

# (Almost!) Everything You Need to Know About Polling

Christiana Lilly, Fellowship Coordinator

ELECTION

The logo consists of a white speech bubble outline with a tail pointing towards the bottom-left. Inside the bubble, the letters "SOS" are written in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

**SOS**

# Hi, I'm Christiana!



- Fellowship coordinator at Harken's Election SOS program
  - Freelance journalist based in South Florida
  - Past president of SPJ Florida chapter
-



## Weeks leading up to Election Day are CRAZY

- Candidates participate in debates, react to breaking news, politicians and groups will share their support for candidates, and more.
  - Newsrooms also generate *a lot* of stories from polls released by agencies around the country — research centers, think tanks, and universities.
-

Who conducts polls?

ELECTION

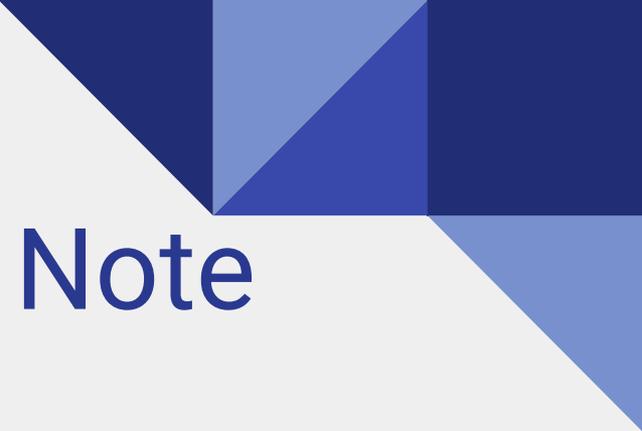
**SOS**

The logo consists of the word "ELECTION" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, followed by a white speech bubble icon containing the word "SOS" in red, lowercase, bold, sans-serif font. The speech bubble has a white outline and a small tail pointing towards the bottom-left.



# Major Polling Agencies

- FiveThirtyEight
- Quinnipiac University  
Polling Institute
- Rasmussen Reports
- Pew Research Center
- Gallup Poll
- Monmouth University  
Polling Institute
- Marquette Law Poll
- Public Policy Polling



# Other Agencies to Note

- Williams Institute and Gill Foundation focus on LGBT issues
- American Association for Public Opinion Research

What should I look at when reading a poll?

ELECTION

**SOS**

The logo consists of the word "ELECTION" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, followed by a white speech bubble icon containing the word "SOS" in red, lowercase, bold, sans-serif font.



**When was the poll conducted?**

**As we've learned in 2020, a LOT can happen in a short period of time!**

**People are constantly changing their minds, and swing voters might be swayed by developments.**

**How many people were polled?**

**Is the number of people they talked to enough to correlate to the whole country?**

**Who conducted the poll?**

**Is the pollster a reliable, reputable source?**

**How long have they been around, what is their record?**

**How was the poll conducted?**

**Was the poll only done in certain states?**

**What method did they use?**

**Check the word choice**

**People can be swayed by using different words.  
Example: Obamacare versus Affordable Care Act.**

## Margin of error

Each poll will share their margin of error on the poll, as nothing can be 100 percent perfect.

## Question anomalies

If the results look strange to you, try and investigate how they got the numbers they did.

Can also compare to other polls and what results they came to.



How are polls conducted?

ELECTION

**SOS**

The logo consists of the word "ELECTION" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, followed by a white speech bubble icon containing the word "SOS" in red, lowercase, bold, sans-serif font. The speech bubble has a tail pointing towards the bottom-left.



## **Live/Traditional Polling**

Interviewers will call people and go down a line of questions, particularly asking how strongly they feel about someone/something. Thought to be the most reliable.

## **Interactive voice response**

“Robopolling,” an automated script is used to ask questions on the phone.

## **Online**

People online can fill out surveys on web pages or receive surveys via email

---

Let's check out some polls

ELECTION

**SOS**

The logo consists of the word "ELECTION" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, followed by a white speech bubble icon containing the word "SOS" in red, lowercase, bold, sans-serif font.



**FiveThirtyEight:** [Republicans Are Less Confident Than Democrats That The Election Will Be Conducted Fairly](#)

**Pew Research Center:** [Political Divides, Conspiracy Theories and Divergent News Sources Heading Into 2020 Election](#)

**Monmouth University:** [Voters Split on Filling SCOTUS Seat](#)

Got  
questions?

- [christiana.lilly@gmail.com](mailto:christiana.lilly@gmail.com)
  - Twitter: @christianalilly
-