

To: Connecticut Education Association  
From: Joshua Ulibarri, Lake Research Partners  
Re: Executive Summary: Voter Attitudes Toward Budget Priorities<sup>1</sup>  
Date: February 1, 2017

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Lake Research Partners conducted a survey of 500 Connecticut residents who voted in the 2016 general election regarding their attitudes toward budget priorities. Results showed that for voters, making a better future for Connecticut means investing in public schools, attracting businesses to Connecticut, creating a new revenue system, and making the tax system fairer by asking corporations and the wealthy to pay their fair share. According to voters, a better future does not include balancing the budget by cutting funding to priorities like education.

- **When it comes to making a better Connecticut, voters strongly value quality education, small businesses, and keeping taxes low for the middle class.**
  - Seventy-eight percent of voters say investing in quality K-12 public education in all communities is very important for making a better Connecticut (94% important overall; 5% not important).
  - Seventy-three percent of voters say keeping taxes low for the middle class is very important (97% important overall; 3% not important).
  - Seventy-three percent of voters say working to attract and keep small businesses in Connecticut is very important (95% important overall; 3% not important).
- **Connecticut voters believe that the state needs to find new sources of revenue through tax reform in order to fund priorities rather than reduce services.**
  - Sixty-three percent of voters feel that the better way to make sure Connecticut is meeting the service needs of the people of the state is to find new sources of revenue by reforming the tax system to make it fairer for all, even if it means raising taxes for some (51% feel this way strongly).
  - Twenty-six percent of voters feel that keeping spending down, even if it means reducing services, is the better way (18% feel this way strongly).
- **Connecticut voters are convinced that when it comes to generating additional revenue for the state and preventing additional cuts to key priorities, the best course of action is a full restructuring of the sales, income, property, and corporate tax systems.**
  - Fifty-four percent of voters think that the best way to generate additional revenue and prevent additional cuts is to have a full restructuring of the tax systems to make everyone pay their fair share (81% convincing overall; 16% not convincing).

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- **It is clear that voters want their state legislators to balance the budget, but they also want to protect public education, children, the economy, and jobs when doing so. They want and they support other changes that can protect these priorities.**
  - Seventy-one percent of voters strongly favor having corporations pay their fair share in taxes (86% favor overall; 12% oppose).
  - Sixty-percent of voters strongly favor increasing the tax on tobacco and alcohol sales (82% favor overall; 16% oppose).
  - Sixty-percent of voters strongly favor raising state income taxes on people making more than \$500,000 a year (79% favor overall; 19% oppose).
  - Fifty-eight percent of voters strongly favor closing some big business tax loopholes (80% favor overall; 15% oppose).
  - On the other hand, sixty percent of voters strongly oppose cutting state spending on education (76% oppose overall; 17% favor).
  - Sixty-two percent of voters also strongly oppose raising the state sales tax (81% oppose overall; 17% favor).

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<sup>i</sup> Methodology: Lake Research Partners designed and administered the survey and it was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers December 5 – 8, 2016. The statewide survey reached a total of 500 2016 voters in Connecticut. The margin of error (MOE) for the total sample for this survey is +/- 4.4% and larger for the sub-groups and split sample questions. Telephone numbers for the sample were generated from a list of registered voters in Connecticut. The data were weighted slightly by gender, race, age, region, party registration, parents in household, and education. Both cell phones and landlines were called.