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Nebraskans Give State Government Failing Grades for Pandemic Response, Economic Policy

OMAHA, NE - Holland Children's Institute, a nonpartisan nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization releases survey results of ongoing Nebraska Voters' Outlook series, a statewide public opinion research initiative measuring Nebraskans' insights into policy impacting children and families.

Nebraska Voters' Outlook is commissioned by the Institute and conducted in partnership with Patinkin Research Strategies, LLC January 4 - January 7, 2021 among 616 registered Nebraska voters across the state.

Respondents believing Nebraska was heading in "the right direction" fell sharply from 64 percent to 46 percent, since similar research was conducted in March of 2020. Respondents believing the state was on "the wrong track" increased from 29 percent to 43 percent over the past 10 months. Similarly, Governor and state Legislature approval ratings have also fallen, 63 percent (March 2020) v. 51 percent (January 2021), and 64 percent (March 2020) v. 53 percent (January 2021) respectively.

"The reasons for Nebraskan's recent drop in approval of state government leaders become clear when comparing the broad support for policies they believe would best support families, and the perceptions of failure on behalf of Nebraska state government leaders to provide them," explained Hadley Richters - Holland Children's Institute CEO. **"It's not surprising during a public health and economic crisis Nebraskans would have even stronger opinions regarding policies they believe would best help them and their families, and the ability of state government to deliver on those policies."**

A majority of Nebraskans believe state government is failing to adequately provide job training (53 percent); ensure workers are paid reasonable wages (56 percent); provide access to paid sick and family leave (55 percent); increase access to affordable childcare (59 percent); and ensure access to affordable college tuition (62 percent).

When considering the state's COVID-19 pandemic, respondents were evenly split, with 44 percent believing "the worst is yet to come," and 44 percent believing "the worst is over." Nebraskans are experiencing hardship during the pandemic, 36 percent reporting that they, or someone in their household, has been "laid off," or "had hours reduced, or "taken a pay cut" due to COVID-19. Another 23 percent report they "will have trouble paying bills over the next few months."

There is overwhelming support for programs designed to provide support during a public health, economic crisis. Nearly seven-in-10 (69 percent) believe it is "extremely important" or "very important" that Nebraska's Legislature ensure "health care for low-income Nebraskans;" implement an "eviction moratorium" (70 percent); provide "unemployment assistance" (72 percent); and deliver "food assistance" (79 percent) to alleviate suffering amidst the pandemic.

"The trend of support for these economic policies among Nebraskans is consistently strong," explains Richters. **"Voters have strong opinions on the kinds of economic policy they believe help them and their families, yet a disconnect continues exist among voters' support and state government's lack of focus on these policies."**

Seven-in-10 Nebraskans are supportive of eliminating the state's tipped minimum wage. Strong majorities also favor establishing a paid family and medical leave policy, funded through an income tax on the wealthiest 4 percent of Nebraskans (61 percent) and raising the minimum wage in Nebraska to \$15 per hour (56 percent).

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Methodology

The survey was conducted January 4th through the 7th, 2021 among n=616 registered Nebraskan voters. Approximately n=250 interviews were completed via live calls to landlines and cell phones using professional interviewers (n=257 weighted), n=250 interviews were completed using Dynata's online panel (n=252 weighted), and an additional n=116 interviews were completed via a text to web platform (n=107 weighted). Telephone interviews were conducted via both landlines and cell phones. Cell phone interviews represent 54% of live calls. The margin of error for the sample is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

About Holland Children's Institute: Our vision is for Nebraska to become the national beacon in economic security and opportunity for all children and working families. The Holland Children's Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. www.hollandinstitute.org Twitter: @HcInstitute Facebook: @HollandInstitute