

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nebraska Voters Outlook: Perceptions of State Government's Performance and Funding Priorities for the Nebraska Legislature

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, February 1-5, 2023, and surveyed 600 registered Nebraska voters across the state.

Our latest public opinion research indicates that a majority of Nebraskans believe the state government is not doing enough to help working families get ahead (58%). When asked open-endedly what they would like the state to focus on regarding tax reform (47%), a combination of voters would like to see property tax be lowered and the tax burden reduced for the middle class while the wealthy/big corporations pay their fair share. Nebraskans would like to see investments in assistance programs and infrastructure (7%), education/child care (6%), transportation infrastructure (14%), and health care/paid family leave (9%).

"Nebraskans are right to be concerned about the state government's failure to invest and focus on the real needs of the people," states Holland Children's Institute CEO, Hadley Richters. "Many are still recovering from the effects of the pandemic while trying to keep up with the astronomical height of inflation. Elected officials and government must put Nebraskans as top priority and these results should serve as a guide in addressing the most pressing issues communities are facing."

Clear and broad consensus exists regarding funding priorities for the Nebraska Legislature. Voters are eager to see the state increase investments in special education (75% "net favor") and oppose state mandates capping local school spending decisions (53% "oppose"). This confirms findings from an October 2022 survey where voters preferred addressing high property taxes through state funding of local programs and services (46%) rather than by providing income tax rebates to offset property taxes (41%).

"Voters want to see the Nebraska Unicameral highly prioritize funding for increased access to medical care and early childhood education, and strongly oppose public subsidy of religious and charter schools. Yet, state lawmakers continue to focus legislative efforts and budget proposals that undermine the public's priorities and restrict access to high-quality health care, including reproductive care," says Richters.

When asked if voters would support a law that bans abortions after six weeks, before most women even know they are pregnant, a majority responded in opposition to a six-week abortion ban (55%). The intensity of feeling is high (46% “strongly opposed”) to this policy. Furthermore, only 11% of Nebraskans say they believe abortion ought to be “illegal in all cases.”

Lawmakers must consider these results to better align legislative action with public policy priorities and deliver better outcomes for the people of Nebraska.

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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 February 1-5, 2023, among n=600 registered Nebraskan voters, age 18 or older in Nebraska. The interviews were completed via live phone calls with trained operators and online via a link from a direct SMS.

The sample was randomly selected from TargetSmart’s enhanced voter file. 67% of respondents were reached on telephones (69% weighted). 63% of respondents who took the survey via phone were reached on a wireless phone (63% weighted). 33% of respondents were reached via SMS and took the survey online (31% weighted). Quotas were assigned to reflect the demographic distribution of registered voters in Nebraska. The data were weighted by gender, age, party registration, TargetSmart Partisan Scores, 2020 Presidential Vote, educational attainment, and county of residence. Percentage totals may not add up precisely due to rounding. The credibility interval (the theoretical margin of error for a blended methodology poll that relies partially on telephone-based probability sampling and partially on non-probability-based online panel sampling is +/-4.0%.