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State government and Nebraskans split on policy priorities

OMAHA, NE - Holland Children's Institute, a nonpartisan nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, releases survey results of its ongoing Nebraska Voters' Outlook (NVO) 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, March 16-21, 2022, surveyed 620 registered Nebraska voters across the state.

Latest public opinion research shows wide majorities of voters in Nebraska believe that state government prioritizes breaks for the wealthiest and big business, at the expense of children and families. When asked open-endedly who they believe state government focuses on helping the most "corporations and the wealthiest" ranked number one in response. While a significant majority (69%) of Nebraska voters are in opposition to state government giving more tax cuts to corporations and those making over \$400,000, and a majority total (54%) who strongly oppose this proposal.

"Results show voters do not believe state government is delivering for average, working Nebraskans," states Holland Children's Institute CEO, Hadley Richters. "And the negative perceptions of state performance on policies affecting children and families should be a wake-up call to lawmakers."

Clear and broad consensus exists among voters on where state lawmakers should be focused and investing funds to help children and families. Priorities include "fully funding K-12 education" (71%) and "ensuring Medicaid covers all uninsured, eligible Nebraska children" (70%). Among the lower priorities numbers are still in or near majority, "expanding access to school-based health care for children in need" (57%), and "ensuring affordable housing" (48%).

Voters strongly support fully funding public schools and children's health care, and strongly oppose more breaks for corporations and Nebraska's wealthiest residents. Yet, state lawmakers continue to focus legislative efforts and budget proposals which undermine the public's priorities," says Richters.

Popular legislative proposals considered by NVO respondents yielded mixed results. Robust support emerged for increased access to polling places and drop boxes (74% favor). Strong support also exists for a \$15 minimum. Notably, support for a \$15 Nebraska minimum wage increased significantly in the past year (+16 since July 2021). A slim majority support tax credits for private school savings accounts (51%), but nearly two-thirds oppose both public funding of charter schools (65%) and cutting taxes for corporations and wealthy Nebraskans (69%).

Lawmakers must consider these results to better align legislative action with public policy priorities, and deliver better outcomes for Nebraska children and families.

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Methodology

This analysis is based on a survey conducted by Patinkin Research Strategies on behalf of the Holland Children's Institute. The survey was conducted March 16-21, 2022 among n=620 registered Nebraskan voters. Approximately n=250 interviews were completed via live calls to landlines and cell phones using professional interviewers (n=255 weighted), n=250 interviews were completed using Dynata's online panel (n=252 weighted), and an additional n=121 interviews were completed via a text to web platform (n=113 weighted). Telephone interviews were conducted via both landlines and cell phones. Cell phone interviews represent 48% of live calls. The overall credibility interval (the theoretical margin of error for a poll that relies partially on non-probability based online sampling is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

The survey sample was randomly selected from TargetSmart's enhanced voter file and quotas and weights were set based on education, age, gender, party registration, party identification, 2020 presidential vote choice, county, and race to reflect a statistically representative universe of registered voters in Nebraska. Weights and quotas specific to education (based on census data), party registration, party identification (avg. of the three past surveys), and 2020 presidential vote choice were set specifically to reduce the impact of differential non-response bias and ensure an accurate representation of more conservative Republican and independent voters based on numerous post-election 2020 analyses conducted by both Republican and Democratic polling firms. The multi-modal platform selected for this research project (the current gold standard in research design) was also implemented to minimize the impact of differential non-response bias.