

Video: Public Opinion Voice of the People

Link: http://www.learner.org/vod/vod_window.html?pid=1921

1. A Change of Heart About Federalizing Airport Security

- Why did the Republicans eventually give in on the airport security bill?
- How did political leaders know what the public wanted?
- Is this example atypical of the power of public opinion?

2. The Voice of the People. Really?

- What was wrong with Mr. Perot's poll?
- What would he have needed to do to create a better poll?
- What kinds of things should we, as consumers of polls, know about polling in order to evaluate their accuracy?

3. The Case of Vermont and Its Civil Unions Legislation

- How did Vermont's citizens express their views on civil unions?
- Polls can show what position people may take on issues, but it does not do a good job of showing the intensity of those feelings. Given that, should they be ignored in favor of participation in rallies or letter-writing campaigns?
- Given public opinion on this issue, did Senator MacDonald do the right thing?