



MEMORANDUM

TO: NEVADA CAN DO BETTER

FROM: DAVE SACKETT

RE: KEY FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF VOTER ATTITUDES IN NEVADA REGARDING BUDGET PROPOSALS

DATE: FEBRUARY 24, 2015

The Tarrance Group is pleased to present “Nevada Can Do Better” with the key findings from a survey of voter attitudes in Nevada. These key findings are based on telephone interviews with N=500 “likely” registered voters throughout the state of Nevada. Responses to this survey were gathered February 21-23, 2015 and the margin of error associated with this sample is $\pm 4.5\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases.

(* there were several questions that were tested in a similar statewide survey in January only. These results have been noted in this memo with a notation indicating “January.”)

KEY FINDINGS

President Obama:

- President Obama stands with a 44% approve and fifty-one percent (51%) disapproval rating among Nevada voters, a job approval rating that is a net -2 points lower than his job approval rating across the country as a whole.

	Approve	Disapprove
ALL	44%	51%
Las Vegas DMA	46%	49%
Reno DMA	45%	51%
GOP	10%	87%
DEM	77%	18%
IND	36%	56%

Direction of Nevada:

- There has been no change in views about the direction of the state over the past forty-five days, and Nevada voters continue to have a very positive view about the direction of the state:

	Right Direction	Wrong Track
ALL	62%	30%
Las Vegas DMA	57%	34%
Reno DMA	77%	18%
GOP	63%	30%
DEM	60%	32%
IND	64%	26%

Governor Sandoval Image:

- There has also been no change in Governor Sandoval’s image ratings over the past forty-five days, and fully three quarters of the electorate continues to have a favorable impression of him:

	Favorable	Unfavorable
ALL	75%	17%
Las Vegas DMA	73%	18%
Reno DMA	81%	15%
GOP	85%	8%
DEM	67%	26%
IND	76%	15%

Views of State Legislature:

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No Opinion
ALL	40%	22%	39%
Las Vegas DMA	36%	24%	40%
Reno DMA	48%	19%	31%
GOP	45%	19%	45%
DEM	36%	26%	38%
IND	39%	18%	43%

Issue Matrix:

- As has been the case for more than fourteen months now, the issue matrix among Nevada voters is completely dominated by only two issues – jobs/economy, and education. These two issues alone consume fully two-thirds of the issue matrix.

	Jobs/Economy	Education
ALL	33%	32%
Las Vegas DMA	32%	36%
Reno DMA	37%	24%
GOP	38%	23%
DEM	29%	40%
IND	34%	31%

Rating Nevada’s Public School System:

	Excellent/Good	Fair	Poor
ALL	19%	39%	39%
Las Vegas DMA	13%	40%	43%
Reno DMA	28%	34%	32%
GOP	17%	39%	40%
DEM	20%	43%	34%
IND	18%	31%	46%

Rating Current Funding Level for K-12 Public Education System:

	More than enough	Right Amount	Not enough
ALL	12%	17%	67%
Las Vegas DMA	10%	19%	69%
Reno DMA	17%	12%	64%
GOP	18%	25%	52%
DEM	5%	11%	82%
IND	17%	17%	62%

Rating Nevada's Healthcare System:

	Excellent/Good	Fair	Poor
ALL	28%	47%	20%
Las Vegas DMA	26%	49%	21%
Reno DMA	35%	44%	16%
GOP	26%	46%	21%
DEM	31%	47%	20%
IND	27%	49%	18%

Rating Nevada's Mental Health System:

	Excellent/Good	Fair	Poor
ALL	11%	34%	42%
Las Vegas DMA	8%	33%	48%
Reno DMA	17%	38%	30%
GOP	9%	37%	39%
DEM	8%	35%	46%
IND	18%	30%	39%

VIEWS OF REVENUE ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

Business License:

Changing the business license fee, which is currently two hundred dollars annually for all companies, to a fee that is based on a company's revenue and charges larger companies more money. This proposal would cost small businesses approximately \$400 a year, and the cost of the fee would be higher for businesses and companies with higher revenue. This business license fee would raise approximately \$250 million dollars per year in revenue, with all the money being used to fund education.

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	56%	41%
Las Vegas DMA	58%	39%
Reno DMA	52%	46%
GOP	43%	54%
DEM	67%	31%
IND	55%	41%

Sales Tax - Specific:

Expand the state sales tax to include such services as haircuts, automotive services, and dry cleaning just to name a few, with all the money being used to fund education.

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	40%	57%
Las Vegas DMA	42%	55%
Reno DMA	34%	61%
GOP	26%	70%
DEM	52%	45%
IND	36%	59%

Sales Tax – Lower Rate:

Expand the state sales tax to include other services like haircuts, BUT - at the same time - lower the overall sales tax rate charged on everything by one to two percent, with all the money being used to fund education.

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	41%	50%
Las Vegas DMA	43%	49%
Reno DMA	37%	53%
GOP	32%	61%
DEM	48%	42%
IND	42%	48%

Expand Payroll Tax:

Expand the current state payroll tax to cover all businesses in Nevada – including small businesses – and double the current payroll tax rate

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	20%	73%
Las Vegas DMA	22%	73%
Reno DMA	18%	74%
GOP	10%	85%
DEM	30%	62%
IND	18%	77%

Cigarette Tax: (January)

Raising the cigarette tax from eighty cents per pack to a dollar per pack. This proposal would raise approximately forty one million dollars in revenue.

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	74%	24%
Las Vegas DMA	74%	24%
Reno DMA	74%	24%
GOP	70%	30%
DEM	78%	20%
IND	74%	22%

Slot Machine Tax: (January)

Changing the gaming license law to require slot machine operators who own more than seventy five machines to pay the gross gaming tax, like large casinos do, in addition to the regular fees on each slot machine. This proposal would raise approximately fifty million dollars.

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	63%	29%
Las Vegas DMA	65%	27%
Reno DMA	61%	31%
GOP	56%	36%
DEM	72%	20%
IND	59%	34%

VIEWS OF EDUCATION REFORM PROPOSALS

Teacher Union Bargaining:

Changing the way teachers unions are allowed to bargain for salary, benefits, disciplinary procedures, dismissal, and other items.

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	52%	35%
Las Vegas DMA	50%	37%
Reno DMA	56%	32%
GOP	59%	30%
DEM	46%	41%
IND	54%	31%

Read by 3rd Requirement:

Requiring that a student be able to read at grade level by the end of third grade, or he or she would not be promoted to fourth grade

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	81%	17%
Las Vegas DMA	81%	17%
Reno DMA	79%	17%
GOP	83%	15%
DEM	79%	19%
IND	80%	16%

Merit Pay:

Requiring school districts to set aside a portion of funding for merit pay or pay for performance for the best teachers

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	70%	27%
Las Vegas DMA	70%	27%
Reno DMA	69%	29%
GOP	72%	23%
DEM	65%	33%
IND	76%	22%

School Administrator Accountability:

Requiring that district administrators are held accountable with an evaluation the same way teachers are

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	91%	6%
Las Vegas DMA	90%	7%
Reno DMA	93%	3%
GOP	92%	4%
DEM	91%	8%
IND	89%	4%

Altering School Funding Formula:

Ensuring that all schools receive a guaranteed percentage of the funds that their enrolled students generate from the state funding formula, rather than sending the money to the district for allocation.

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	66%	21%
Las Vegas DMA	69%	20%
Reno DMA	61%	24%
GOP	67%	19%
DEM	66%	22%
IND	66%	22%

Funding Charter Schools:

Providing funding for public charter schools to construct or buy school facilities. Currently, public charter schools rent or find private money for construction. This proposal could almost double the number of charter schools in Nevada.

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	61%	33%
Las Vegas DMA	64%	30%
Reno DMA	55%	41%
GOP	68%	26%
DEM	54%	40%
IND	64%	29%

Full Day Kindergarten: (January)

Increasing state funding for school districts so that all schools can offer full-day kindergarten to parents who want it, even if it requires raising additional revenue.

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	65%	32%
Las Vegas DMA	69%	28%
Reno DMA	54%	43%
GOP	50%	48%
DEM	80%	17%
IND	60%	36%

Increased Funding for English Language Learners: (January)

Increasing state spending for English language learners.

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	54%	41%
Las Vegas DMA	56%	38%
Reno DMA	48%	47%
GOP	37%	58%
DEM	68%	27%
IND	54%	39%

Increased Funding for Gifted & Talented: (January)

Increasing state spending for gifted and talented students

	Favor	Oppose
ALL	70%	26%
Las Vegas DMA	75%	21%
Reno DMA	60%	37%
GOP	65%	32%
DEM	76%	22%
IND	69%	26%

VIEWS OF NON-EDUCATION REFORM PROPOSALS

Reforming Construction Defect Law:

Changing Nevada’s construction defect law to restrict the definition of what constitutes a home defect, repeal the provision that allows attorneys to collect fees and costs in a home defect judgment, and require specific descriptions of defects

	Favor	Unsure	Oppose
ALL	47%	17%	37%
Las Vegas DMA	46%	17%	37%
Reno DMA	50%	15%	35%
GOP	50%	18%	32%
DEM	44%	16%	40%
IND	48%	15%	37%

Exempt School Construction from Prevailing Wage:

Exempting public school construction projects in Nevada from the prevailing wage law, and allowing wages for construction workers on school construction projects to be paid based on free-market costs, instead of on a wage scale established by the state’s labor commissioner

	Favor	Unsure	Oppose
ALL	56%	8%	36%
Las Vegas DMA	55%	9%	37%
Reno DMA	57%	7%	36%
GOP	63%	10%	37%
DEM	47%	7%	46%
IND	61%	9%	30%

Revising Public Employee Retirement:

Changing the Nevada Public Employees Retirement system for new public employees to a defined contribution benefit system, similar to what employees in private companies receive.

	Favor	Unsure	Oppose
ALL	63%	9%	28%
Las Vegas DMA	64%	10%	26%
Reno DMA	61%	6%	33%
GOP	68%	7%	25%
DEM	53%	11%	36%
IND	74%	8%	18%

Democrat & Independent Voter Message Testing:

- As part of the interview, registered Democrats and Independents were informed that organized labor is opposed to the budget proposal and asked to react to this information.

As you may or may not know, organized labor opposes most of these reforms and will be urging State Legislators to vote “no-against” the Governor’s budget because they believe that the negative impact of the other reforms is more important than increasing funding for education. Thinking about this issue –

Would you favor or oppose your own State Legislator taking into account the strong opposition of organized labor to these reforms, and voting “no-against” Governor Sandoval’s budget proposal, even though it increases state funding for education?

	Favor	Unsure	Oppose
ALL DEM	37%	13%	50%
Las Vegas DMA DEM	38%	14%	48%
Reno DMA DEM	35%	10%	54%
DEM Men	51%	12%	37%
DEM Women	28%	14%	58%
All IND	37%	13%	50%
Las Vegas DMA IND	32%	14%	54%
Reno DMA IND	47%	9%	43%
IND Men	38%	14%	48%
IND Women	35%	11%	54%

Republican Voter Message Testing:

- As would be expected, Republican voters have a negative reaction to the blanket statement that a Legislator voted for a state budget that raised taxes by \$1 billion. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of Republicans indicate they would be less likely to vote for this candidate.

- However, when Republican voters are exposed to a thematic construct that focused on the whole budget package, Republican voters react in a significantly positive fashion:

Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a Republican State Legislator in a Republican primary election that voted for a package of conservative reforms including pension reform, lawsuit reform, school choice, merit pay for teachers, and stricter academic requirements for students, and voted to raise taxes to be able to increase funding for K-12 education?

	More Likely	No Difference	Less Likely
ALL GOP	62%	7%	32%
Las Vegas DMA GOP	64%	6%	31%
Reno DMA GOP	59%	5%	36%
GOP Men	56%	7%	38%
GOP Women	66%	7%	27%

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