

The MassINC Polling Group Trend Monitor is published once a quarter to provide a snapshot of how key metrics from our statewide polling are changing over time. The figures contained in the Trend Monitor are based on polls<sup>1</sup> conducted by The MassINC Polling Group.

### State Right Direction / Wrong Track

For the second straight quarter, a slight plurality says Massachusetts is headed in the right direction, a reversal from before the November election. In recent national polls, about a quarter of respondents say the *nation* is headed in the right direction.

	Right Direction / Wrong Track
Apr 2011	47 / 41
Jan 2011	48 / 42
Sep 2010	41 / 47

### Favorables - People

Scott Brown held steady with around half of residents viewing him favorably. Deval Patrick is seen favorably by a 54/36 margin, and is about even with John Kerry (56/28) atop the list of current leaders seen most favorably in the state.

#### Favorable / Unfavorable Ratios

	Deval Patrick	Scott Brown	John Kerry	Mitt Romney	Joe Kennedy
Apr 2011	54/36	50/28	56/28	42/40	60/16
Jan 2011	57/33	51/25	NA	NA	NA
Sep 2010	42/45	57/24	59/31	NA	NA

*\*Note: Totals do not add up to 100% due to "Don't know" and "Refused" responses. People and groups included in the favorables section are rotated.*

### Favorables - Groups

Although the Tea Party remains a political force in the Bay State, they have slipped slightly since before the November 2011 election, and now hold favorables in the 30 percent range. Residents are split on their views of the State Legislature, with the same number (38%) viewing it favorable and unfavorably.

#### Favorable / Unfavorable Ratios

	The United States Congress	The Massachusetts State Legislature	The Tea Party
Apr 2011	NA	38/38	29/47
Jan 2011	46/41	41/37	30/46
Sep 2010	NA	NA	37/35

*\*Note: Totals do not add up to 100% due to "Don't know" and "Refused" responses. People and groups included in the favorables section are rotated.*

### Massachusetts Index of Consumer Sentiment<sup>2</sup>

While ratings of current economic conditions remained fairly steady, pessimism about future conditions drove the overall decline in the statewide Index of Consumer Sentiment (ICS). By comparison, the most recent national ICS reading (April, 2011) was 69.8. The drop in the ICS in Massachusetts mirrors a decline in the Index on a national level since February.

	MA Index of Consumer Sentiment	MA Index of Current Economic Conditions	MA Index of Consumer Expectations
Apr 2011	68.0	71.0	66.1
Jan 2011	73.3	72.8	73.7
Sep 2010	NA	NA	NA

*The Massachusetts Index of Consumer Sentiment measures views of both current and future economic conditions. The ICS is made up two component indices, the Index of Current Economic Conditions, which measures present sentiments, and the Index of Consumer Expectations, which represents future prospects. The ICS is scaled such that the 1966 national ICS represents 100.*

The questions shown below are the components of the Index of Consumer Sentiment.

<b>We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you (and your family living there) are better off or worse off financially than you were a year ago?</b>			
	<b>Better off</b>	<b>The same</b>	<b>Worse off</b>
<b>Apr 2011</b>	29	24	45
<b>Jan 2011</b>	27	27	45

<b>Now looking ahead--do you think that a year from now you (and your family living there) will be better off financially, or worse off, or just about the same as now?</b>			
	<b>Better off</b>	<b>The same</b>	<b>Worse off</b>
<b>Apr 2011</b>	25	52	20
<b>Jan 2011</b>	28	51	17

<b>Now turning to business conditions in the country as a whole--do you think that during the next twelve months we'll have good times financially or bad times?</b>			
	<b>Good times</b>	<b>Mixed, or both good and bad times</b>	<b>Bad times</b>
<b>Apr 2011</b>	35	7	53
<b>Jan 2011</b>	43	10	43

<b>Looking ahead, which would you say is more likely--that in the country as a whole we'll have continuous good times during the next five years or so, or that we will have periods of widespread unemployment or depression?</b>			
	<b>Good times</b>	<b>Mixed, or both good and bad times</b>	<b>Widespread unemployment or depression</b>
<b>Apr 2011</b>	32	8	55
<b>Jan 2011</b>	35	10	52

<b>About the big things people buy for their homes--such as furniture, a refrigerator, stove, television, and things like that. Generally speaking, do you think now is a good or bad time for people to buy major household items?</b>			
	<b>Good time to buy</b>	<b>Mixed, or both good and bad time</b>	<b>Bad time to buy</b>
<b>Apr 2011</b>	41	7	43
<b>Jan 2011</b>	45	9	40

## Financial Prospects

Massachusetts residents express doubts about the next generation's prospects. Just one in five residents believe the next generation will be better off financially than the current generation, though half believe they have done better than their own parents.

<b>Looking ahead, do you think the next generation will be financially better off when they are your age, financially worse off, or about the same?</b>			
	<b>Better Off</b>	<b>Worse Off</b>	<b>About the Same</b>
<b>Apr 2011</b>	20	38	37
<b>Jan 2011</b>	NA	NA	NA
<b>Sep 2010</b>	20	46	31

*\*Note: Totals do not add up to 100% due to "Don't know" and "Refused" responses.*

<b>Would you say you are financially better off than your parents were when they were your age, financially worse off, or about the same?</b>			
	<b>Better Off</b>	<b>Worse Off</b>	<b>About the Same</b>
<b>Apr 2011</b>	50	22	26
<b>Jan 2011</b>	NA	NA	NA
<b>Sep 2010</b>	47	23	27

*\*Note: Totals do not add up to 100% due to "Don't know" and "Refused" responses.*

## Questions or comments?

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<sup>1</sup> **About the Polls** - These results are based on questions from The MassINC Polling Group statewide polls of Massachusetts residents. Live telephone interviews are conducted via both landline and cell phone. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish by Eastern Research Services. Question wording and additional methodological details are available upon request, but are excluded from this document for simplicity and length.

<sup>2</sup> **About the Index of Consumer Sentiment** - The national Index of Consumer Sentiment is a consumer confidence index published monthly by the University of Michigan and Thomson Reuters. The ICS is made up two component indices, the Index of Current Economic Conditions, which measures present sentiments, and the Index of Consumer Expectations, which represents future prospects. The consumer confidence measures were devised in the late 1940's by George Katona at the University of Michigan. The measures have now developed into an ongoing, nationally representative survey based on telephonic household interviews. The Index of Consumer Sentiment (ICS) is developed from these interviews. The Index of Consumer Expectations (a sub-index of ICS) is included in the Leading Indicator Composite Index published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.