



COMMONWEALTH POLL

A survey of Virginians conducted by the Center for Public Policy

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VCU POLL FINDS MIXED OPINIONS OF MCDONNELL JOB PERFORMANCE, TEA PARTY MOVEMENT

Virginians give Governor Bob McDonnell mixed reviews after just 6 months in office according to a new VCU Commonwealth Poll. Among those holding an opinion about the governor's performance, 48% say McDonnell is doing an excellent or good job, 52% say it is fair or poor. Views about the direction of the state as a whole tilt positive with 47% saying the state is headed in the right direction, 37% saying Virginia is on the wrong track and the remaining 16% holding no opinion.

The Tea Party movement garnered national attention over the past year and a half as a potentially sizeable voting group in the Congressional elections this fall. Most Virginians are unfamiliar with the Tea Party. Six-in-ten Virginians hold no opinion about the Tea Party movement, 19% have a favorable view and 21% have an unfavorable view of the movement.

These findings are part of a new statewide survey conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University. The Commonwealth Poll was conducted by landline and cell telephone from July 15-19, 2010 with a random sample of 810 adults in Virginia. The margin of error for the poll is plus or minus 4.1 percentage points.

McDonnell Job Performance

Evaluations of McDonnell's job performance are mixed with slightly more taking a negative than positive view of the governor's performance. 84% of Virginians rated the governor's job performance, 16% had no opinion. Among those holding an opinion (700 respondents), 48% say McDonnell is doing an excellent or good job, 52% say it is fair or poor.

McDonnell Job Evaluation

How would you rate the job Bob McDonnell is doing as governor? Do you think that he is doing an excellent, good, fair or poor job as governor?

	Rated	Not rated	Excellent/ Good	Fair/ Poor	Number rating
July 2010	84%	16%	48%	52% = 100	700

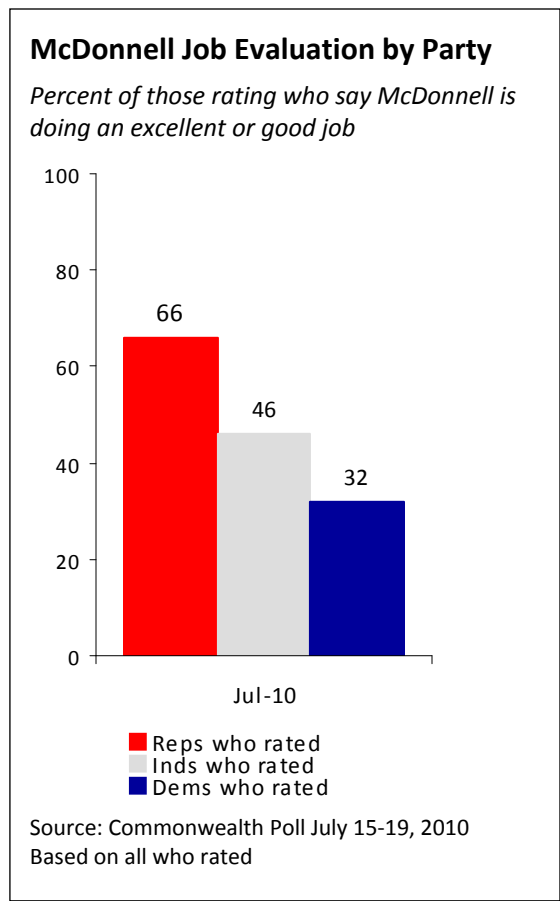
Source: Commonwealth Poll July 15-19, 2010
Based on all adults and all who rated

Views of McDonnell’s performance track with partisan leanings. Two-thirds of Republicans say McDonnell is doing an excellent or good job in office, a third say his performance is fair or poor. Independents are split with more giving McDonnell negative than positive marks (46% excellent or good compared with 54% fair or poor). About a third of Democrats (32%) say McDonnell is doing an excellent or good job in office.

“The job performance ratings are lower than what we saw for past governors at similar points in their terms. But politics is more polarized along partisan lines these days and the economic climate is decidedly more sour than it was several years ago. Governor McDonnell has strong support from Republicans but less support from Democrats than did Governors Kaine or Warner with Republicans early in their terms” said Cary Funk, Ph.D., director of the Commonwealth Poll and associate professor in the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs.

Attorney General Job Performance

Evaluations of the Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli are also mixed, with slightly more taking a negative than positive view. Fewer Virginians hold an opinion about Cuccinelli’s performance in office relative to views about the governor. Two-thirds (67%) of adults expressed an opinion about Cuccinelli’s job performance. Among those with an opinion (570 respondents), 47% say Cuccinelli is doing either an excellent or good job, 53% say he is doing a fair or poor job.



Cuccinelli Job Evaluation

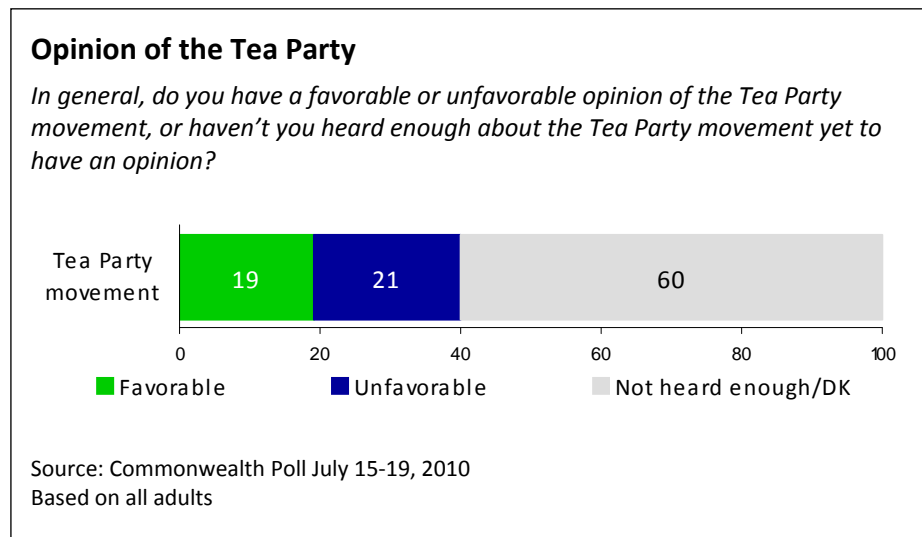
How would you rate the job Ken Cuccinelli is doing as Attorney General? Do you think that he is doing an excellent, good, fair or poor job as Attorney General?

	Rated	Not rated	Excellent/ Good	Fair/ Poor	Number rating
July 2010	67%	33%	47%	53% = 100	570

Source: Commonwealth Poll July 15-19, 2010
 Based on all adults and all who rated

Opinion about the Tea Party

Most Virginians are unfamiliar with the Tea Party. Six-in-ten adults hold no opinion about the Tea Party movement either because they are undecided or they haven't heard enough about the movement to have an opinion. Those expressing a viewpoint about the Tea Party movement are divided in their evaluation; 19% have a favorable opinion of the movement while 21% have an unfavorable opinion.



The profile of those favoring the Tea Party movement is largely Republican or Republican-leaning. About half (51%) of those with a favorable view of the Tea Party are Republicans, another three-in-ten are independents who lean to the Republicans. And, 67% of those with favorable views of the Tea Party describe themselves as conservatives; 25% are moderates.

Among those with a favorable view of the Tea Party, most give both McDonnell and Cuccinelli positive marks. 37% of those favorable to the Tea Party movement say McDonnell is doing an excellent job as governor, 44% say he is doing a good job, and 19% say he is doing either a fair or poor job. A similar pattern occurs in ratings of the attorney general; 30% of those favorable to the Tea Party movement say that Cuccinelli is doing an excellent job as attorney general, 42% say he is doing a good job, and 28% say is doing either a fair or poor job as attorney general. (These figures are based on those holding an opinion about the governor's or attorney general's job performance, respectively.)

"Tea Party supporters around the nation tend to be more engaged in politics and have increasingly aligned with the GOP in recent months. Those favorable to the Tea Party in Virginia are quite positive about the direction of the state, the job performance of the governor and state financial management," Funk said.

Overall Direction of the State

More hold positive than negative views about the overall direction of Virginia. A plurality of 47% say the state is going in the right direction, 37% think things have gotten off on the wrong track; the remainder have no opinion on this issue.

Views about the state’s overall direction are related to personal finances as well as partisan leanings. Those with lower incomes are more likely than those with higher incomes to say the state is on the wrong track. Republicans are more likely than either Democrats or independents to say the state is headed in the right direction.

Where Are We Headed?

All in all, do you think things in the state are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

	Right direction	Wrong track	Don't know
All adults	47%	37%	16%

Source: Commonwealth Poll July 15-19, 2010
Based on all adults

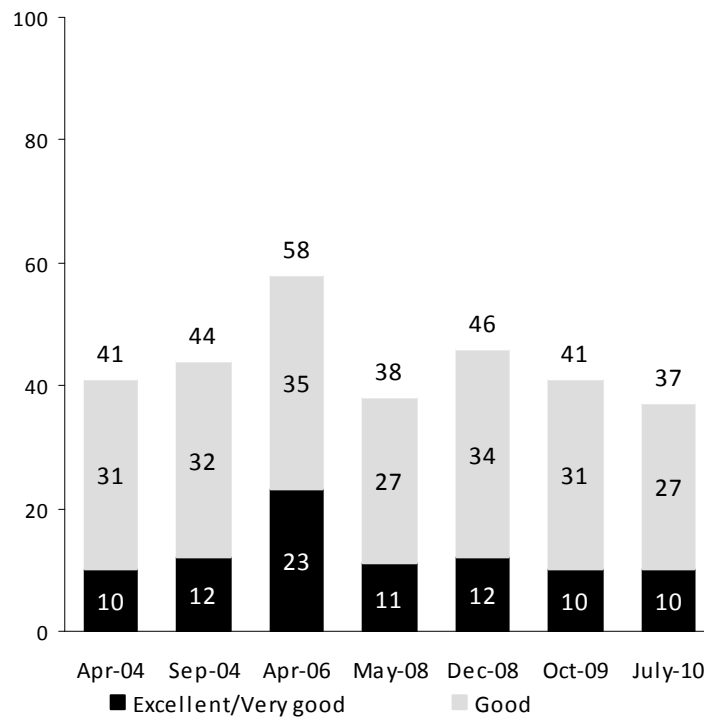
Financial Management of State Government

Overall, 37% of Virginians give the state positive marks for fiscal management as either excellent, very good, or good. This figure is down 4 points since October 2009, just prior to McDonnell’s election as governor.

“These ratings are surprisingly low in light of the recent announcement that Virginia now has a budget surplus. Public attention to state news is often limited and sporadic so it may take more time for good news of this sort to be reflected in evaluations and a number of other factors may influence public judgments on this as well,” Funk said.

Managing the State Finances

Overall, do you think the financial management of state government in Virginia is excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?



Source: VCU Commonwealth Polls
Based on all adults

METHOD OF THE COMMONWEALTH POLL

The Commonwealth Poll is a public opinion survey of Virginia residents about politics and public policy issues in the state. The survey was conducted by landline and cell telephone from July 15-19, 2010 with a randomly-selected sample of 810 adults living in Virginia. The interviewing was conducted through the facilities of Princeton Data Source (PDS), a research and polling company located in northern Virginia. They used a staff of professionally trained, paid interviewers and computer-assisted telephone interviewing software to conduct the survey.

The sample of telephone numbers was designed so that all adults in Virginia with access to either a residential landline or cellular telephone, including new and unlisted numbers, had a known chance of inclusion. The data are weighted to adjust for unequal probabilities of selection due to multiple adults living in landline households and for frame size of the landline and cell phone sampling frames. In addition, the data are weighted on sex, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region of residence and population density to reflect the demographic composition of the adult population in Virginia. Percentages reported in the text and tables are weighted, while the number of cases shown in the tables for various subgroups is the actual number of respondents.

Questions answered by the full sample of adults are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus approximately 4.1 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples like the one used here, the results obtained should be no more than 4.1 percentage points above or below the figure that would be obtained by interviewing all Virginia residents with telephones. Where the answers of subgroups are reported, the sampling error would be higher. Because of non-response (refusals to participate, etc.), standard calculations of sampling error are apt to understate the actual extent to which survey results are at variance with the true population values. Surveys are also subject to errors from sources other than sampling. While every effort is made to identify such errors, they are often difficult or impossible to measure. Readers making use of the results are urged to be mindful of the limitations inherent in survey research.

VCU Commonwealth Poll

State-wide survey of adults in Virginia, conducted by landline and cell telephone

July 15-19, 2010

Number of Respondents: 810¹

Thinking about the state of Virginia as a whole...

Q.1 All in all, do you think that things in the state are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

	July 2010	Oct 2009	Oct 2008
	%	%	%
Right direction	47	41	40
Wrong track	37	44	49
Don't Know/Refused	16	15	10

Q2. How would you rate the job Bob McDonnell is doing as Governor? Do you think that he is doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job as Governor?

	All adults	Among those who rated*
	%	%
Excellent	10	12
Good	30	36
Fair	34	40
Poor	10	12
Don't Know/Refused	16	--
N	810	700

Bob McDonnell	Rated	Not Rated	Excellent or Good	Fair or Poor	Number who rated
July 2010	84%	16%	48%	52%	700

FOR COMPARISON:

Tim Kaine	Rated	Not Rated	Excellent or Good	Fair or Poor	Number who rated
October 2009	90%	10%	43%	57%	930
October 2008	91%	9%	48%	52%	940
May 2008	84%	16%	54%	46%	858
April 2006	81%	19%	56%	44%	638

Mark Warner	Rated	Not Rated	Excellent or Good	Fair or Poor	Number who rated
Sept. 2004	83%	17%	58%	42%	663
April 2004	88%	12%	55%	45%	714
July 2002	80%	20%	60%	40%	636

Jim Gilmore	Rated	Not Rated	Excellent or Good	Fair or Poor	Number who rated
Dec. 2001	86%	14%	45%	55%	684
May 1998	75%	25%	64%	37%	607

¹ In the following tables, cells that are blank contain no cases. Cells with a zero percent entry contain cases, but the percentage is less than 0.5%. Percentages may add to 99 or 101 due to rounding.

George Allen	Rated	Not Rated	Excellent or Good	Fair or Poor	Number who rated
April 1997	78%	22%	61%	39%	645
November 1996	78%	22%	64%	36%	635
October 1995	90%	10%	52%	48%	728
July 1995	94%	6%	57%	43%	974
April 1995	79%	21%	53%	47%	648
July 1994	72%	28%	66%	35%	592
April 1994	74%	26%	68%	31%	596

Q3. Overall, do you think the financial management of state government in Virginia is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

	July 2010	Oct 2009	Dec 2008	May 2008	April 2006	Sept 2004	April 2004
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Excellent/Very good	10	10	12	11	23	12	10
Good	27	31	34	27	35	32	31
Fair	34	36	32	36	26	32	32
Poor	20	16	14	16	10	11	19
Don't know/Refused	8	7	7	10	6	13	7

Q4. How would you rate the job Ken Cuccinelli is doing as Attorney General? Do you think that he is doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job as Attorney General?

	All adults	Among those who rated
	%	%
Excellent	6	9
Good	26	38
Fair	23	34
Poor	13	19
Don't Know/Refused	33	--
N	810	570

Questions held for future release

ASK ALL:

PID1. Do you normally consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican or an Independent?

	July 2010	Oct 2009	Average 2008*
	%	%	%
Democrat	29	34	32
Republican	25	25	26
Independent	34	34	35
Don't Know/Refused/ Something else (volunteered)	12	7	8

IF RESPONSE IS INDEPENDENT, SOMETHING ELSE, DK/REF THEN ASK:

PID2. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic party or to the Republican party?

-----PARTY ID WITH LEANERS-----			
	July 2010	Oct 2009	Average 2008*
	%	%	%
Democrat or lean Democrat	38	46	46
Republican or lean Republican	39	40	38
Independent--refused to lean	23	14	16

ASK ALL:

LIB1. How would you describe your views on most political matters? Do you consider yourself liberal, moderate, or conservative?

	July 2010	Oct 2009	Average 2008*
	%	%	%
Liberal	16	17	19
Moderate	38	42	42
Conservative	33	35	32
Don't Know/No Answer	13	6	7

***Average 2008 results are based on aggregating the May, October and December 2008 surveys, N=3,029**

TEA1. In general, do you have a favorable or UNfavorable opinion of the Tea Party movement, or haven't you heard enough about the Tea Party movement yet to have an opinion?

	July 2010
	%
Favorable	19
UNfavorable	21
Not heard enough about	53
Don't know	7

Tables of Results by Selected Subgroups²

		Q1. All in all, do you think that things in the state are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?			
		Right direction	Wrong track	Don't know	Number of cases
All respondents		47%	37%	16%	810
VA Region	Northwest	45%	37%	18%	134
	Northern VA	49%	33%	18%	208
	West	40%	50%	10%	164
	South Central	52%	33%	15%	131
	Tidewater	49%	33%	18%	173
Gender	Men	48%	36%	16%	412
	Women	46%	37%	16%	398
Age	18-29	49%	35%	15%	115
	30-44	50%	31%	19%	163
	45-64	44%	42%	14%	339
	65 and older	50%	34%	16%	169
Education	H.S. or less	38%	48%	13%	245
	Some college	47%	34%	19%	216
	College grad or more	59%	24%	16%	344
Family Income	Under \$50,000	37%	49%	15%	270
	\$50K to under \$100K	52%	30%	18%	209
	\$100,000 or more	62%	23%	15%	182
Party identification	Democrat	43%	41%	16%	215
	Republican	58%	31%	12%	230
	Independent	45%	40%	15%	275
Opinion of Tea Party movement	Favorable	64%	29%	7%	186
	UNFavorable	43%	41%	16%	194
	Not heard enough/Don't know	44%	37%	19%	430

² In the following tables, cells that are blank contain no cases. Cells with a zero percent entry contain cases, but the percentage is less than 0.5%. Percentages may add to 99 or 101 due to rounding.

		Q2. How would you rate the job Bob McDonnell is doing as Governor? Do you think that he is doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job as Governor?				
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Number of cases
All adults who rated		12%	36%	40%	12%	700
VA Region	Northwest	15%	32%	40%	13%	120
	Northern VA	11%	32%	43%	14%	169
	West	9%	40%	34%	17%	146
	South Central	15%	37%	43%	5%	117
	Tidewater	12%	36%	41%	10%	148
Gender	Men	14%	36%	38%	12%	357
	Women	10%	35%	42%	13%	343
Education	H.S. or less	10%	38%	41%	12%	211
	Some college	15%	36%	37%	12%	179
	College grad or more	13%	33%	41%	13%	308
Family Income	Under \$50,000	9%	35%	42%	13%	229
	\$50K to under \$100K	9%	40%	41%	9%	182
	\$100,000 or more	18%	30%	38%	14%	164
Party identification	Democrat	4%	28%	50%	18%	185
	Republican	27%	39%	31%	3%	204
	Independent	11%	35%	39%	15%	242
Opinion of Tea Party movement	Favorable	37%	44%	18%	1%	175
	UNFavorable	3%	15%	57%	25%	173
	Not heard enough/Don't know	7%	40%	41%	11%	352

Based on all adults with an opinion

		Q3. Overall, do you think the financial management of state government in Virginia is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?					
		Excellent/ Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know	Number of cases
All adults		10%	27%	34%	20%	8%	810
VA Region	Northwest	8%	26%	39%	22%	5%	134
	Northern VA	13%	29%	31%	15%	12%	208
	West	9%	29%	26%	30%	6%	164
	South Central	8%	32%	36%	21%	2%	131
	Tidewater	9%	22%	40%	17%	11%	173
Gender	Men	13%	28%	32%	18%	9%	412
	Women	7%	27%	36%	22%	8%	398
Age	18-29	3%	29%	34%	25%	9%	115
	30-44	8%	24%	40%	20%	7%	163
	45-64	11%	27%	34%	21%	6%	339
	65 and older	19%	31%	26%	14%	11%	169
Education	H.S. or less	7%	26%	36%	25%	6%	245
	Some college	8%	30%	34%	20%	8%	216
	College grad or more	16%	28%	32%	15%	9%	344
Family Income	Under \$50,000	6%	26%	33%	29%	7%	270
	\$50K to under \$100K	11%	29%	40%	13%	7%	209
	\$100,000 or more	19%	29%	31%	14%	8%	182
Party identification	Democrat	5%	26%	40%	24%	5%	215
	Republican	19%	31%	31%	13%	6%	230
	Independent	8%	28%	32%	22%	10%	275
Opinion of Tea Party movement	Favorable	28%	33%	24%	12%	3%	186
	UNfavorable	8%	25%	34%	28%	5%	194
	Not heard enough/Don't know	5%	27%	37%	20%	11%	430

Q4. How would you rate the job Ken Cuccinelli is doing as Attorney General? Do you think that he is doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job as Attorney General?

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Number of cases
All adults who rated		9%	38%	34%	19%	570
VA Region	Northwest	7%	36%	41%	16%	95
	Northern VA	11%	38%	29%	21%	130
	West	4%	38%	37%	21%	123
	South Central	11%	40%	33%	16%	102
	Tidewater	13%	37%	32%	19%	120
Gender	Men	12%	39%	30%	18%	306
	Women	6%	37%	38%	19%	264
Education	H.S. or less	6%	40%	38%	15%	176
	Some college	12%	38%	38%	11%	144
	College grad or more	12%	34%	25%	28%	248
Family Income	Under \$50,000	7%	37%	44%	12%	193
	\$50K to under \$100K	8%	35%	31%	26%	152
	\$100,000 or more	15%	38%	24%	24%	129
Party identification	Democrat	2%	30%	41%	28%	159
	Republican	16%	51%	29%	4%	164
	Independent	13%	33%	31%	23%	197
Opinion of Tea Party movement	Favorable	30%	42%	20%	8%	151
	UNFavorable	2%	17%	33%	48%	148
	Not heard enough/Don't know	4%	46%	40%	10%	271

Based on all adults with an opinion

In general, do you have a favorable or UNfavorable opinion of the
Tea Party movement, or haven't you heard enough about the Tea
Party movement yet to have an opinion?

		Favorable	UNFavorable	Not heard enough/ Don't know	Number of cases
All adults		19%	21%	60%	810
VA Region	Northwest	18%	17%	65%	134
	Northern VA	18%	27%	56%	208
	West	19%	15%	66%	164
	South Central	20%	20%	60%	131
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	Women	12%	22%	66%	398
Age	18-29	10%	21%	69%	115
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	45-64	23%	25%	52%	339
	65 and older	22%	18%	60%	169
Education	H.S. or less	13%	11%	76%	245
	Some college	23%	20%	57%	216
	College grad or more	23%	35%	42%	344
Family Income	Under \$50,000	13%	15%	72%	270
	\$50K to under \$100K	23%	27%	49%	209
	\$100,000 or more	29%	32%	40%	182
Party identification	Democrat	4%	42%	55%	215
	Republican	38%	6%	56%	230
	Independent	22%	18%	59%	275