Introduction

In November and December of 2022, Data for Progress conducted a survey of likely voters nationally to gauge voter support towards state action to address racial disparities, fund public programs, and hold profitable corporations and the wealthy accountable to pay their fair share of taxes. The national survey was then used to estimate opinion at the state level for Virginia using a machine learning model trained on nationally representative survey responses linked to a commercial voter file.

Predicted Policy Support

The survey first examined support or opposition towards state lawmakers spending more on policies that would address racial disparities. We estimate that 62 percent of voters in Virginia support state lawmakers spending more to address racial disparities by a +24-point margin.

Next, the survey looked at attitudes towards public programs like Medicaid and food assistance that are used by low-to-moderate-income families. The survey question provided two statements: 1) that state lawmakers should prioritize funding and access to public programs in order to provide a foundation for low-to-moderate-income parents who are struggling to make ends meet or 2) that state lawmakers should not prioritize funding to these programs because they do more harm than good by having families rely on the government. Our models estimate that 83 percent of voters support funding and access to public programs — like Medicaid and food assistance — in Virginia, by a +66-point margin.

The survey also included several questions regarding tax policies, such as whether or not the level of taxes that profitable corporations and wealthy individuals pay are sufficient. We estimate that 80 percent of voters believe that profitable corporations and wealthy individuals are not paying enough taxes in Virginia. Only 20% of voters believe that profitable corporations and wealthy individuals already pay enough in state taxes.

We next analyzed voter attitudes towards cutting taxes that fund public services, such as public infrastructure, healthcare, and public schools by providing two statements: 1) that state lawmakers should **not** cut taxes because it would decrease the quality of the services the state provides and make their state **less** competitive, or 2) state lawmakers should cut taxes because it would make wealthy individuals and corporations more likely to stay and make their state **more** competitive. 62 percent of voters in Virginia are predicted to believe that lawmakers should **not** cut taxes in order to preserve the quality of state services, by a +24-point margin.

Lastly, the survey examined voters' sentiment on corporate accountability by having respondents choose between the following two statements: 1) state lawmakers should do more to hold corporations who avoid paying taxes accountable because taxpayers need more transparency, or 2) state lawmakers should not put more red tape on corporations because, like citizens, they have the right to keep their tax information private. 82 percent of voters in Virginia are predicted to believe corporations who avoid paying taxes need to be held accountable. In comparison, only 18 percent of voters believe that lawmakers in Virginia should not place more red-tape on corporations by taking action on corporate profits.

Survey Methodology

From November 22 to December 1, 2022, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 7,738 likely voters nationally using web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, geography, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is ±1 percentage point.

From December 15 to 20, 2022, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 3,601 likely voters nationally using web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, geography, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is ±2 percentage points.

Modeling Methodology

Data for Progress estimates opinion at the state level using a machine learning model trained on nationally representative survey responses linked to a commercial voter file. The model accounts for over 400 variables, including individual demographic characteristics, vote history, and primary participation as well as the political and demographic characteristics of the respondents' census tract.

Once trained on our survey data, the model is used to estimate opinion in the population of registered voters. The process used is known as MRP (or Multilevel regression with poststratification). Support is displayed by modeling two-way support for an issue at the voter level across the country. Since this is an estimation technique, the measure of uncertainty is roughly double that of a traditional polling instrument. The model remains informative, especially when comparing values, but it is important to be aware of its additional uncertainty.

About Data for Progress

Data for Progress is a progressive think tank and polling firm which arms movements with data-driven tools to fight for a more equitable future. DFP provides polling, data-based messaging, and policy generation for the progressive movement, and advises campaigns and candidates with the tools they need to win.