



MONUMENTAL DIFFERENCES

POLARIZED PUBLIC OPINION IN NORTH CAROLINA
ON CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS

FROM THE CREATORS OF THE LIFE, LIBERTY, AND HAPPINESS PROJECT

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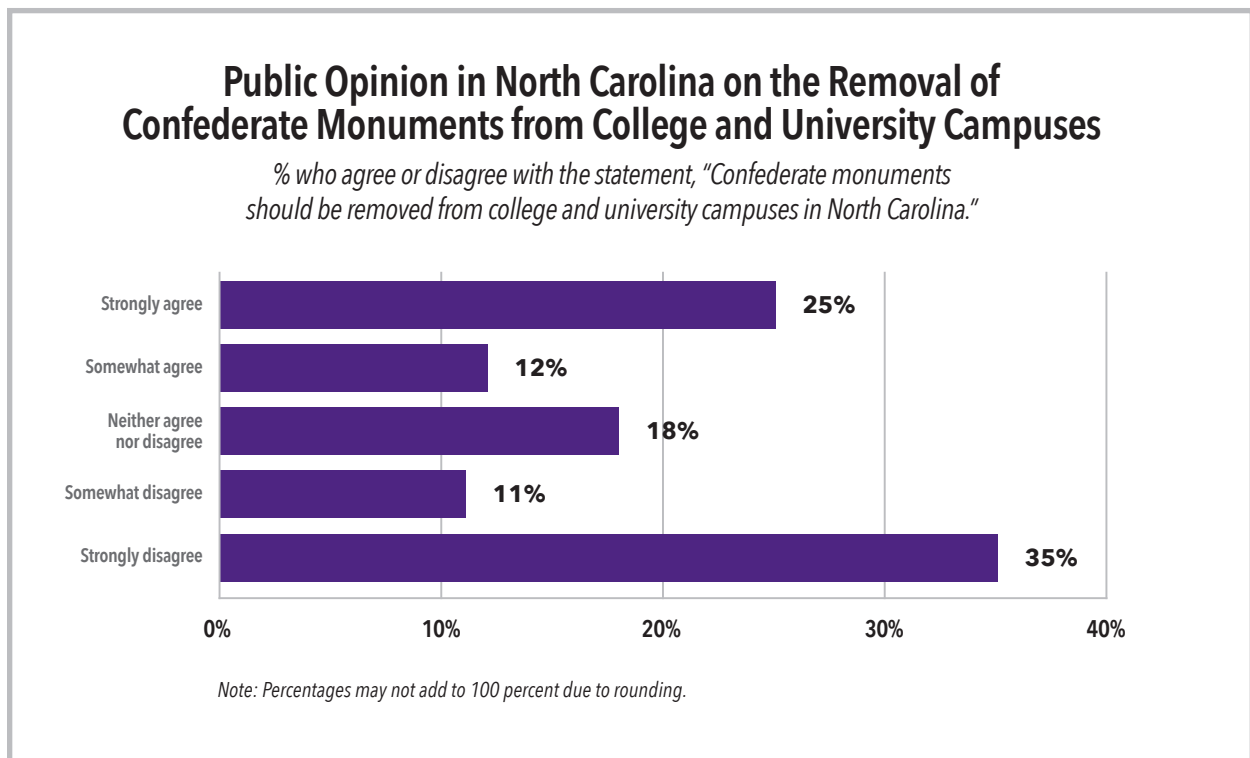
In small towns and large metropolitan regions of North Carolina, the debate regarding Confederate monuments on public property continues. Over just the past half-year or so, North Carolina has drawn national headlines with the toppling of a monument on the courthouse grounds in Durham and the Silent Sam statue on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. While political activists, student protestors and elected officials have been the most visible participants in this fight, a debate also rages among the mass public.

A new survey from ECU's Center for Survey Research (CSR) reveals just how deeply divided North Carolinians are regarding the controversies surrounding Confederate monuments, such as Silent Sam, and the broader issue of Confederate monuments on college and university campuses in North Carolina. Drawing on a demographically representative sample of more than 700 adults (age 18 or over) across North Carolina, who were polled from Feb. 4-12 (n=708, +/- 4.1), the results show that large segments of the population hold strong opinions on the issue, and often at opposite extremes. Despite what would appear to be a local issue, divisions among North Carolinians run especially deep between those who voted for Donald Trump and those who voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016.

KEY FINDINGS

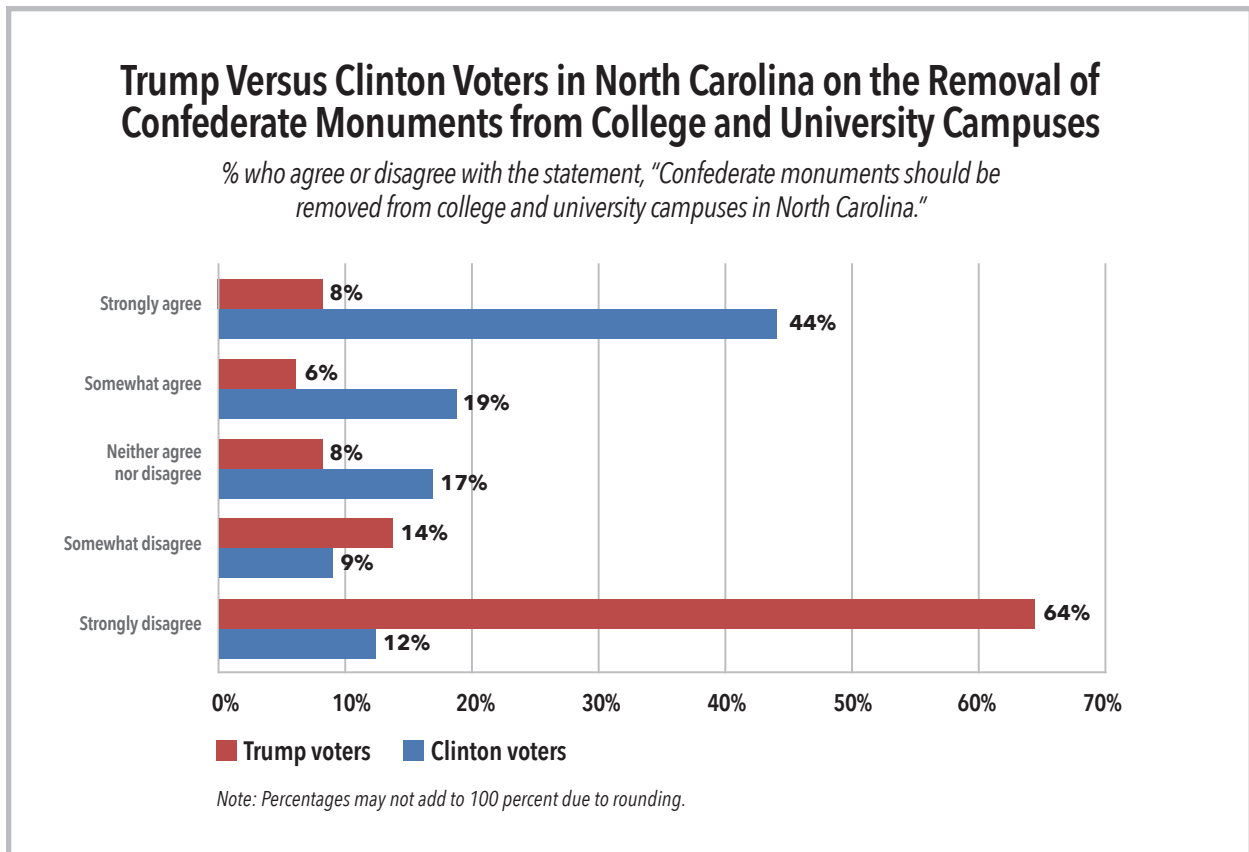
- ▶ The overall public is deeply divided on the issue of Confederate monuments remaining on college and university campuses.

Among all adult North Carolinians, three out of five respondents (60 percent) had strong opinions on the topic. On the statement, “Confederate monuments should be removed from college and university campuses in North Carolina,” 35 percent selected “strongly disagree” while 25 percent selected “strongly agree.” Overall, those who think that Confederate monuments should not be removed from college and university campuses in North Carolina (i.e., those who disagree somewhat or strongly with the statement) outnumber those who think they should be removed (i.e., those who agree somewhat or strongly with the statement) by a 46 percent to 37 percent margin.



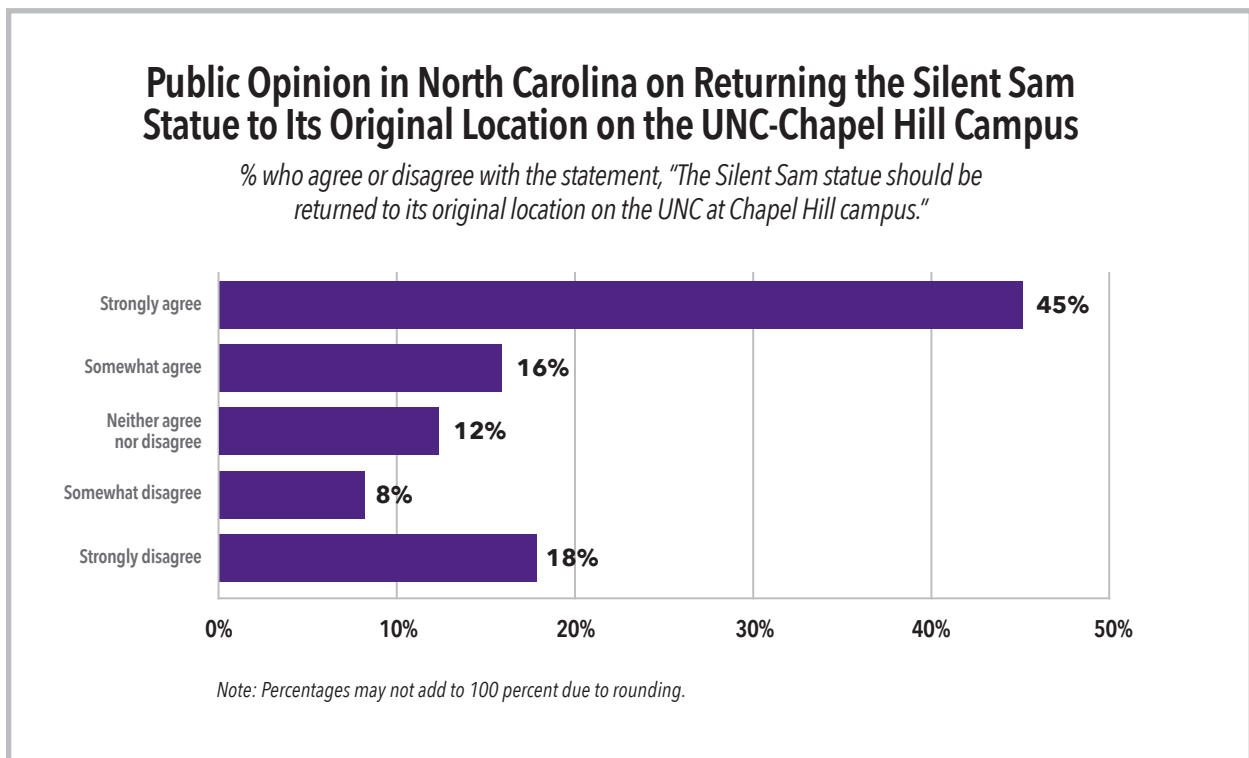
- ▶ **There are deep political divisions on the issue of Confederate monuments remaining on college and university campuses, highlighted by extreme polarization between those who voted for Donald Trump and those who voted for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election.**

More than three-fifths (64 percent) of Trump voters in North Carolina strongly disagree that Confederate monuments should be removed from college and university campuses in the state. In contrast, 44 percent of Clinton voters strongly agree that Confederate monuments should be removed from college and university campuses in the state. Overall, 78 percent of Trump voters oppose the removal of Confederate statues from college and university campuses compared to just 21 percent of Clinton voters – a gap of 57 percentage points. By comparison, the gap separating white North Carolinians (59.4 percent who disagree with removal) from black or African-American North Carolinians (15.6 percent who disagree) is 44 percentage points. Other gaps in opinion based upon gender, age and education are also smaller than those separating Trump and Clinton voters.



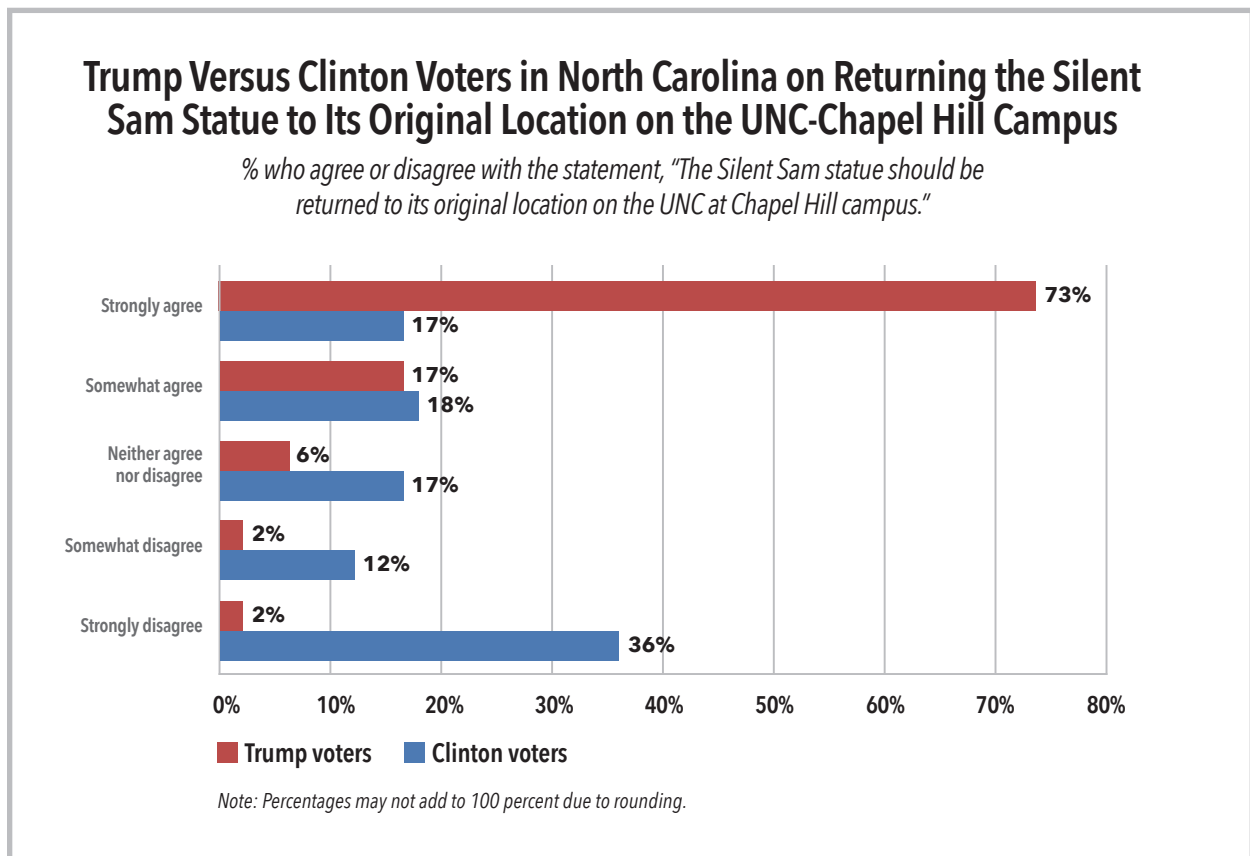
- ▶ **On the specific issue of the Silent Sam statue, there is less division within the population (with a majority favoring its return to its original location), but still strong opinions.**

Approximately 70 percent of North Carolinians report that they are familiar with the controversy. Among those who are familiar with the Silent Sam controversy, public opinion sides with returning Silent Sam to its original location on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus. Some 61 percent of North Carolinians agree with the position that Silent Sam should be returned to its original location on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus, compared to 26 percent who disagree (with 12 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing). Of the 61 percent who agree, most hold strong opinions, with 45 percent answering that they strongly agree compared to 16 percent who answer that they somewhat agree. Among those who disagree, strong opinions outnumber weak opinions by a margin of 10 percentage points (18 percent who strongly disagree compared to 8 percent who somewhat disagree).



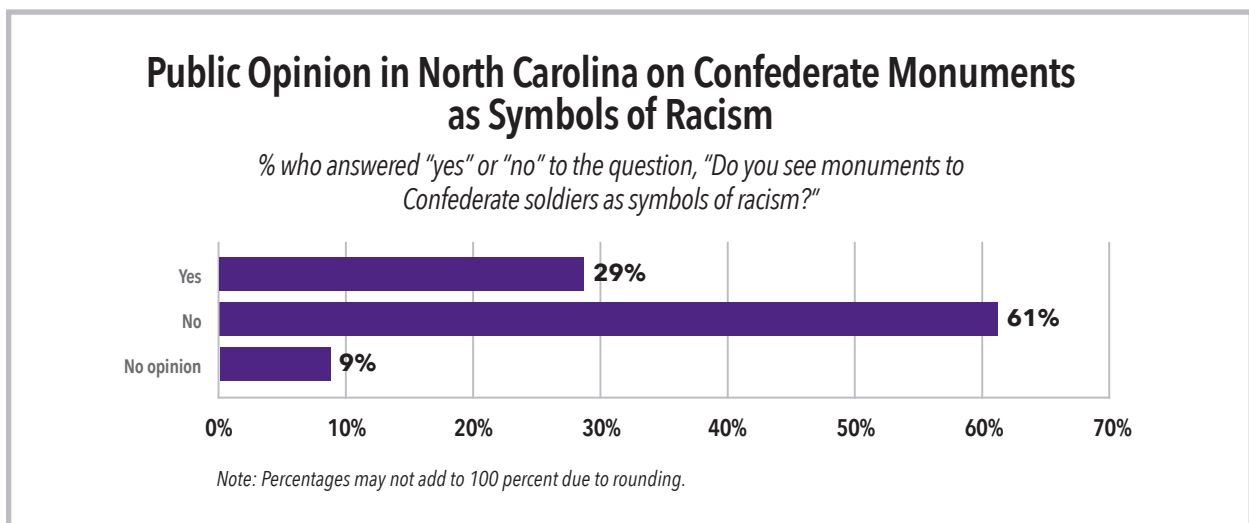
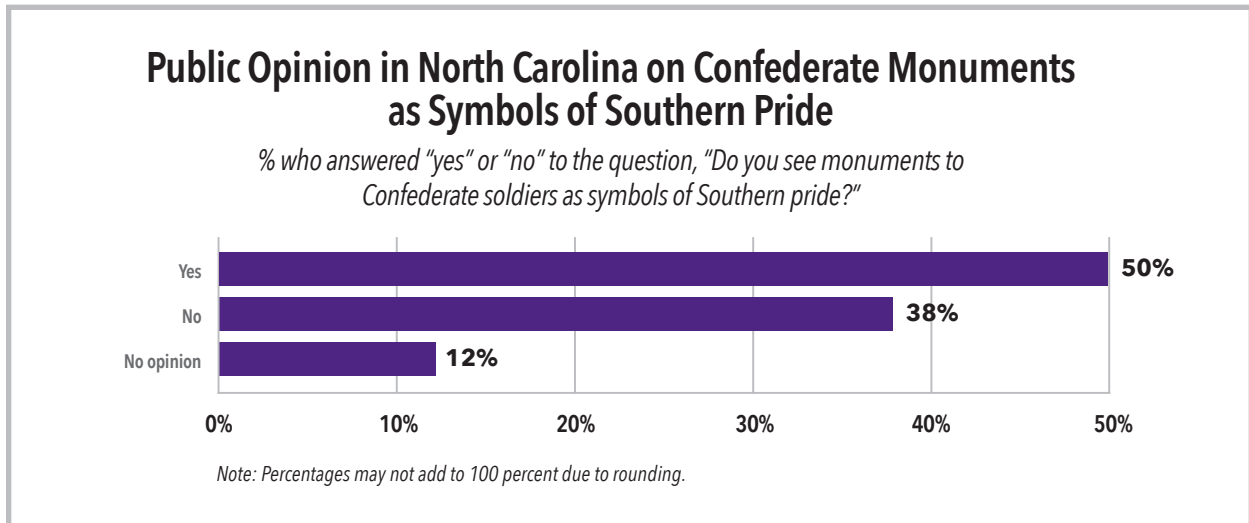
► Again, however, there are deep divisions within the population along political lines.

Trump voters in North Carolina express overwhelming support (90 percent) for returning Silent Sam to its original location on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus. Perhaps more noteworthy is the intensity of opinion among Trump voters: 73 percent of Trump voters answered that they strongly agree with the return of Silent Sam to its original location compared to just 17 percent who answered that they somewhat agree. Clinton voters, by comparison, were more divided about the Silent Sam controversy. Nonetheless, a plurality (36 percent) of Clinton voters fell into the “strongly disagree” category. Once again, Trump-Clinton divisions were wider than those along lines of race, gender, age and education.



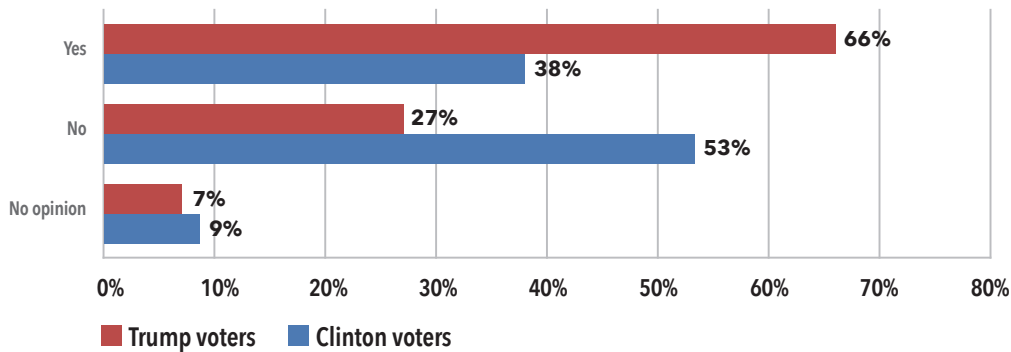
► **More North Carolinians hold the opinion that monuments to Confederate soldiers reflect Southern pride compared to reflecting racism.**

When asked, “Do you see monuments to Confederate soldiers as symbols of Southern pride,” approximately 50 percent of North Carolinians responded “yes” compared to 38 percent who responded “no” (12 percent had no opinion). By comparison, when asked, “Do you see monuments to confederate soldiers as symbols of racism,” approximately 29 percent of North Carolinians responded “yes” compared to 61 percent who responded “no” (9 percent had no opinion). Once more, the deepest divisions on both questions were along political lines. Two-thirds (66 percent) of Trump voters see Confederate monuments as symbols of Southern pride as compared to 38 percent of Clinton voters. Likewise, only 9 percent of Trump voters view monuments to Confederate soldiers as symbols of racism compared to 59 percent of Clinton voters.



Trump Versus Clinton Voters in North Carolina on Confederate Monuments as Symbols of Southern Pride

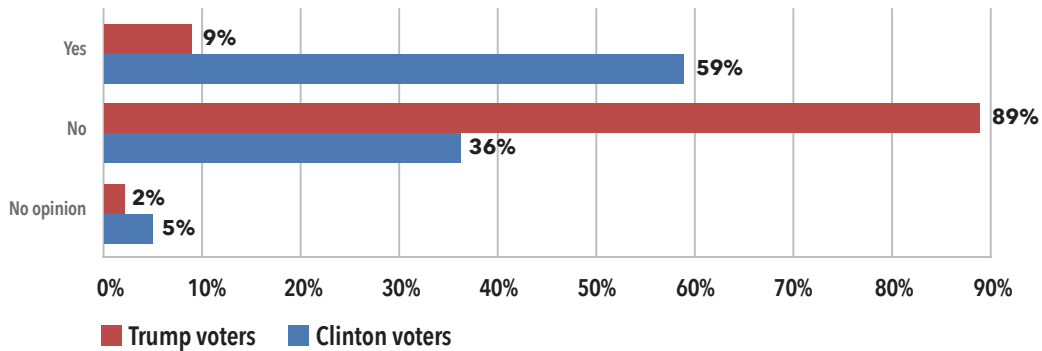
% who answered "yes" or "no" to the question, "Do you see monuments to Confederate soldiers as symbols of Southern pride?"



Note: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Trump Versus Clinton Voters in North Carolina on Confederate Monuments as Symbols of Racism

% who answered "yes" or "no" to the question, "Do you see monuments to Confederate soldiers as symbols of racism?"



Note: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

CONCLUSION

In recent years, controversy about Confederate statues has surrounded much of the South. North Carolina is no exception, as the recent Silent Sam dispute makes clear. Yet, the protests that enveloped the UNC-Chapel Hill campus reflect divisions that run deeper than those pitting student-protestors against a handful of politicians and university leaders. Perhaps the most noteworthy takeaway from the results in this report is that the public itself is also deeply divided, with strong opinions dominating weak opinions on the issue. Indeed, much like so many controversies of the day, the results reveal further that supporters and non-supporters of President Trump demarcate where most of today's deepest divisions in public opinion lie, even on issues that reflect local rather than national concerns.

METHODOLOGY

The ECU Center for Survey Research in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences conducted this survey beginning on February 4 and ending on February 12, 2019. The sample consisted of 708 adult respondents (18 years or older) in North Carolina, with a credibility interval, much like a poll's margin of error, of +/- 4.1 percentage points. The data were weighted in proportion to the overall demographics (age, education, gender and race) of the adult general population in North Carolina. The data also included a weighting adjustment based on the exit poll data from the 2016 election given this report's emphasis on comparing Trump and Clinton voters. (The following appendix provides a demographic comparison of our weighted survey sample to the exit poll data.) Survey responses were collected using an interactive voice response system of landline telephone calls (n=287) and an online sample (n=421) provided by Dynata (formerly Survey Sampling International Inc).

APPENDIX

Trump/Clinton Voter Breakdowns: Comparison of Weighted Sample to Exit Poll Data

Voting Behavior	Survey Sample	North Carolina Voters (2016 Exit Poll)
<i>All</i>		
Voted for Trump	48%	50%
Voted for Clinton	47%	46%
Voted other/no answer	5%	4%
<i>Whites</i>		
Voted for Trump	63%	63%
Voted for Clinton	31%	32%
Voted other/no answer	6%	5%
<i>African-Americans/Blacks</i>		
Voted for Trump	9%	8%
Voted for Clinton	88%	89%
Voted other/no answer	3%	3%
<i>Latinos/Hispanics</i>		
Voted for Trump	38%	40%
Voted for Clinton	60%	57%
Voted other/no answer	2%	3%
<i>Women</i>		
Voted for Trump	47%	45%
Voted for Clinton	49%	52%
Voted other/no answer	4%	3%
<i>Men</i>		
Voted for Trump	50%	56%
Voted for Clinton	44%	38%
Voted other/no answer	6%	6%
<i>18- to 44-year-olds</i>		
Voted for Trump	39%	42%
Voted for Clinton	56%	52%
Voted other/no answer	5%	6%
<i>45 years and older</i>		
Voted for Trump	56%	57%
Voted for Clinton	39%	41%
Voted other/no answer	5%	2%



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