

Shallow media coverage leads to misperceptions in Southern Illinois

John Jackson, a veteran political scientist at the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University, recently told a room of newspaper editors that the media are partly to blame for the misperception held by most residents of Southe

rn Illinois that they don't get their fair share from the government.

Almost eight of ten residents of the 18 southern counties in Illinois told Simon pollsters that they got less than their fair share in state spending. Jackson says that clearly false belief results partly from shallow media coverage.

David Yepsen, director of the Simon Institute, agreed. He told editors from the Southern Illinois Editorial Association that one way to address the narrow view of some voters is to foster statewide public broadcasting networks. He pointed to statewide networks in places such as Wisconsin and Iowa as models. Yepsen said that he hopes to foster a similar system in Illinois.

Another striking finding of the Southern Illinois poll is that a 51 percent majority of this conservative, but poor portion of the state would favor government efforts to redistribute income. More residents think that people are rich because of their birth rather than hard work.

One other parochial view is that residents of Southern Illinois would be happy to kick out Chicago and let it set up its own state.

The survey of 400 registered voters from Illinois' southernmost 18 counties was conducted February 23 – 28 and has a margin for error of ± 4.9 percent.

<http://paulsimoninstitute.org/>