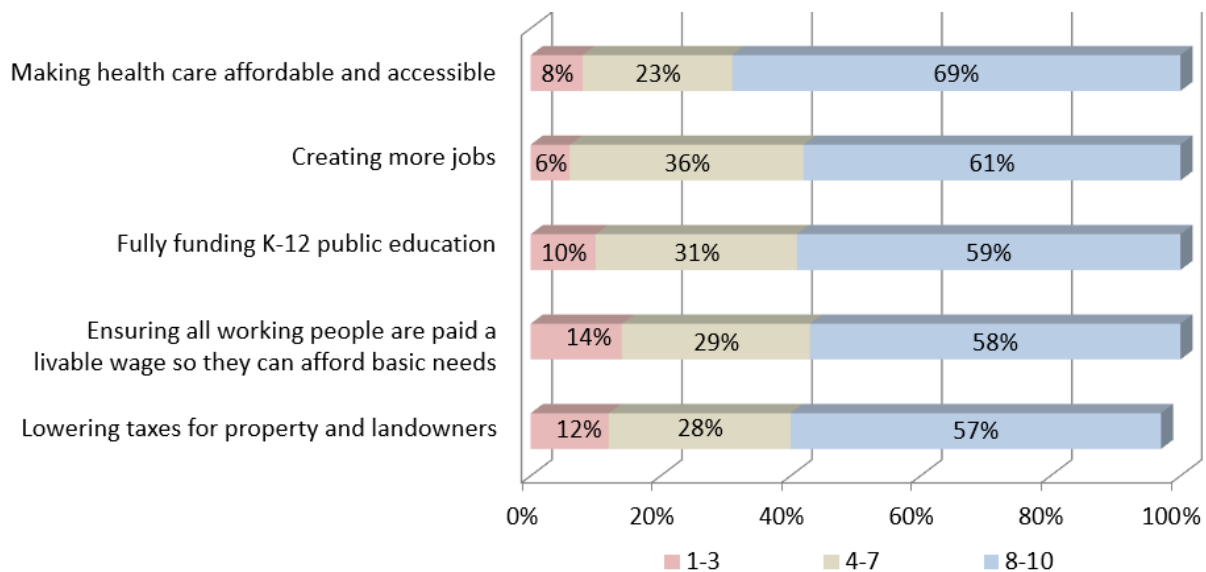




TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Patinkin Research Strategies, LLC
Ben Patinkin and Maggie Simich
RE: March 19-25th, 2019 Nebraska Statewide Issues Survey
Date: April 6, 2020

Issue Priorities

Worries about state performance on specific issues mirror broad policy priorities Nebraskans believe will be “helpful to you and your family.” As shown in [figure 1](#) below top tier priorities for Nebraskans include affordable/accessible healthcare (69%), creating more jobs (61%), fully funding K-12 public education (59%) and ensuring all working people are paid a livable wage so they can afford basic needs (58%).



Now I'm going to read you a series of proposed policies that the Nebraska state government could adopt. Please rate each of them on a scale from 1 to 10, in which 1 means not at all helpful to you and your family, and 10 means extremely helpful to you and your family. You may choose any number from 1 to 10. The higher the number, the more helpful the proposal is to you and your family.

Opinion on these points has changed little from the summer of 2019. The one outlier is willingness to say that “lowering taxes for property and landowners” will help Nebraskan individuals and families. While our July 2019 survey indicated it was the second highest priority

(64%) behind healthcare (70%), today its overall salience has fallen to the 5th highest priority slot at just 57%.

State Performance

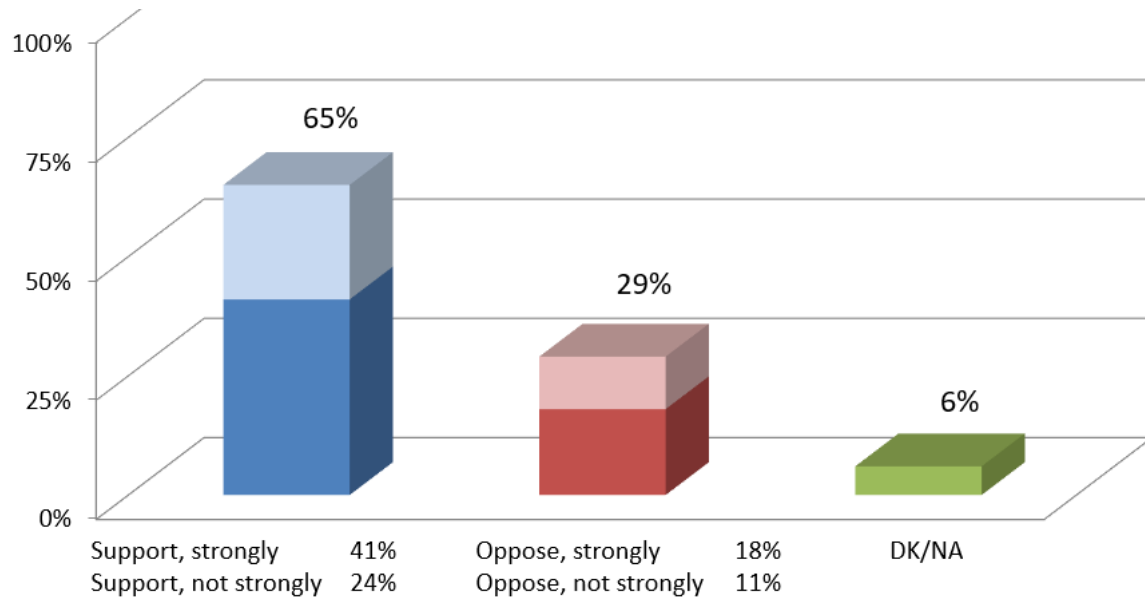
Nebraska voters currently provide the state with failing grades on a number of issue areas. As noted in [figure 2](#), these include vocational training (52% negative), ensuring workers are paid reasonable wages (61% negative), access to paid family leave (61% negative) and paid sick leave (62% negative), access to affordable childcare (64% negative) and ensuring access to affordable college tuitions (70% negative).

<i>Please tell me if you think state government in Nebraska is doing an excellent, good, just fair, poor job on each of the following:</i>	Positive	Negative	Positive Margin
Providing job training and access to career, technical and vocational education that is affordable	45%	52%	-7
Ensuring workers are paid reasonable wages so they can afford basic needs	38%	61%	-23
Supporting workers with benefits like paid sick leave	36%	62%	-26
Supporting workers with benefits like paid family leave	35%	61%	-26
Making childcare more available and affordable	30%	64%	-34
Providing necessary funding to make sure college tuition is affordable	27%	70%	-43

When asked to volunteer which groups they believe the state government focuses on helping most, the clear winner is “the wealthy” (22%). Another 11% say the state is unbiased, focusing on everyone equally, while 8% identify the middle class, 7% identify farmers/ranchers/rural Nebraskans and 6% identify working families or vulnerable/low income Nebraskans.

K-12 Public Education

While a majority (62%) believe the state is “providing high quality public education,” most believe it should invest even more in Nebraska’s future leaders. When asked whether they “support or oppose removing tax incentives provided to profitable Nebraska businesses in order to expand K-12 education to include pre-K early childhood education in Nebraska,” nearly two-thirds (65%) line up in favor as outlined in [figure 3](#) on page three. What’s more, there’s bipartisan support for expanding education funding to include early childhood education with 54% of Republicans, 69% of independents and 79% of Democrats expressing support.



Do you support or oppose removing tax incentives provided to profitable Nebraska businesses in order to expand K through 12 education to include pre-K early childhood education in Nebraska?

In another question, nearly three-quarters of Nebraskans (74%) oppose “efforts to stimulate the economy by reducing taxes for big corporations—even if it means less money will be available for education, roads and other services.” Less than one-quarter (23%) support the concept. Opposition is bipartisan in nature with 59% of independents, 68% of Republicans and 88% of Democrats opposed to the idea.

And when asked whether the state should invest in higher education and vocational training as opposed to providing tax breaks and incentives to private sector job creators the intensity of feeling is squarely in favor of the former policy point. Exactly six-in-10 (60%) say they agree that “state government should be investing in higher education and making job training and career, technical and vocational training more accessible to grow and support our workforce.” Conversely, fewer than four-in-10 (38%) say they’d prefer that “state government should continue giving more tax breaks and incentives to private sector job creators that will encourage them to develop and support the workforce in Nebraska.”

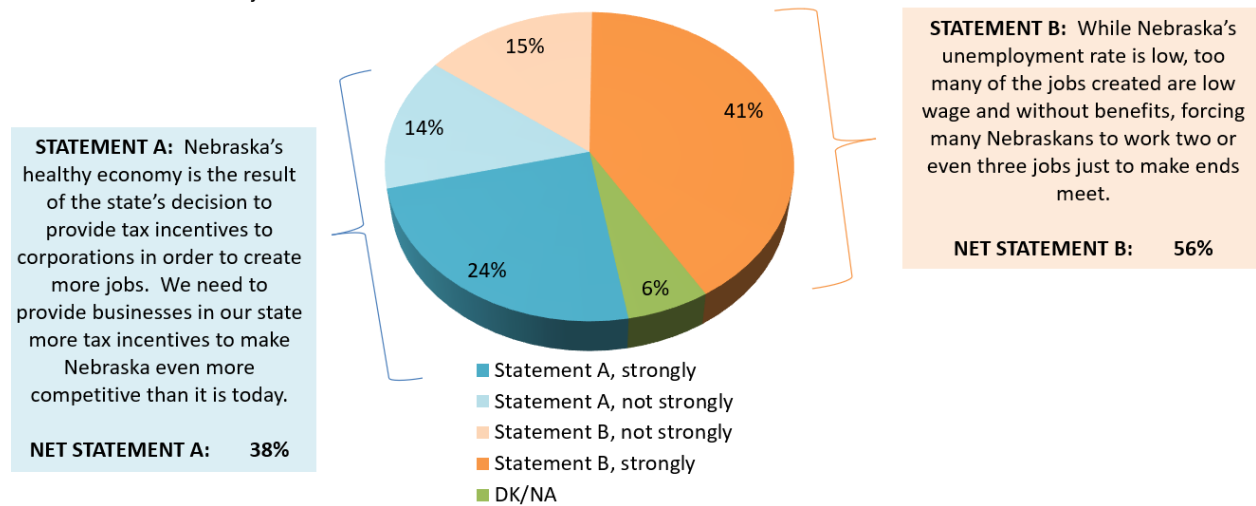
When asked to choose why local property taxes are high, a majority (56%) put the blame on state government because it “underfunds public education and as a result our property taxes are high and many kids get left behind.” Less than four-in-10 (38%) subscribe to the concept that “state government in Nebraska properly funds our kids’ schools. Property taxes are high because local school districts waste taxpayers’ money.”

Jobs

As noted on page two above, Nebraskans in mid to late March prioritized “creating more jobs” (61%). However, they want to make sure their government ensures “all working people are paid a livable wage so they can afford basic needs” (58%)—and they want this despite the fact that by the dates this survey was in the field the U.S. economy was already headed into recession.

Indeed, this survey specifically asked whether Nebraska’s leaders should be more focused on *increasing the number of jobs available in the state -or- increasing pathways that allow Nebraskan workers access to quality high paying jobs with benefits*. In response, nearly six-in-10 (58%) said they’d like a greater focus on quality over quantity, while fewer than four-in-10 (37%) were only focused on the quantity of jobs created.

This sentiment is reflected in *figure 4 below*. A majority (56%) of Nebraskans believe that while unemployment in mid-March was low, it was marred by the fact that many of these employment opportunities were “low wage and without benefits, forcing many Nebraskans to work two or even three jobs just to make ends meet.” As the pandemic subsides, the issue of high-quality jobs should be kept front and center on leaders’ to-do lists—particularly given voters’ unwillingness to set it issue aside as unemployment claims skyrocketed during the course of this survey.



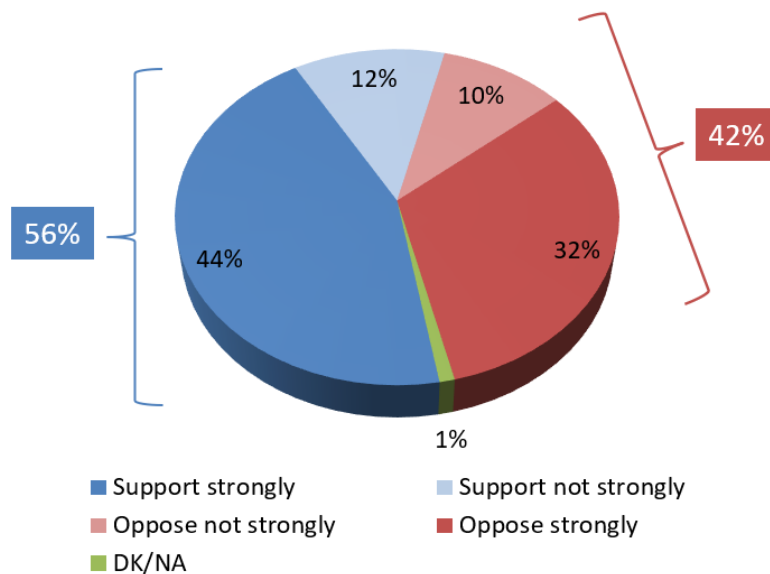
I’m now going to read you two points of view regarding Nebraska’s economy. Having heard these two points of view, which one comes closest to your own point of view even if neither is exactly right?

Asked which potential policy priorities would help “ensure Nebraskans have access to more high-quality jobs,” respondents identify three top concerns. These include (in order of importance on a scale from 1-10 where 1 means it would do nothing to increase the quality of jobs in Nebraska and 10 means it would significantly increase the quality of jobs in Nebraska):

- 1) Prohibiting workplace discrimination (62% who rank this 8-10);
- 2) Ensuring all Nebraska workers are earning a livable wage (61% who rank this 8-10);
- 3) Creating more opportunities and pathways to secondary and higher education and career training (57% who rank this 8-10).

Healthcare

As noted on page one above, Nebraskans in mid-March gave the state failing grades on its ability to provide paid sick (62% negative) and family leave (61%). Other questioning in the survey corroborates these findings. As noted in [figure 5](#) below, a majority (56%) express support for the establishment of a paid family and medical leave program for every worker in Nebraska by increasing taxes on the wealthiest four percent of Nebraskans. Around four-in-10 (42% are opposed).



Would you support or oppose establishing a paid family and medical leave program for every worker in Nebraska by increasing income taxes on the wealthiest four percent of Nebraskans?

Given voter’s robust support for “making healthcare more affordable and available” (69%), it should come as no surprise that registered voters are concerned over Governor Ricketts’ actions on Medicaid Expansion. Nearly six-in-10 (59%) said they were net “concerned” over the Governor’s desire to add restrictions on who qualifies for the voter-approved Medicaid expansion measure and the resultant delay in implementation.

Asked what concerns them most, one-in-five (22%) say that the Governor is unfairly limiting access to the kids and seniors most in need. Another 14% say that they disapprove of his refusal to follow the will of the people, while 8% say that the delay in implementation itself is concerning.

Survey methods

These data reflect a survey conducted by Patinkin Research Strategies on behalf of the Holland Children's Institute. The survey was conducted March 19th through 25th, 2020 among n=900 registered Nebraskan voters. The survey was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers. Respondents were contacted via both landlines and cell phones with cell phones representing 45% of the sample. The margin of error for the sample as a whole is plus or minus 3.25 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.