



## 2009 Legislative Priorities Survey

### Introduction:

In September 2009, the DLCC launched our inaugural Legislative Priorities Survey, a project to facilitate communication between legislators and their constituents nationwide. We designed the survey to test individuals' views of the highest profile issues in legislative politics and determine which of those issues are the highest priorities for our supporters this year.

The response this year has been overwhelming.

More than 3,200 Democratic supporters offered input, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This universe of respondents is self-selected and is not based on a random sampling of the population.

**Issue Importance:** Respondents were first asked to rank how important a series of issues were to them. The issues were: "Expand Health Care Coverage for the Uninsured," "Reduce Healthcare Costs," "Promote Renewable Energy Production," "Improve Public Education," "Improve and/or Expand Transportation Infrastructure," "Toughen Government Ethics Laws," "Promote Local Job Growth," and "Promote Equal Rights." Respondents were extremely supportive of all these issues, though transportation noticeably failed to generate the same level of excitement as the others.

Issue:	Extremely Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important at All	No Answer
Health Coverage	79.2%	12.2%	3.8%	3.8%	1.0%
Health Costs	78.3%	16.6%	2.0%	0.9%	2.2%
Renewable Energy	65.9%	26.5%	3.3%	1.7%	2.6%
Public Education	63.5%	28.6%	2.7%	1.4%	3.8%
Transportation	35.2%	50.8%	8.9%	2.2%	3.1%
Transparency/Ethics	50.5%	34.8%	9.9%	1.3%	3.5%
Econ. Development	55.7%	34.8%	5.0%	1.2%	3.3%
Equal Rights	56.1%	29.4%	8.1%	2.8%	3.7%

**Top Priorities:** In an effort to separate issues from one another, respondents were next asked to compare these specific issues and designate one of them as their most important priority. Health Care was far and away the top priority among those tested,

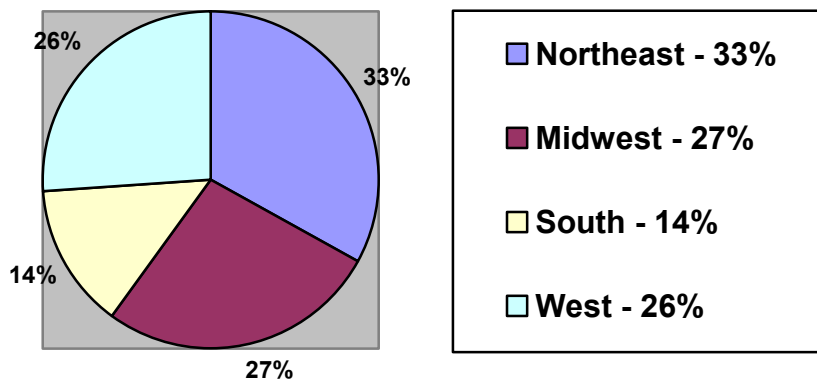
favored by over 60% of respondents. Renewable Energy, Economic Development, and Public Education all were favored by 8.5%-10% of respondents.

Issue:	Top Priority:
Health Care	61.5%
Renewable Energy	9.9%
Econ. Development	8.7%

Public Education	8.6%
Transparency/Ethics	5.8%
Equal Rights	3.6%
Transportation	1.7%

**Open-Ended Question:** The survey concluded with an open-ended question, “Are there any other issues facing your state that you'd like your legislators to focus on?” Among the most common responses were those supporting specific healthcare reform ideas (e.g. a public health insurance option), environmental protection, lower taxes, public campaign financing, and prison reform. Responses from constituents in your state have been provided in a separate packet.

**Regional Distribution of Responses:** Survey respondents were required to submit their zip codes to allow some geographic analysis of the data. Nationwide, responses followed an uneven geographic distribution:



Responses from each geographic region tracked very closely to one another. As noted in the chart below, 60%-63% of respondents in all regions listed health care as their top priority among the issues tested.

Top Priority:	Midwest	Northeast	South	West
Health Care	62.3%	60.1%	59.9%	63.4%
Renewable Energy	7.8%	10.8%	10.9%	10.6%
Public Education	7.9%	8.7%	6.7%	10.3%
Transportation	1.3%	1.4%	3.1%	1.8%
Transparency/Ethics	6.3%	6.2%	5.4%	5.3%
Econ. Development	10.8%	8.1%	11.4%	6.1%
Equal Rights	3.8%	4.7%	2.7%	2.6%

Supporter enthusiasm for particular issues showed slightly more variations across different regions, but these results also tracked very close to one another. The following charts list the percentage of respondents in each region who said it was “Extremely Important” that their legislators pursue each issue:

Health Coverage	Extremely Important
Midwest	77.3%
Northeast	81.4%
South	74.6%
West	80.7%

Transportation	Extremely Important
Midwest	31.1%
Northeast	39.3%
South	38.5%
West	32.2%

Health Costs	Extremely Important
Midwest	76.7%
Northeast	79.4%
South	78.4%
West	78.5%

Transparency/Ethics	Extremely Important
Midwest	53.4%
Northeast	49.7%
South	49.4%
West	49.1%

Renewable Energy	Extremely Important
Midwest	62.2%
Northeast	70.7%
South	63.7%
West	64.7%

Economic Development	Extremely Important
Midwest	59.4%
Northeast	55.4%
South	58.8%
West	50.6%

Public Education	Extremely Important
Midwest	59.8%
Northeast	64.6%
South	65.5%
West	64.9%

Equal Rights	Extremely Important
Midwest	57.3%
Northeast	57.4%
South	59.0%
West	51.1%

**Conclusion:** Based on the results of this survey, health care is far and away the top concern of our supporters at this time. Undoubtedly fueled by the national debate over health care reform, the issues of health care access and affordability both prompted much more enthusiastic responses than any other issue tested. This was true in the issue importance section of the survey (78%-79% ranked healthcare as “extremely important,” with renewable energy the next closest competitor at 66%) as well as the top priority question (62% listed health care as their top legislative priority, with renewable energy next at 10%).