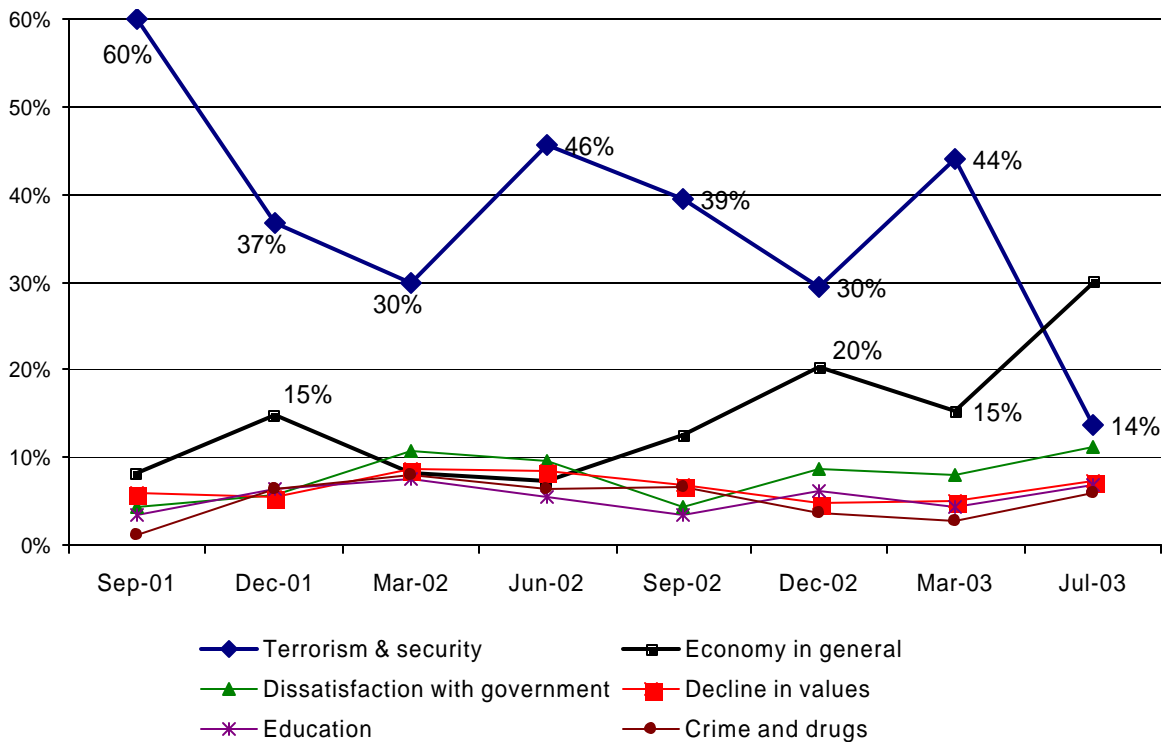


## The Economy Is on Georgia's Mind

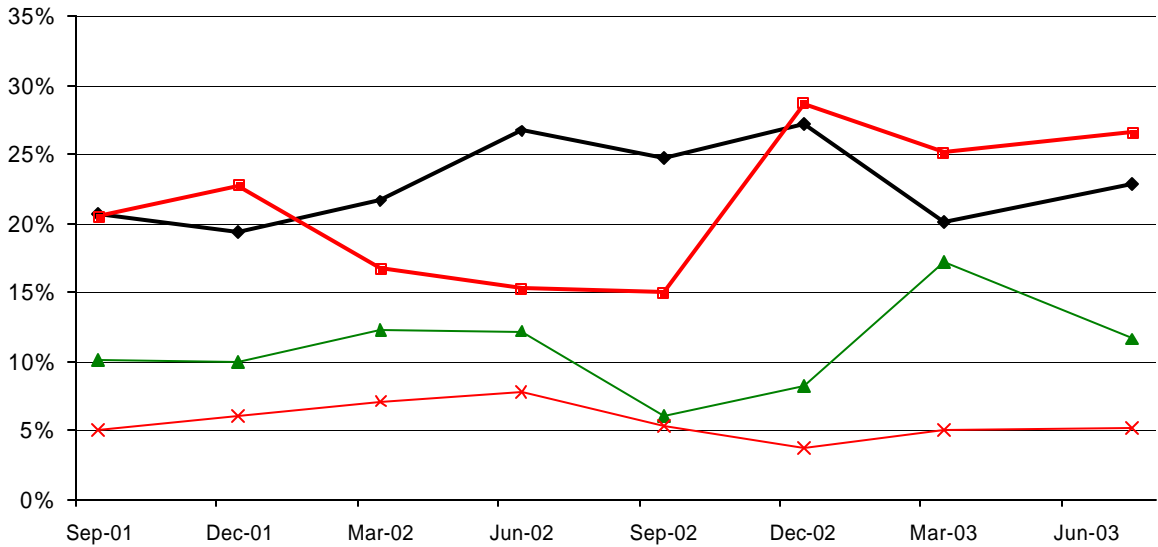
In the Peach State Poll conducted in August 2003, the Georgia public's major concern was the economy. When asked to name the most important problem facing the country, the economy surpassed terrorism as the major concern for the first time since September 2001. Concern about terrorism dropped 30 points from 44 percent in March to only 14 percent in August.

What do you consider the most important problem facing this country, the U.S.A., today?



The economy is also considered the top concern for the state of Georgia. Twenty-seven percent of the public overall—and 35 percent of African-Americans—cite the economy as the most important problem facing the state. For whites, education is running virtually even with the economy as the most important problem (26 percent for education as compared with 25 percent for the economy).

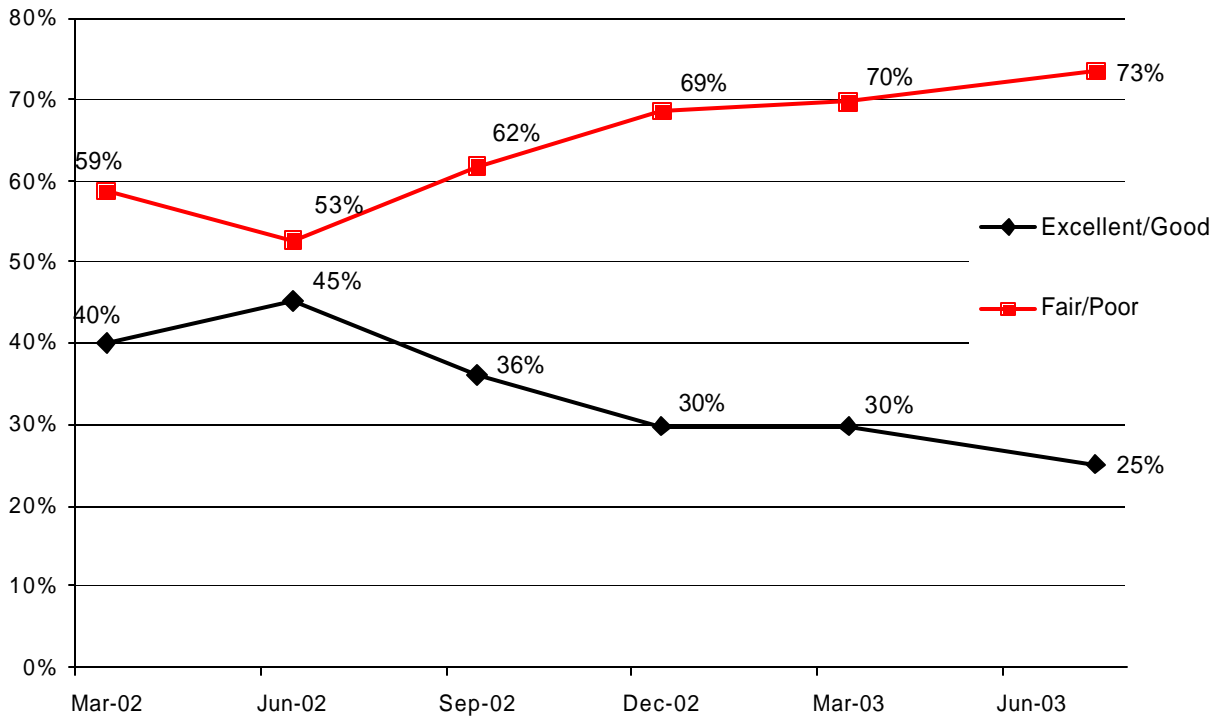
**What is the most important problem facing Georgia today?**



— Education — Jobs and the economy — Dissatisfaction with government — Crime and drugs

Consistent with concerns about the economy, 22 percent of Georgians rated the economy poor, and another 52 percent rated it only fair.<sup>1</sup> Only one in four Georgians rated the economy as either good (23 percent) or excellent (2 percent). The proportion of the public rating the economy as fair to poor has continued to rise since June 2002.

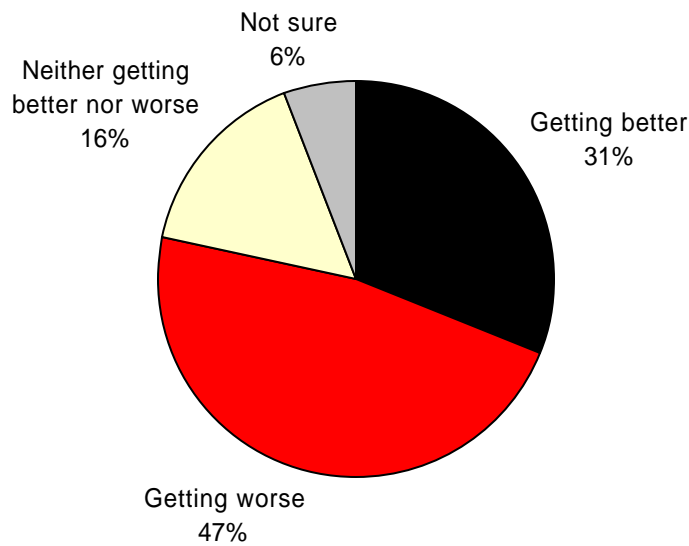
**How would you rate economic conditions in Georgia today?**



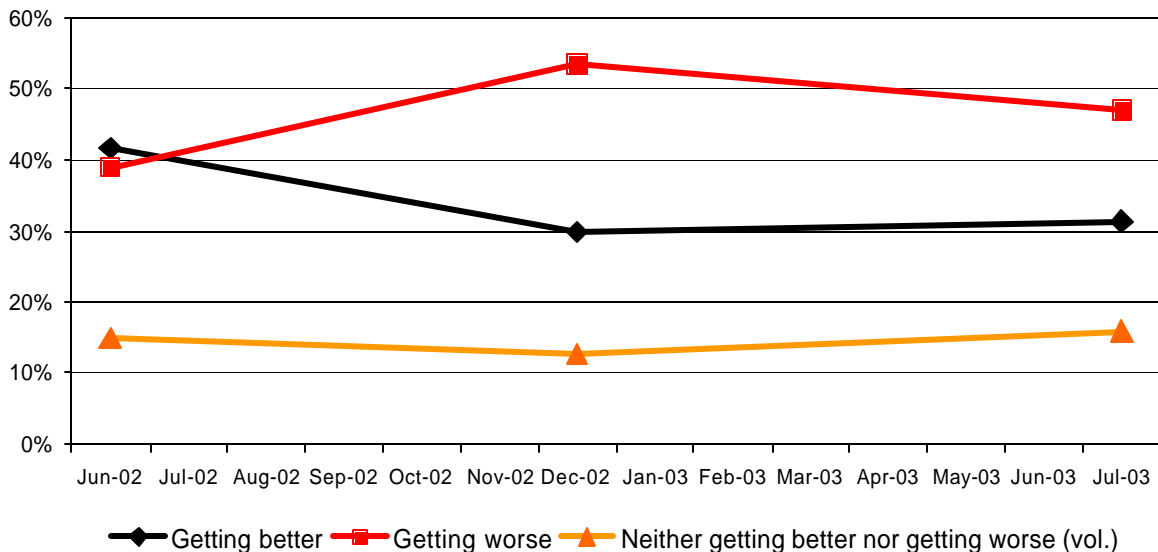
<sup>1</sup> Totals for “fair” and “poor” combined round down to 73 percent, despite the fact that the values for each—calculated separately—round up to 52 percent and 22 percent respectively.

The general public is not optimistic about the state's economic future. A plurality of Georgians (47 percent) say that they expect economic conditions in the state to get worse, while 31 percent say economic conditions are getting better. These numbers show Georgians as slightly less pessimistic than in March 2003, when 53 percent of Georgians said economic conditions were getting worse.

**Do you think economic conditions in the state of Georgia are getting better or getting worse?**



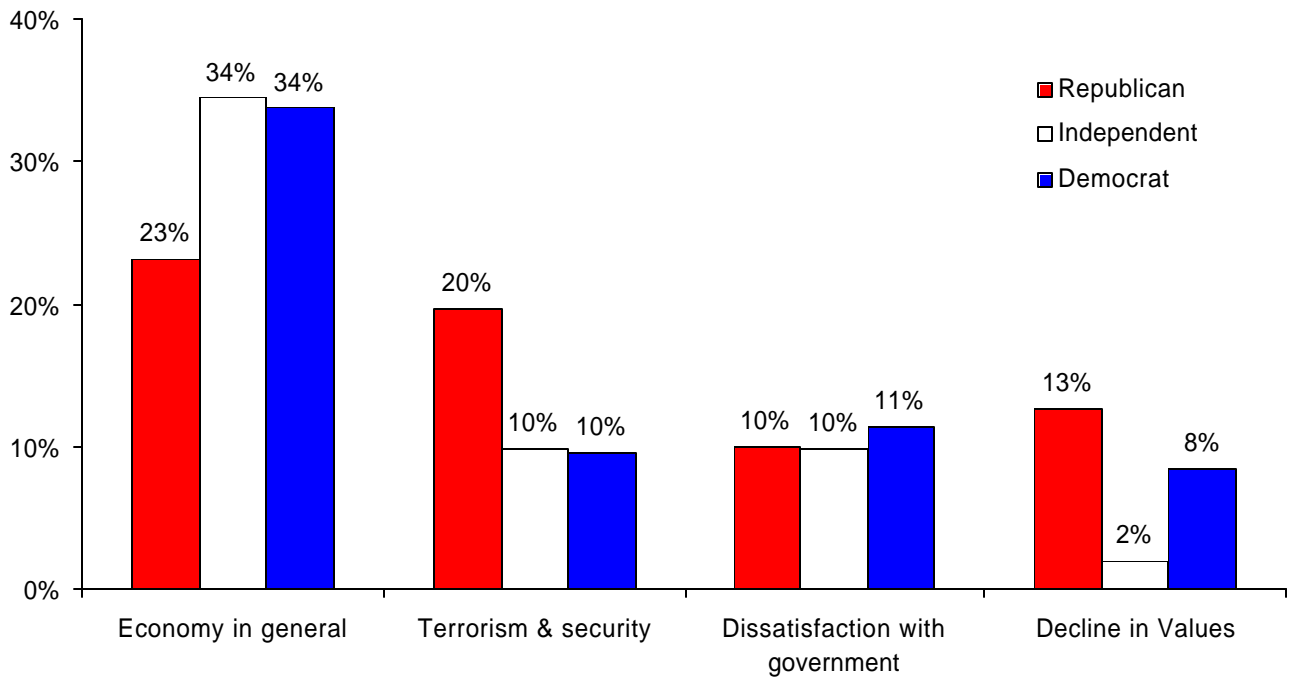
**Do you think economic conditions in the state of Georgia are getting better or getting worse?**



Sixty-two percent of Democrats surveyed say that the economy is getting worse, as compared to only 33 percent of Republicans. It is true that African-Americans—being more likely to be both Democrats and disenchanted with the economy—skew the party differences, but even after controlling for race, Democrats are far more pessimistic about the economy than are Republicans.

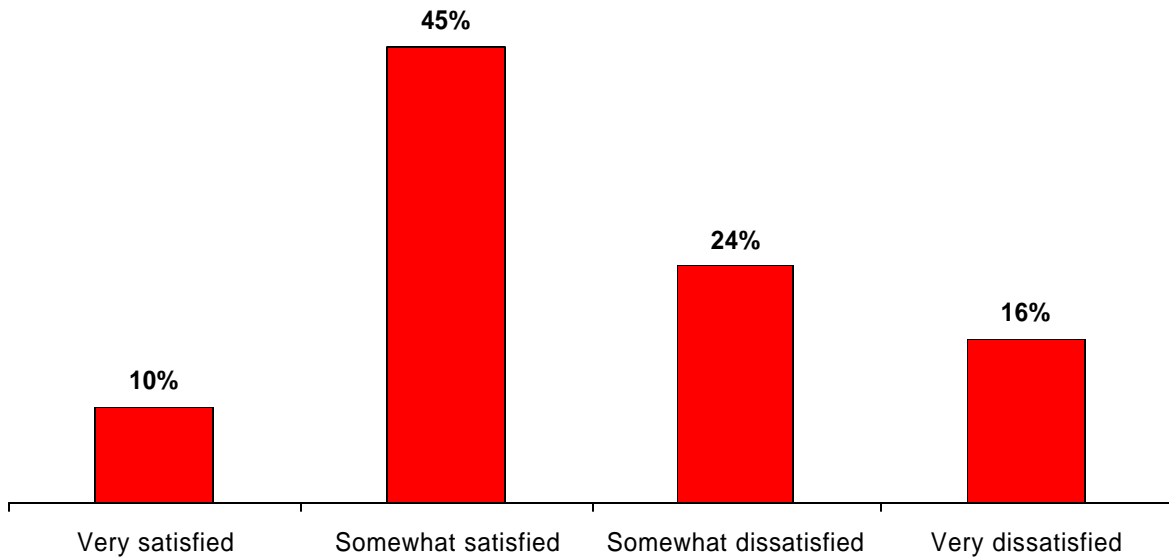
Democrats and Independents are more likely to cite the economy as the most important problem facing the nation than are Republicans. On the other hand, Republicans are about twice as likely to cite terrorism as are other partisans. Another difference between the parties, in respect to issue salience, is that concern for the decline in values is far higher with Republicans (13 percent) than with Democrats (2 percent).

### What do you consider the most important problem facing the United States today?

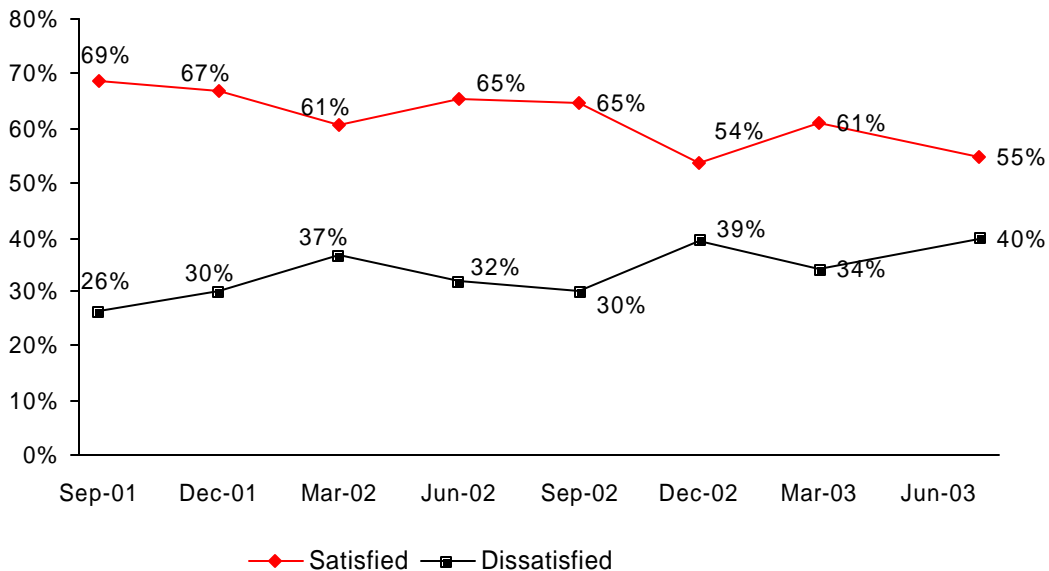


The percent of Georgians satisfied with the way things are going in the state has dropped some (6 percentage points) since March 2003 and dropped considerably (14 percentage points) since the highwater mark for the Peach State Poll in September 2001. Despite concerns about the economy, however, Georgians continue to be more satisfied than dissatisfied with the way things are going in their state.

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



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



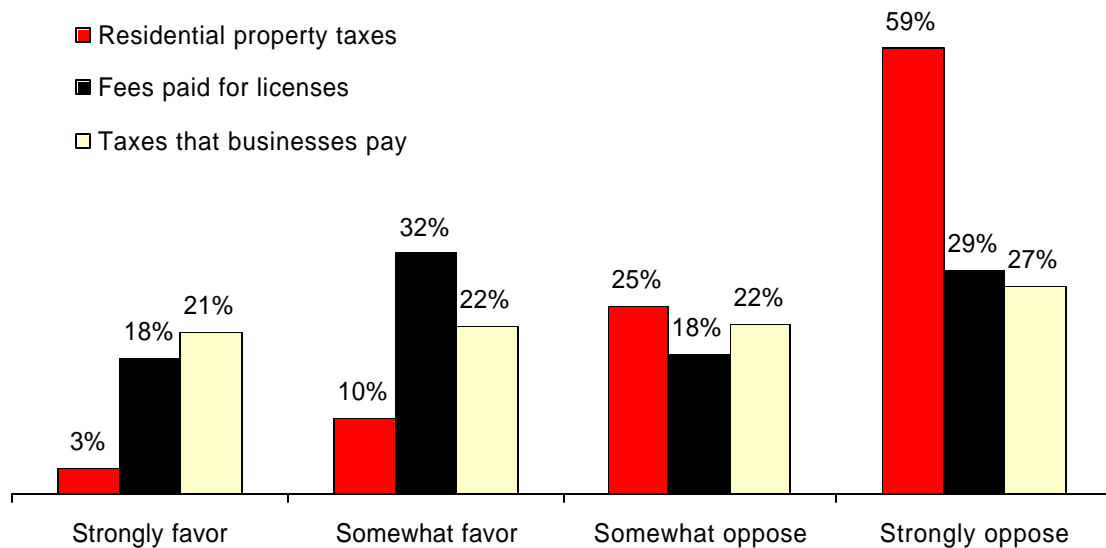
Consistent with the dour feelings about the economy, only one in three Georgians rate their state as either an excellent (6 percent) or good (27 percent) place to find a job. Georgians rate their state highly in cost and availability of housing; 59 percent of the public rate Georgia as either an excellent (16 percent) or good (43 percent) place for finding reasonably priced housing.

**Percent rating Georgia as excellent or good for ...**



The summer 2003 Peach State Poll explored the public's attitudes about revenue generation, given the continued uncertainty in the state's budgetary outlook. The data suggest that higher property taxes are the least preferred means of increasing revenue. This finding does not bode well for local governments who rely on property tax to support government services. Opposition is less strong when considering raising business taxes and fees for licenses; in fact, a slim majority (50 percent) favors raising taxes on businesses to increase revenue.

### Public support or opposition to raising revenue by increasing ...



The data presented in this report are taken from a Peach State Poll conducted by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government between August 8 and August 17, 2003. The poll included 804 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](mailto:clark@cviog.uga.edu), or 706-542-2736.