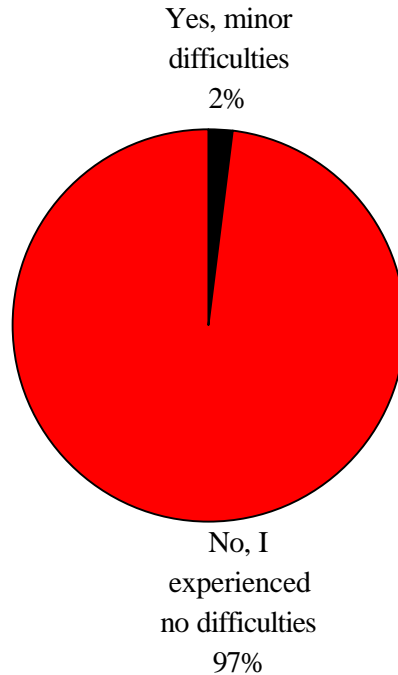


Georgians Express Confidence in New Electronic Voting System

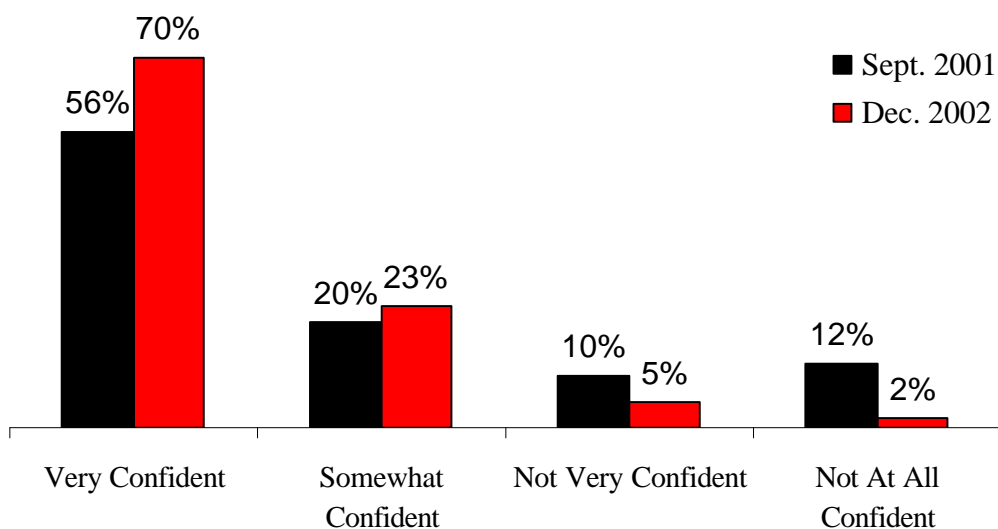
The people of Georgia are clearly pleased with the new electronic voting machines that went into use in the November 2002 elections. Of those saying that they voted in 2002, nearly all (97 percent) reported no difficulties in operating the new system.

Did you experience any difficulties using the new electronic voting machines in this most recent election?



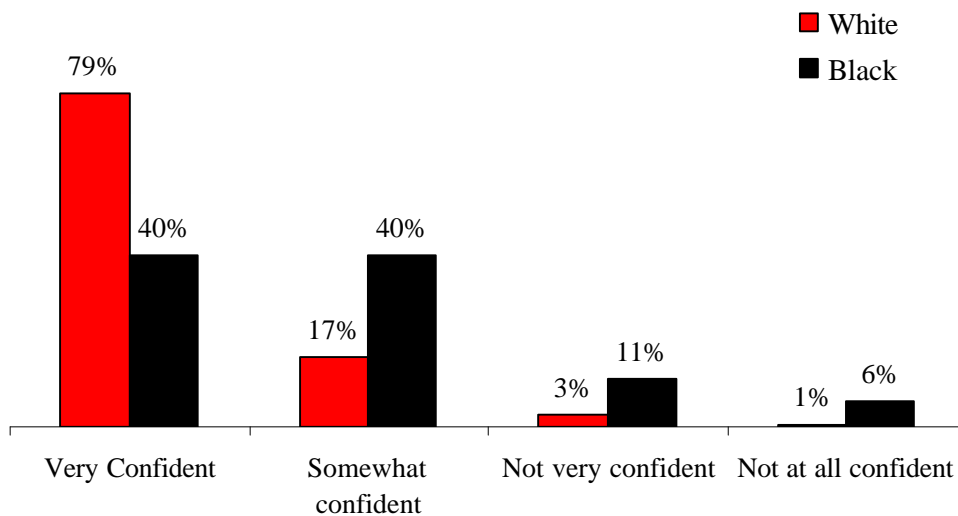
Georgians' confidence in the voting system has increased since the introduction of the new electronic voting machines. The majority of Georgians (70 percent) report being very confident that their votes were accurately counted in the 2002 elections. This is a sharp increase from September 2001 when only 56 percent of Georgians reported being very confident.

How confident are you that your vote was accurately counted?



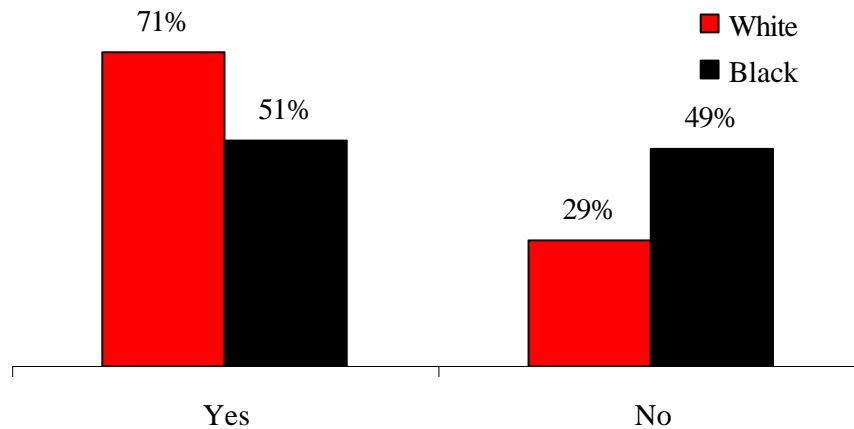
While overall confidence in the voting system may be high, there are sharp variations depending on race and level of education. Ninety-eight percent of Georgians with a college degree responded as either very confident or somewhat confident compared with 86 percent of those without a college degree. Level of confidence also varies depending on race. Seventy-nine percent of Whites reported being very confident that their vote was accurately counted compared with only 40 percent of Blacks.

How confident are you that your vote was accurately counted?



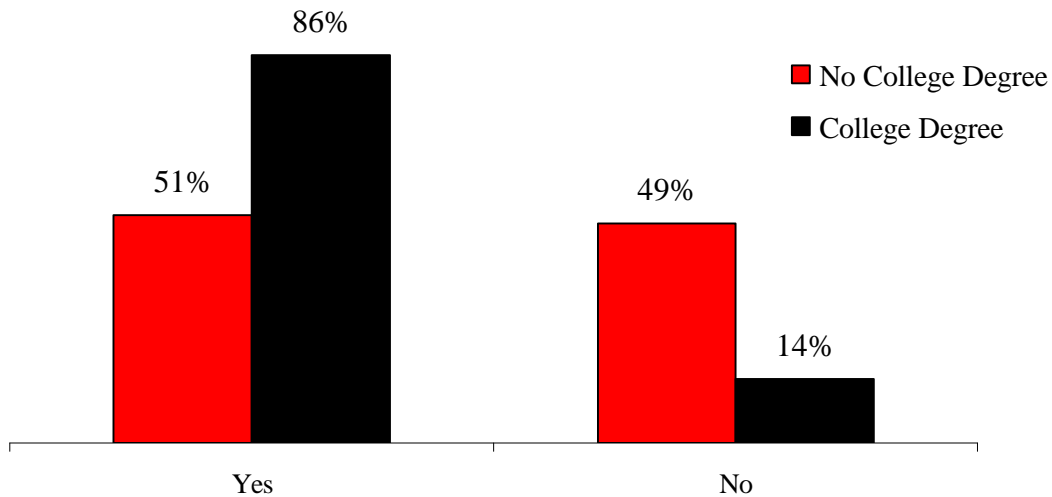
In addition to gaps in voter confidence, there are also large gaps in self-reported voter turnout by race and education. Seventy-one percent of White respondents reported having voted in November 2002, compared with 51 percent of Black respondents. It is important to note, however, that self-reported voter turnout usually overreported. Actual voter turnout rates are slightly lower with 57 percent of Whites having voted and 48 percent of Blacks. This trend among self-reported voter rates is to be expected because it is more socially desirable to have voted than to have not voted.

Only about one-third of eligible voters vote in any given election. What about you, did you vote last month?



In addition, those with a college degree are much more likely to vote than are those without a college degree. Slightly more than 8 in 10 college-educated respondents (86 percent) stated that they voted in the 2002 elections, whereas only 51 percent of those persons without a college degree did the same.

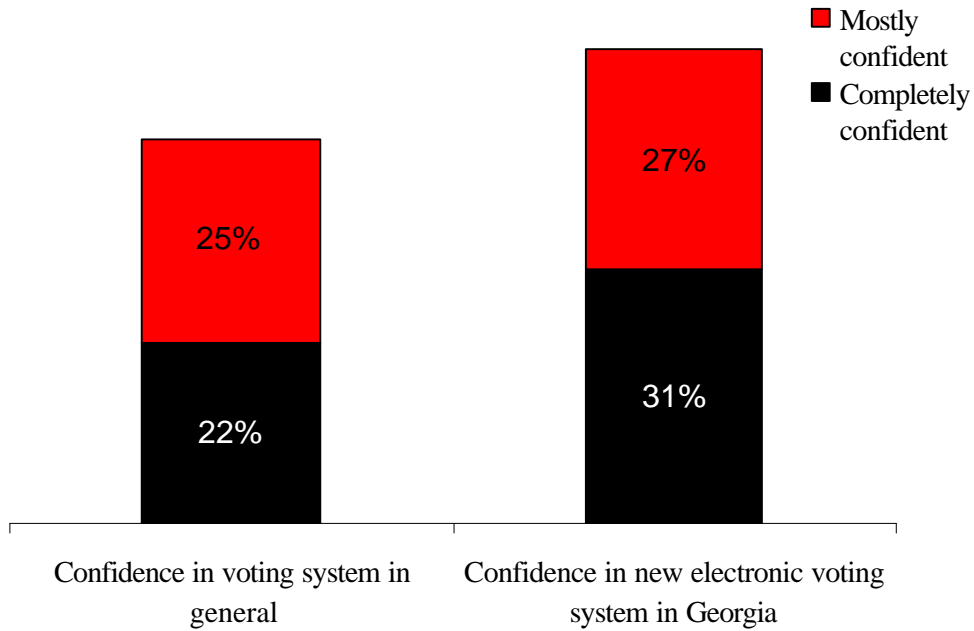
Only about one-third of eligible voters vote in any given election. What about you? Did you vote last month?



The people of Georgia clearly believe the new voting system is effective. We asked Georgians, “How confident are you that the problems with the system for recording and counting votes experienced in the 2000 Presidential election have now been resolved?” This question was intended to measure general confidence in voting systems across the country and made no mention of the state of Georgia or its new voting system. We then asked respondents, “How confident are you that the new equipment for casting and counting votes in Georgia will prevent the sort of problems that Florida experienced in the 2000 Presidential election?”

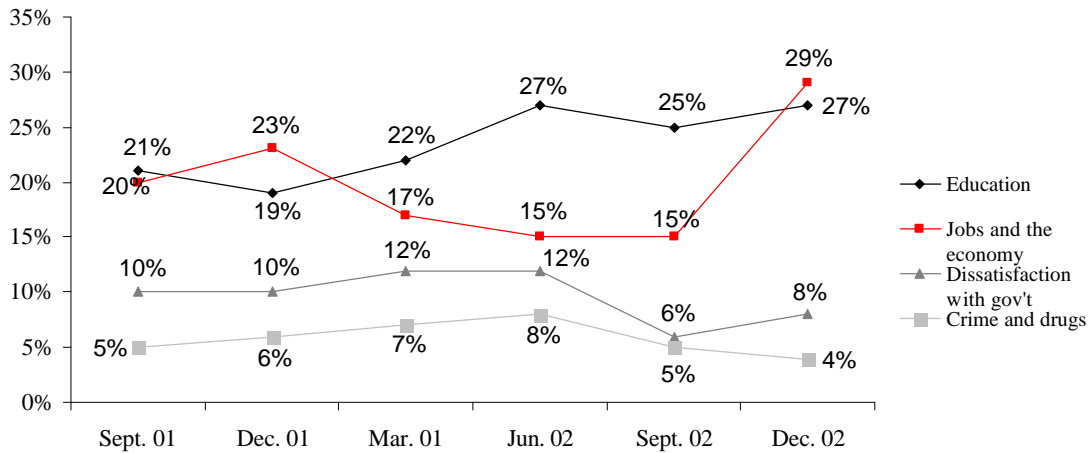
When we compared the two questions to one another we found that Georgians have more faith in the state’s new electronic voting than they do voting systems in general. Overall, Georgians are more likely to express confidence in the state’s ability than in the ability of the rest of the country to prevent problems similar to those experienced in the 2000 presidential election.

Confidence in voting systems

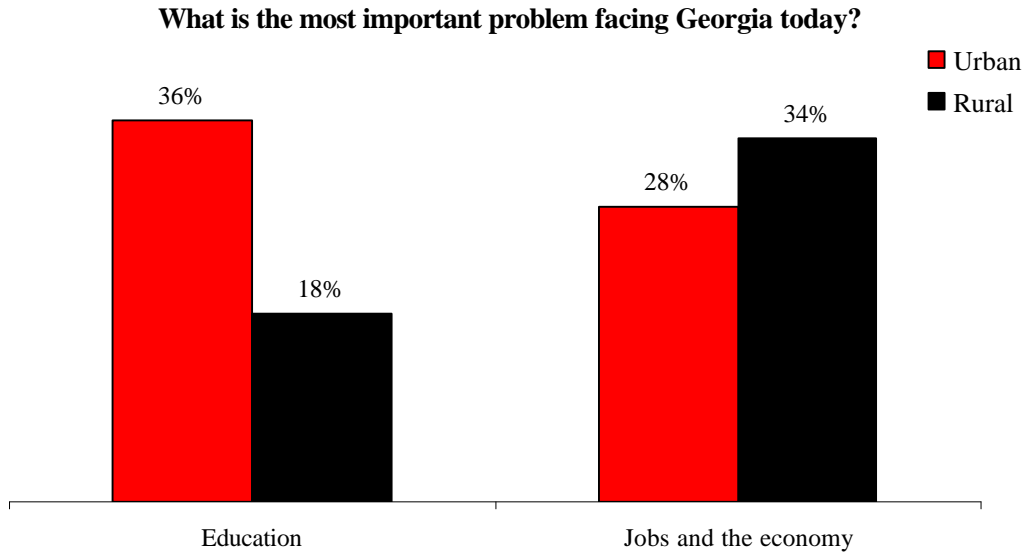


The latest Peach State Poll reveals that voting is not the only issue on Georgians' minds. When asked what the most important problem facing Georgia today is, 29 percent of respondents believe jobs and the economy to be the most important issue. This is a dramatic increase from the 15 percent who believed it to be the most important problem in the previous poll. Education ranks second in level of importance, with 27 percent of the public citing it as the most important problem facing the state.

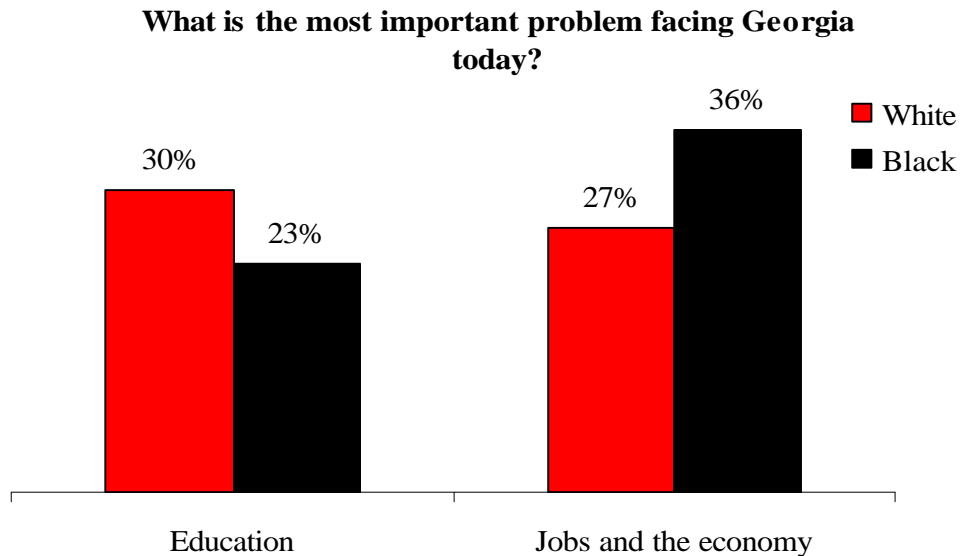
What is the most important problem facing Georgia today?



Georgians living in rural areas tend to be more concerned with the economy while those in urban areas are more troubled by education. For example, of those respondents living in urban areas 35 percent rank education as the single most important problem. However, only 18 percent of those living in rural areas report feeling the same way.

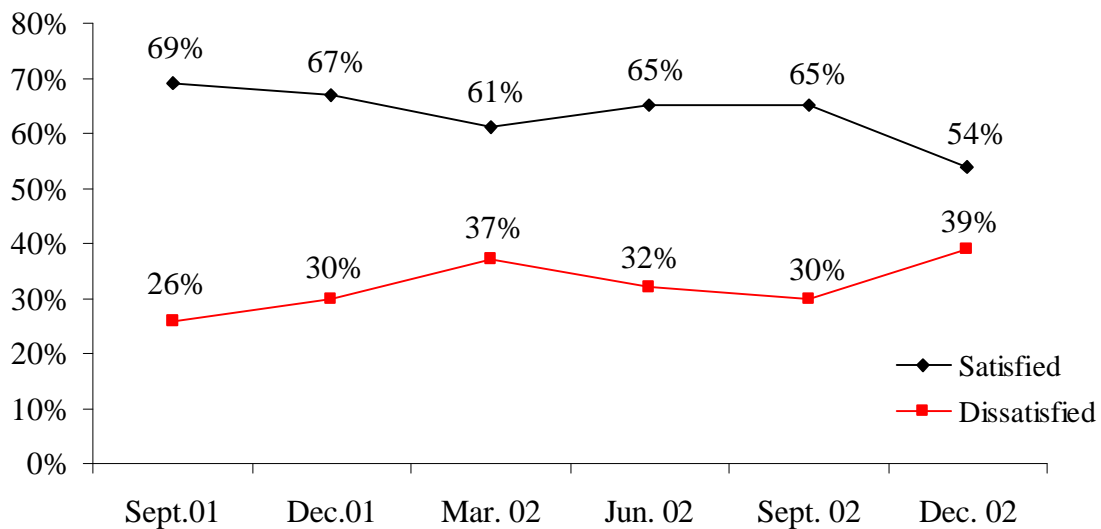


There is also a sizeable gap between what White and Black respondents say is the most important problem facing Georgia. Thirty percent of Whites would rank education as the single most important issue, compared with 23 percent of Blacks. Conversely, 36 percent of Blacks would rank jobs and the economy as the most important issue, compared with 27 percent of Whites.



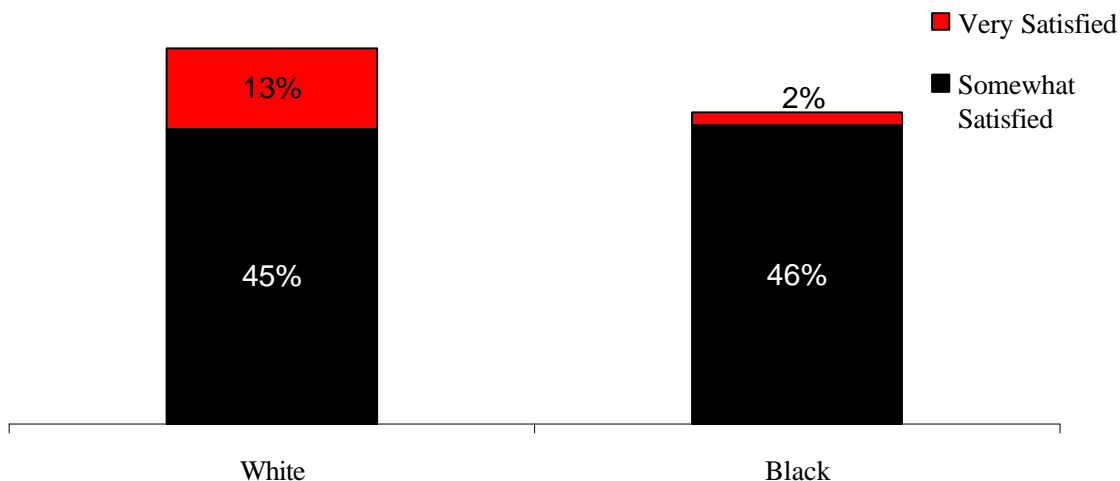
The General mood of Georgians has also changed significantly since the previous Peach State Poll. Overall satisfaction among the public has decreased while dissatisfaction has increased. Fifty-four percent of Georgians say that they are satisfied with the way things are going in Georgia—an 11 percent decrease from the previous poll. These results mirror levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction across the country. According to the Gallop Poll, 40 percent of Americans are satisfied with the way things are going compared with 58 percent who say they are dissatisfied with the way things are going.

In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in Georgia?



On average, Whites are much more likely to report being satisfied than are Blacks. While Whites are as likely to report being somewhat satisfied as Blacks are, there are large differences in the extreme measures. Thirteen percent of Whites report being very satisfied with the way things are going, compared with only 2 percent of Blacks.

In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in Georgia?



The data presented in this report are taken from a Peach State Poll conducted by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government between December 13 and December 21, 2002. The poll included 800 telephone interviews of randomly selected adults in Georgia. For a sample of this size, the margin of error at the 95 percent confidence level is +/- 3.5 percent. Although sampling error is only one source of potential survey error, all precautions have been taken to minimize other sources of error for this survey.

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government, a public service and outreach unit of the University of Georgia, has as part of its mission to provide policymakers with systematic, objective research to inform policy decisions. In accordance with that mission, the Peach State Poll aims to give voice to the public on important policy matters and issues pertaining to political, social, and economic life in Georgia.

For more information, contact Rich Clark at clark@cviog.uga.edu, or 706-542-2736.