REPORT ADDENDUM: Accounting for the Differential Between the Kansas 2024 Presidential Vote and the 2024 Kansas Speaks Survey Presidential Preference Findings

November 12, 2024

The 2024 Kansas Speaks survey results were released on October 28, 2024, about one week ahead of the November 5, 2024, elections. Among media mentions of the survey's results leading up to election day (see https://www.fhsu.edu/docking/media-mentions/) were several about the survey's presidential race findings that Trump led Harris by only +5% among registered voters planning to vote and +10.5% among all respondents planning to vote -- surprising given that Trump carried the 2020 Kansas vote by a margin of +14.6% advantage over Biden. The 2020 Kansas Speaks survey's presidential race question had Trump leading Biden by +14.4%. The "Key Factors" of this addendum summarize what appears to have contributed to the 2024 Kansas Speaks survey presidential preference findings underestimating the projected 16.2% Trump advantage over Harris in the, as yet, unofficial Kansas vote. For those with an interest, a more detailed account of the methodological improvement needed in future presidential preference measurement from our surveying follows the key factors summary.

Key Factors:

- Future Kansas Speaks surveys with a presidential or gubernatorial preference question will add a party ID question that can be used for weighting purposes, as may be needed. Unlike in 2020, the 2024 Kansas Speaks survey data after weighting by age, gender, and education had an under-representation of Republicans (about 4%) and an over-representation of Democrats (about 7%). A post-election look (detailed below) using answers to a political orientation question in the 2024 survey as best proxy for party ID of respondent shows that weighting by party ID was needed in 2024, particularly since Republicans and Democrats were so extremely polarized in their presidential candidate preference. After weighting by the best proxy for party ID available from the survey, Trump's advantage among survey respondents increases to +10.5% among registered voters planning to vote and to +14.6% among all respondents planning to vote. The lack of a party ID question and then weighting by party ID is the largest factor accounting for the differential between the Kansas presidential vote and the candidate preference findings of the 2024 Kansas Speaks survey.
- Early national exit polling data reported by RealClearPolitics.com (instagram.com/p/DCHrXQVSJ18/) and NBC News (nbcnews.com/politics/2024-elections/exit-polls) finds that late deciders broke heavily toward Trump. 2024 Kansas Speaks surveying ended on October 16, almost three weeks prior to election day.
- In the last month before the 2024 election, October-over-September Republican voter registrations in Kansas outpaced Democrat voter registrations by greater than a 2 to 1 margin, with 15,710 Republican registrations in October compared to 6,336 Democrat registrations. Early national exit polling data reported by CNN (cnn.com/interactive/2024/politics/2020-2016-exit-polls-2024-dg/) finds that new voters broke heavily toward Trump, and 2024 Kansas Speaks surveying could have responses from those who took the survey before they registered, given the Kansas registration deadline of October 15.

A methodological weakness - survey should collect so that it can weight by respondent party ID
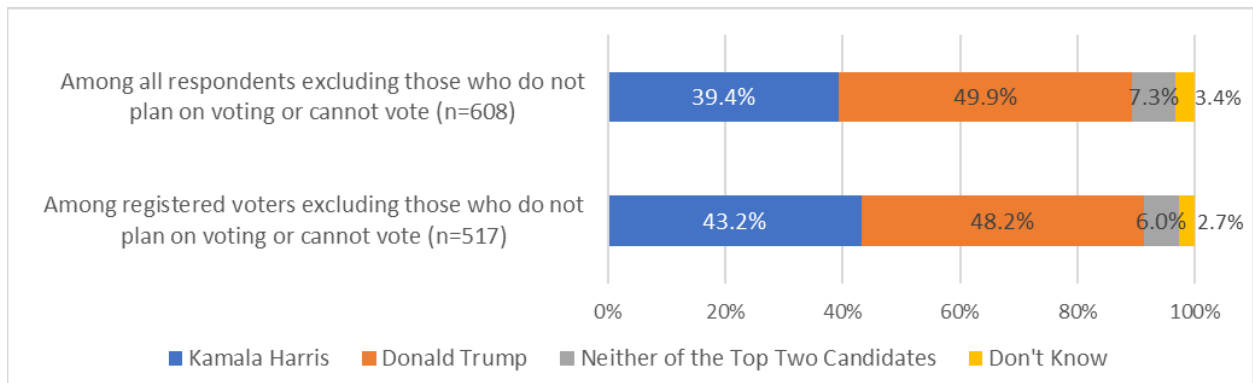
As of November 12 (a week out from election day), the AP has the unofficial vote advantage for Trump over Harris in Kansas at 16.2%, as shown in this table.

Donald Trump, Republican	57.2% (741,949 votes)
Kamala Harris, Democrat	41.0% (532,475 votes)
Robert Kennedy, Independent	1.2% (15,823 votes)
Chase Oliver, Libertarian	0.6% (7,420 votes)

Source: https://apnews.com/projects/election-results-2024/kansas/?r=0

On the presidential preference question in Docking Institute's 2024 Kansas Speaks survey report (https://www.fhsu.edu/docking/Kansas-Speaks/) the Institute reported the following on page 21:

Figure 1: Voting Preference for the 2024 Presidential Election Excluding Those Who Do Not Plan to Vote or Cannot Vote

Question: Q17 *If the 2024 presidential election were held today, who would you vote for?*

Figure 12 of the report shows that the Kansas Speaks survey presidential preference question had Trump at an advantage of **+5%** (48.2% - 43.2%) among registered voters who planned to vote and at a larger advantage of **+10.5%** (49.9% - 39.4%) among all respondents who planned to vote. Kansas allows counties to begin advanced voting on October 16, 2024, (https://sos.ks.gov/elections/voter-information.html), and the Docking Institute collected survey data from September 26-October 16, closing survey data collection on the first possible day of advanced voting in Kansas counties.

The findings in Figure 12 are weighted by a combined term for age, education, and gender proportionate to the presence of those characteristics in the survey sample as compared to the estimates for the entire adult population of Kansas. Figure 12 results <u>are not weighted by political party ID</u>. Political party ID is a common weight applied in candidate polling. The Kansas Speaks survey does not ask respondents to report party ID. The survey does ask respondents this political orientation question, *"Do you consider yourself a Strong Republican, Moderate Republican, Independent Leaning Republican, Independent, Independent Leaning Democrat, Moderate Democrat, Strong Democrat"* or *"Don't Know?"*

Logistic regression (not shown) finds that by far the largest contributor to candidate preference is political orientation compared to other sociodemographic characteristics measured in the survey. Indeed, a look at crosstabular breakouts shows high polarization between those identifying as 'Strong' or 'Moderate' Republicans and those who identify as 'Strong' or 'Moderate' Democrats. Tables 17b and 17c in Appendix C of the 2024 Kansas Speaks survey report show that nearly all Republicans (those who identified as 'Strong' or 'Moderate' Republicans) planned to vote for Trump (only 10% did not in Table 17b and 11% did not in 17c), while nearly all Democrats (those who identified as 'Strong' or 'Moderate' Democrats) planned to vote for Harris (only 8% did not in Table 17b and 7% did not in 17c). Separate breakouts (not shown) on presidential preference among registered voters planning to vote also finds substantial differences between those identifying as <u>Independent Leaning Republican</u> (Trump 73%, Harris 13%, and Neither 13%) and those identifying as <u>Independent Leaning Democrat</u> (Trump 4%, Harris 93%, and Neither 4%).

In the absence of a political party ID survey question, this political orientation question is used as the best proxy for party ID in order to create weighting based on an underrepresentation of those identifying as Republican (about 4% under) and an overrepresentation of Democrats (about 7% over) in the 2024 survey sample. The next table shows the distribution of response on the political orientation question both unweighted and weighted (by gender, age, and education). The far right column is the percentage of Kansas registered voters by party affiliation per counts from Kansas Secretary of State website.

	Survey panel unweighted %	Survey panel weighted (age, gender, education) %	Kansas Sec. of State count of registered voters by party through October 2024* %
Strong Republican	15.3	14.9	
Moderate Republican	16.0	15.9	
Independent Leaning Republican	9.3	9.5	44.8 (Republican)
Independent	18.3	20.5	28.2 (Unaffiliated)
Independent Leaning Democrat	9.8	9.5	25.7 (Democrat)
Moderate Democrat	11.2	9.8	
Strong Democrat	11.8	10.7	
DON'T KNOW	8.4	9.1	---
TOTALS	100	100	98.6

* https://sos.ks.gov/elections/election-statistics-data.html

Those identifying as Strong Republican, Moderate Republican, or Independent Leaning Republican (40.6%) were weighted to increase their statistical presence in the sample to the level equivalent to Republican proportion of the October 2024 registered voters in Kansas (44.8%), resulting in a weight of 1.1022. Those identifying in the survey as Independent (18.3%) were also weighted to increase their presence in the sample to be equivalent to that in the

registered voter population (28.2%), resulting in a weight of 1.5462. And those identifying as Strong Democrat, Moderate Democrat, or Independent Leaning Democrat (32.8%) were weighted to decrease their statistical presence in the sample to the level equivalent to Democrat presence in the registered voter population (25.7%), resulting in a weight of 0.7790. Those who answered "Don't Know" on the political orientation question were left at their original default weight of 1.0.

The political orientation weight was combined with those for age, education, and gender to create a multi-term weight for analyzing presidential preference. After applying the multi-term presidential preference weight, 47 cases had weights exceeding 2.0 and were truncated back to 2.0 to attenuate these cases' outsized influence.

The next table below shows the presidential preference vote after weighting responses by the multi-term weight that includes age, education, gender, and political orientation serving a proxy for political party ID.

	Among all respondents excluding those who do not plan to or cannot vote (n=607)	Among registered voters excluding those who do not plan to or cannot vote (n=519)
Donald Trump	**51.2%**	**50.1%**
Kamala Harris	**36.6%**	**39.6%**
Neither of the top two candidates	7.9%	6.8%
Don't Know	4.2%	3.6%

The Trump advantage over Harris among all respondents planning to vote is +14.6% (51.2% - 36.6%), and the Trump advantage over Harris among registered voters planning to vote is +10.5% (50.1% - 39.6%). Thus, after factoring in a weight for political orientation (as the best proxy for party ID), the survey sample's performance notably improved with respect to approximating the eventual Trump advantage of +16.2% in the Kansas vote for president, though the +10.5% Trump advantage found among registered voters planning to vote is still more discrepant from the actual vote than we would hope. Future Kansas Speaks surveys with a presidential or gubernatorial preference question will add a party ID question that can be used for weighting purposes, as may be needed.

A note on external validation of other findings in the 2024 Kansas Speaks survey report

Survey research on attitudes, perceptions, and anticipated behaviors rarely enjoys external validation measures (except for candidate races and ballot initiatives) by which to assess findings. However, this year on a limited set of public affairs questions and a question about expectation of staying in or moving from Kansas over the next few years fielded in our Kansas Speaks surveying overlapped with similar questions fielded by an Emerson College poll of Kansas registered voters (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jySvitJYMHZnf21NG3Ri9Zv6r5vPvf4J/view).

Both the Kansas Speaks survey and the Emerson College poll started on 26 September. Kansas Speaks collected data through 16 October, while Emerson College collected until Oct 2. Emerson College used multiple modes of contact to poll registered voters: cell phone (MMS-to-web text), landline phone interactive voice response, email, and an online panel of voters pre-matched to L2 voter file data from Rep Data. Analyzing response to the two surveys where similar questions exist, we find high comparability between the Kansas Speaks survey results (looking at registered voters) and the Emerson College poll of registered voters. This includes:

- Legalizing Medical Marijuana: 72.5% support and 11.9% oppose in the Kansas Speaks survey, while 73% support and 18% oppose in Emerson poll.
- Legalizing Recreational Marijuana: 59.4% support and 22.3% oppose in the Kansas Speaks survey, while 56% support, 30% oppose in Emerson poll.
- 77.9% of Kansas Speaks respondents plan to be in Kansas five years from now with most of those (62.9%) planning to be in the same community and 15% anticipating a relocation within Kansas. This is comparable to the Emerson College poll of registered voters, which finds a combined 70% who say they have no plans to move from Kansas (58%) or they are never moving (12%).
- Illegal immigration: Kansas Speaks added two new sets of items in 2024 on attitudes about both legal immigrants and illegal immigrants. 48.4% strongly or somewhat disagree that immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally contribute more to society than they take in terms of resources (18.1% are neutral and 30.7% strongly or somewhat agree). In the Emerson College poll, respondents were asked, "Overall, do you think immigration has had a positive or negative impact on Kansas?" In this context, we suspect most respondents had illegal immigrants in mind, and 47% responded negative impact, 25% were unsure, and 28% responded positive impact.
- Support for maintaining women's access to abortion in Kansas among the 2024 Kansas Speaks registered voters is high:
  - 68% strongly agree or agree that women are in a better position that politicians to make their own choices about whether to get and abortion (16.1% strongly disagree or disagree)
  - 55.7% strongly agree or agree that the Kansas government should not place any regulations on the circumstances under which women can get abortions (32% strongly disagree or disagree)
  - 52.9% strongly or somewhat oppose new laws that restrict access to abortion (26.6% strongly or somewhat support)

These 2024 Kansas Speaks survey findings are in a direction consistent with the Emerson College poll finding that 49% of Kansans believe continuing access to abortion for Kansans and for out of state residents before the 22nd week of pregnancy is a good thing, compared to 38% who think it's a bad thing.