



This year in Harper Polling's *Our Commonwealth Poll*, we have burning insights into everything from Pennsylvanians' favorite salad dressings to their happiness and peculiar regional dialects. Plus, a series on perceptions of professional athletes, construction workers, CEOs and more.

### ***Personal Preferences***

#### ***The Potato Chip Belt***

Utz (31%) has a narrow advantage over Herr's (29%) as the champion of the [Potato Chip Belt](#), followed distantly by Snyder's of Hanover (12%). Natives of PA are more likely to prefer Herr's (31%) and Utz (32%) while Snyder's of Hanover ticks up slightly among non-natives (19%). Utz spikes in popularity in the Northern Tier (38%) and South Central (49%) regions of the state, while Herr's takes the lead in Philadelphia and the Southeast (47%, 27% Utz) and Pittsburgh and the Southwest (35%, 17% Utz) regions. Scranton and the Lehigh Valley residents are split between Herr's (32%) and Utz (30%) potato chips.

#### ***Ranch for the Win***

Pennsylvanians prefer good old-fashioned creamy Ranch dressing on our salad (26%). Blue Cheese is next (17%), followed by Italian (15%). The more sensible Balsamic Vinaigrette comes in fourth in the Commonwealth (13%), with French (11%) and Thousand Island (11%) trailing. Balsamic Vinaigrette is more likely to be the choice of the learned as 27% of Post Graduate degree holders give it a drizzle. Ranch is the top choice around Pittsburgh (40%), as well as in the Northern Tier (28%) and South Central PA (27%). Blue Cheese tops out around Philadelphia (21%) while Scranton and the Lehigh Valley are torn between Ranch (21%), Italian (22%) and Blue Cheese (20%).

#### ***Vacation Destination***

The Jersey Shore [remains on top](#) as the favorite vacation destination of Pennsylvanians (33%), followed by Maryland's Eastern Shore (16%), The Poconos (15%) and New York City (12%). Pennsylvania Natives are nearly twice as likely to prefer The Poconos (15%) as non-natives (8%). Summers down the shore can't be beat in Philadelphia and the Southeast (55%). In Scranton and the Lehigh Valley, residents pick the Jersey Shore (34%) over the Poconos (20%). South Central Pennsylvanians split their vacation loyalty between the Jersey Shore (28%) and Maryland's Eastern Shore (24%).

#### ***Punxsutawney Phil vs. Local Meteorologist***

Nearly 1-in-5 [Pennsylvania faithful](#) believe Punxsutawney Phil is more accurate in predicting the end of winter than their local meteorologist.

Which begs the question, which media market in the state has the honor of being considered the least accurate in comparison to vermin? That would be Erie, where 28% place more faith in Punxsutawney Phil than their local meteorologist (68%). You live on a giant lake, people. Erie is followed by the Pittsburgh market (22%). Local meteorologists in the Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon York (80%) and Wilkes-Barre-Scranton-Hazleton (72%) markets fair a bit better on the confidence meter.

### ***Soda or Pop?***

Nearly 1-in-4 Pennsylvanians will ask for a “pop” when they want a carbonated soft drink. But it’s primarily part of the regional dialect around Pittsburgh where 7-in-10 use the term. Pop also sees an uptick in the Northern Tier (37%). People in Philadelphia and the Southeast, (97%), Scranton and the Lehigh Valley (97%) and South Central PA (88%) all decidedly say “soda.” Overall PA natives are twice as likely to say “pop” (27%) as non-natives (13%).

### ***“You All”***

We asked Pennsylvanians how they say the words “You all” and there were some notable regional differences. More than a third of those around [Pittsburgh](#) say “Yinz” while in Scranton and the Lehigh Valley you are more likely to hear “yous” or “yous guys” (19% each). Very Conservative people are much more likely to say “Y’all” (20%). People in the Southwest (30%) are the least likely to correctly pronounce “You all” (30%) while those in the Southeast are the most likely (55%). Sooo proper.

### ***80s Music***

A surprising 63% of Pennsylvanians like [80s music](#). People who weren’t even alive during the 1980s are almost twice as likely to like its music than those who lived through the decade as parents (18-39: 72%, 75+: 43%). [Girls](#) (68%) like 80s music more than boys (58%).

### ***Lemon in your water?***

For our annual [question-lazily-thought-up-in-a-diner](#), 60% of Pennsylvanians say “yes” to the question, “lemon in your water?” (35% no). People who make over \$251,000 are the only income group to find displeasure in water with lemon (35% yes/65% no). Because Perrier has lemon flavor built in, you peasants. Women are far more likely to prefer lemon in their water (65%/30%) than men (55%/42%).

### ***Beards***

So this [beard thing](#) is still going strong. But Pennsylvanians come down against beards by an 8% margin (40% yes/48% no). Sorry fellas, you might like them (47%/42%), but a majority of women do not (34%/52%). Across the state, beards hit their highest popularity in Pittsburgh (51%/35%).

### ***Philexit?***

We briefly explained Brexit to respondents and asked them “*which region of Pennsylvania would you most like to see leave the Commonwealth in its own Brexit?*” Nearly a third of respondents would vote Philadelphia and the Southeast off the island (29%). Regional breaks reveal that everybody wants Philadelphia to leave, [including Philadelphia](#) (Northern Tier: 31%, Philadelphia/SE: 26%, Pittsburgh/SW: 28%, Scranton/LV: 34%, South Central: 28%).

### ***Professions & Institutions***

We tested how Pennsylvanians perceive people, professions and institutions in society.

1. [Small Business Owners](#) are the most popular group tested in the survey (91%/3%). Nearly two-thirds of Pennsylvanians report a *very favorable* opinion of small business owners (63%). Through the lens of income, small business owner favorability peaks among those who report an annual income of \$51-75,000 (69% *very favorable*) and \$76-100,000 (73% *very favorable*), close in range to the income for the average [small business owner](#).
2. **Police Officers** receive the second most favorable image at 86% favorable (60% *very favorable*), and have high favorable ratings from Pennsylvanians of all ages (18-39: 81% total favorable, 40-54: 83%, 55-64: 81%, 65-74: 88%, 65+: 94%). They are followed by...
3. **Construction Workers** boast an impressive 84% favorable rating among Pennsylvanians (43% *very favorable*). Hard hats in this heat earn the respects of all survey demographics.

4. **Doctors** are also very well thought of by Pennsylvanians (83%/11%). Those who completed “some high school or below” are more likely to have a *very* favorable opinion of doctors (66%) than those with a Post Graduate degree (46%). Among Pennsylvanians making over \$251,000, doctors’ *very* favorable number soars to 82%. Another way of saying that doctors hold themselves in high regard.
5. [\*Professional Athletes\*](#) come in at a surprising fourth place with almost half of all Pennsylvanians having a favorable opinion of pro athletes (49%).
6. Nearly half of Pennsylvanians have a favorable perception of **Lawyers** (48% favorable/36% unfavorable). Lawyers have their largest net favorable rating in Philadelphia (52%/34%). Women (57%/25%) think higher of lawyers than do men (37%/50%).
7. [\*Popular Culture\*](#) has a net negative image in Pennsylvania (37%/48%). People who are registered voters are twice as less likely to have a *very* unfavorable view of pop culture (21%) as have a *very* favorable view (9%). High School graduates (43%/42%) and below (59%/38%) in education attainment have a more favorable view of pop culture than College graduates (31%/55%) and those with a Post graduate degree (33%/59%).
8. [\*Pollsters\*](#) have a net negative image among Pennsylvanians (34%/45%). Republicans dislike pollsters (32%/47%) more than Democrats (43%/42%). Who cares what you think anyways.
9. **Hollywood** is viewed unfavorably by 57% of Pennsylvanians (30% favorable). Democrats are substantially more likely to have a favorable opinion of Hollywood (41%/46%) than Republicans (24%/66%).
10. In contrast to small business owners, **CEOs and Corporate Executives** are viewed unfavorably by a majority of Pennsylvanians (58%, 30% favorable). People who are the “boss” in their work setting are more bullish on CEOs (38%) than those who are the employee (27%/65%). Very Liberals are far more likely to have a *very* unfavorable opinion of CEOs (43%) than Very Conservatives (23%).

## ***Pennsylvania’s State of Being***

### ***Happiness***

Forty-two percent of Pennsylvanians believe they are “happier than the average Pennsylvanian”, while 34% say they are “about as happy” and 19% consider themselves “not as happy.” Does money buy happiness? The percentage of people considering themselves “happier” generally increases as income increases (%25K or less: 32%, \$26-50K: 34%, \$51-75K: 31%, \$76-100K: 38%, \$101-250K: 58%, \$251K+: 54%), but a note of caution as those making over \$251K also register the highest “not as happy” number (46%).



People who are the boss at work consider themselves happier (51%) while employees are more likely to say they are about as happy (44%). Married people are more likely to say they are “happier” than the average Pennsylvanian (44%) than divorced people (29%) and single people (32%). Single people are the most likely to be “not as happy” (31%, married: 15%, divorced: 18%).

### ***Intelligence***

Intelligence appears to be a greater source of pride than happiness, as people are more willing to say they are “not as happy” (19%) than that they are “not as smart” (7%) than the average Pennsylvanian. A 46% plurality say they are “smarter” and 41% “about as smart.” Bosses are far more likely to believe they are “smarter” (59%) than the average Pennsylvanian than employees are (47%, 43% about as smart). Very Liberals overwhelmingly say they are “smarter” (70%) while Very Conservatives are a bit more divided (53% smarter, 39% about as smart). People with a college or post graduate degree describe themselves as smarter than average (college: 51% smarter, post grad: 86%), while those with some college (52% about as smart), a high school degree (53%) or some high school (46%) say they are “about as smart.”

### ***Health***

Health is the only issue where the plurality of Pennsylvanians feel they are about on the same level as their peers, with 46% saying they are “about as healthy.” Thirty-three percent say healthier, while 20% are not as healthy. In Pittsburgh and the Southwest, where you’ll recall Ranch was the dressing of choice, people are most likely to describe themselves as “not as healthy” (27%, 24% Northern Tier). Apparently Pennsylvania has an active and self-confident elderly community as 45% of those 75 or older describe themselves as “healthier” than the average Pennsylvanian.

### ***To prep or not to prep***

More than 1 in 4 Pennsylvanians say the United States is “very likely” to “face a catastrophic event that threatens our power or water supply in the next 10 years.” A majority of Very Conservatives say this is “very likely” (56%) while Very Liberals are less convinced (49% somewhat likely, 27% very likely). By education level, people with a Post Graduate degree are the least likely to say a catastrophic event is very likely to occur (18%). Whether imminent or not, 58% say their family is not prepared “for a catastrophic even that threatens our power or water supply.”

*METHODOLOGY: The sample size for the survey is 500 adults in Pennsylvania and the margin of error is +/-4.4%. Responses were gathered through land line interviews conducted using Interactive Voice Response (IVR). The survey was conducted July 10-11, 2016 by Harper Polling. The total percentages for responses may not equal 100% due to rounding.*