



Support and Understanding of Proposed North Carolina Constitutional Amendments

Survey of North Carolina Registered Voters
September 1st-3rd, 2018

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Survey Overview

The Elon University Poll conducted a representative online survey of North Carolina registered voters between September 1st and September 3rd, 2018. The purpose of this survey was to measure knowledge of and public support for two proposed amendments to the North Carolina Constitution, which may be on the ballot in 2018.

In this poll, we focus on the amendments related to voter identification and state income tax limits. Respondents were asked about the amendments after reading the proposed ballot wording *and* after reading a more detailed explanation of the amendment. Language for both the ballot items and the detailed explanations came directly from the North Carolina Secretary of State.¹

This poll offers useful information about the state of opinion and knowledge on these two amendments, however, we caution against using this poll to make inferences about what will happen if/when these amendments are voted on. Although our sample was designed to reflect registered voters in North Carolina, we do not ultimately know who will vote in 2018, and as we demonstrate, many voters have yet to make up their minds about the amendments. Additionally, the two amendments in this survey are being litigated, and their wording or presence on the November ballot could change before Election Day.

For highlights of key findings from this survey, please see our press release at www.elon.edu/elonpoll.

Prior Elon Poll reports on voter id attitudes are linked below.

April 2014	https://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/elonpoll/05_04_14_ElonPoll_ExecSummary.pdf
February 2013	https://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/elonpoll/030413_ElonPoll_voterID.pdf
April 2012	https://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/elonpoll/040412_Methodology.pdf

¹ https://www.sosnc.gov/static_forms/NC_Constitutional_Documents/2018/H1092_Official_Explanation.pdf
https://www.sosnc.gov/static_forms/NC_Constitutional_Documents/2018/S75_Official_Explanation.pdf

Topline Results

Amendment Awareness

Amendment Awareness

Are you aware that up to six proposed amendments to the North Carolina constitution could be on the ballot in the November elections?

Yes	858.....	56%
No.....	665.....	44%
N=	1523.....	100%

Heard About Amendments

How much have you heard about the proposed amendments?

A lot	127.....	8%
Some	454.....	30%
A little	421.....	28%
Not at all.....	521.....	34%
N=	1523.....	100%

Information About Amendments

Where do you most often look for information about proposed North Carolina Constitutional amendments?

I don't look for this information	364.....	24%
Newspapers or newspaper websites	263.....	17%
Local television or television station websites.....	450.....	30%
Google or other search engines	232.....	15%
Facebook, twitter or other social media sites.....	93.....	6%
Voter registration office, election board or Secretary of State	75.....	5%
Other	45.....	3%
N=	1523.....	100%

Voter Identification Amendment

Voter ID Ballot Description

Please read the following description of a potential amendment to the North Carolina Constitution:

“Constitutional amendment to require voters to provide photo identification before voting in person.”

Voter ID Support 1

Are you for or against this proposed amendment?

For	958.....	63%
Against	300.....	20%
Not sure	265.....	17%
N=	1523.....	100%

Voter ID Understand 1

Does the description give you enough information to make an informed decision?

Yes	1158.....	76%
No.....	365.....	24%
N=	1523.....	100%

Voter ID Motivate

Does this amendment make you more or less likely to turn out to vote in the November election?

More likely	732.....	48%
No change	757.....	50%
Less likely	33.....	2%
N=	1523.....	100%

Voter ID Detailed Explanation

Please read the following official explanation of the amendment from the State of North Carolina:

“This amendment requires you to show photographic identification to a poll-worker before you can vote in person. It does not apply to absentee voting.

The Legislature would make laws providing the details of acceptable and unacceptable forms of photographic identification after passage of the proposed amendment. The Legislature would be authorized to establish exceptions to the requirement to present photographic identification before voting. However, it is not required to make any exceptions.

There are no further details at this time on how voters could acquire valid photographic identification for the purposes of voting. There is no official estimate of how much this proposal would cost if it is approved.”

Voter ID Support 2

Having read this explanation, are you for or against this amendment?

For	903.....	59%
Against	377.....	25%
Not sure	243.....	16%
N=	1523.....	100%

Voter ID Understand 2

Does this official explanation give you enough information to make an informed decision?

Yes	1254.....	82%
No.....	269.....	18%
N=	1523.....	100%

Voter ID Fraud Effect

Do you think this amendment will reduce voter fraud, increase voter fraud or will it have no effect on voter fraud?

Reduce voter fraud	994.....	65%
Increase voter fraud.....	69.....	5%
No effect on voter fraud	459.....	30%
N=	1522.....	100%

Prevent Legal Voters?

Do you expect the amendment will prevent legal, eligible voters from casting a ballot?

Definitely yes	314.....	21%
Probably yes	282.....	19%
Might or might not	319.....	21%
Probably not	347.....	23%
Definitely not	261.....	17%
N=	1522.....	100%

Acceptable ID Forms

Multiple forms of identification could be used under this amendment to provide identification. Which of the following do you think should be acceptable forms of identification?

U.S. Passport

Acceptable.....	1394.....	92%
Not Acceptable.....	127.....	8%
N=	1521.....	100%

Driver's License or other state-issued ID

Acceptable.....	1486.....	98%
Not Acceptable.....	34.....	2%
N=	1520.....	100%

Other non-governmental id with photo (such as a work ID)

Acceptable.....	849.....	56%
Not Acceptable.....	670.....	44%
N=	1519.....	100%

Utility or tax bill with the voter's residential address

Acceptable.....	544.....	36%
Not Acceptable.....	973.....	64%
N=	1517.....	100%

Voter ID Litigation Awareness

How much have you heard about lawsuits related to prior Voter ID legislation in North Carolina?

A lot	152.....	10%
Some	433.....	28%
A little	452.....	30%
None at all	486.....	32%
N=	1522.....	100%

Voter ID Electoral Consequences

Do you think this amendment will make it easier for Republicans to win elections, Democrats to win elections, or will it not make any difference?

Easier for Republicans	410.....	27%
Easier for Democrats.....	97.....	6%
Not make any difference.....	1015.....	67%
N=	1522.....	100%

Tax Cap Amendment

Tax Cap Ballot Description

Please read the following description of a potential amendment to the North Carolina Constitution.

“Constitutional amendment to reduce the income tax rate in North Carolina to a maximum allowable rate of seven percent (7%).”

Tax Cap Support 1

Are you for or against this proposed amendment?

For	846.....	56%
Against	222.....	15%
Not sure	455.....	30%
N=	1523.....	100%

Tax Cap Understand 1

Does the description give you enough information to make an informed decision?

Yes	852.....	56%
No.....	671.....	44%
N=	1523.....	100%

Tax Cap Motivate

Does this amendment make you more or less likely to turn out to vote in the November election?

More likely	656.....	43%
No change	843.....	55%
Less likely	23.....	2%
N=	1523.....	100%

Tax Cap Detailed Explanation

Please read the following official explanation of the amendment from the State of North Carolina:

“The current maximum personal and corporate income tax rate in our State Constitution is 10%. This proposed amendment makes the new limit 7%.

This proposed amendment does not reduce your current taxes. It does not change the current individual income tax rate of 5.499%, and it does not change the current corporate income tax rate of 3%. Instead, it limits how much the state income tax rate could go up.

This proposed amendment applies only to state income taxes. It does not affect sales taxes, property taxes, or federal taxes.

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Income taxes are one of the ways State government raises the money to pay for core services such as public education, public health, and public safety.

The proposed amendment does not include any exceptions. Therefore, in times of disaster or recession, the State could have to take measures such as cutting core services, raising sales taxes or fees, or increasing borrowing.

Tax Cap Support 2

Having read this explanation, are you for or against this amendment?

For	684.....	45%
Against	412.....	27%
Not sure	426.....	28%
N=	1523.....	100%

Tax Cap Understand 2

Does this official explanation give you enough information to make an informed decision?

Yes	1177.....	77%
No.....	346.....	23%
N=	1523.....	100%

Would Your Taxes Change

How would this amendment change your personal income tax rate?

It would raise it	138.....	9%
It would lower it.....	203.....	13%
It would have no immediate effect.....	852.....	56%
Don't Know	330.....	22%
N=	1523.....	100%

Tax Emergency

In times of a disaster, war or recession, should the state be able to raise income taxes as much as needed or should the state make do with what income tax revenue it has?

Raise as much as needed.....	436.....	29%
Make do with what it has	1086.....	71%
N=	1522.....	100%

Demographics

Age

18-29	274.....	18%
30-44	366.....	24%
45-64	503.....	33%
65 or older	381.....	25%
N=	1523.....	100%

Race

Note: Responses have been collapsed into the categories shown below.

White	1055.....	69%
Black	340.....	22%
Other	128.....	8%
N=	1523.....	100%

Self-Reported Party ID

Are you a Democrat, Republican, Independent or something else?

Democrat	561.....	37%
Republican	463.....	30%
Independent	427.....	28%
Something Else	72.....	5%
N=	1523.....	100%

Education

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Note: Responses have been collapsed into the categories shown below.

Less than Bachelor	1020.....	67%
Bachelor or Higher.....	503.....	33%
N=	1523.....	100%

Income

Is your total household annual income above or below \$48,256?

Note: This value is median household income in NC.

Above \$48,256	825.....	54%
Below \$48,256	698.....	46%
N=	1523.....	100%

Gender

What is your gender?



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Male	705.....	46%
Female.....	818.....	54%
N=	1523.....	100%

Registered Voter

Are you currently registered to vote in North Carolina?

Note: Only registered voters were included in this report.

Registered Party ID

Are you registered to vote in North Carolina as a Republican, Democrat, Libertarian or Unaffiliated (Independent)?

Democrat.....	579.....	38%
Unaffiliated /Other	487.....	32%
Republican	457.....	30%
N=	1523.....	100%

2018 Vote Intention

Do you plan to vote in the 2018 Midterm elections?

Note: Self-reported intention to vote is typically much higher than actual future behavior of voting.

Yes	1353.....	89%
No.....	168.....	11%
N=	1521.....	100%

County Density

Note: Coded from self-reported ZIP code

Rural.....	600.....	39%
Suburban	382.....	25%
Urban.....	541.....	36%
N=	1523.....	100%

Cross-Tabulations

Support for Voter Identification (Ballot Wording)

Are you for or against this proposed amendment?

	For %	Against %	Not sure %
Overall	63	20	17
Age 18-29	57	13	30
30-44	59	22	19
45-64	66	20	14
65 or older	68	21	11
Income above \$48,256	64	21	16
Below \$48,256	62	19	20
White	72	16	13
Black	38	32	30
Other	56	20	24
Did not graduate college	65	15	19
Bachelor's degree or higher	58	28	13
Male	66	19	15
Female	61	20	19
Registered Democrat	43	34	22
Unaffiliated	64	16	19
Registered Republican	86	5	9
Rural	68	15	17
Suburban	63	18	19
Urban	57	26	17
Plans to vote in 2018	63	21	16
Does not plan to vote	61	12	27



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Support for Tax Cap (Ballot Wording)

Are you for or against this proposed amendment?

	For %	Against %	Not sure %
Overall	56	15	30
Age 18-29	52	15	33
30-44	53	13	34
45-64	58	13	29
65 or older	58	18	25
Income above \$48,256	56	15	29
Below \$48,256	55	14	31
White	58	14	28
Black	48	20	33
Other	55	10	35
Did not graduate from college	57	13	30
Bachelor's degree or higher	53	17	30
Male	58	18	24
Female	53	12	35
Registered Democrat	45	20	35
Unaffiliated	53	16	31
Registered Republican	72	6	21
Rural	58	13	29
Suburban	55	16	30
Urban	54	15	31
Plans to vote in 2018	56	15	29
Does not plan to vote	52	9	39

Methodological Information

Mode:	Online
Population:	North Carolina Registered Voters
Dates in the field:	September 1-3, 2018
Sample Size:	1,523
Weighting Variables:	Race, Gender, Age, Education, Rural/Urban/Suburban, Registered Party
Credibility Interval:	+/- 2.7%

Procedure

For this survey, the Elon University Poll used an online opt-in sample provided by Lucid, LLC. Respondents were recruited for this sample from many sample providers in the Lucid marketplace. Respondents received small amounts of compensation in exchange for their opinions.

For the administration of the survey, the Elon University Poll used Qualtrics. We only included interviews in the final data if respondents spent a minimum length of time on the interview. A survey was considered complete only if a respondent progressed through the entire survey.

Reported results are limited to respondents who self-identified as North Carolina registered voters. Quotas on race, sex and age were applied prior to survey commencement.

Credibility Interval

Unlike a traditional random digit-dial telephone survey, online opt-in surveys do not have traditional margin of errors because they do not adhere to assumptions of random selection. To account for uncertainty inherent in any sample-based research design, we provide a credibility interval. More information about this technique [can be found here](#). The credibility interval was calculated by inflating traditional confidence intervals by design effects. For the registered voter sample this means: $(1.09 * 2.5) = 2.7$.

Support for Transparency

The Elon University Poll supports transparency in survey research and is a charter member of the [American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative](#), which is a program promoting openness and transparency about survey research methods and operations among survey research professionals and the industry. All information about the Elon University Poll that we released to the public conforms to reporting conventions recommended by the American Association for Public Opinion Research and the National Council on Public Polls.

Weighting Information

Weights for registered voters were calculated based on demographics calculated by Elon Poll staff from the NCSBE individual voter file or a large sample thereof.

Weights were generated in Stata using a technique known as iterative proportional fitting, also known as raking. The weight variable was calculated based on NCSBE data for age, race, sex, county density and registered party id. NCSBE data does not provide estimates for education. As a result, we determined these parameters based on the all resident weighted values restricted to self-described registered voters:

		Population Value	Unweighted Value	Weighted Value
Sex	Male	46%	45%	46%
	Female	54%	55%	54%
County Density	Rural	39%	45.5%	39%
	Suburban	25%	28.6%	25%
	Urban	36%	25.9%	36%
Education	Less than Bachelor	67%	61%	67%
	Bachelor or Higher	33%	39%	33%
Race	White	69.3%	77.2%	69.3%
	African American	22.3%	16.1%	22.3%
	Other	8.4%	6.8%	8.4%
Age	18-29	18%	16.4%	18%
	30-44	24%	28.0%	24%
	45-64	33%	39.4%	33%
	65+	25%	16.2%	25%
Party Registration	Democrat	38%	33.5%	38%
	Unaffiliated / Other	32%	30.3%	32%
	Republican	30%	36.2%	30%

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who pays for the Elon University Poll?

Elon University fully funds the Elon University Poll. The poll operates under the auspices of the College of Arts and Sciences at Elon University, led by Dean Gabie Smith. The Elon University administration, led by Dr. Connie Ledoux Book, president of the university, fully supports the Elon University Poll as part of its service to the community. Because of this generous support, the Elon University poll does not engage in any contract work. This permits the Elon University Poll to operate as a neutral, non-biased, non-partisan resource.

2. Does the Elon University Poll favor a certain party?

The Elon University Poll is an academic, non-partisan survey. We do not engage or work with any political candidates or parties. We employ best practices to ensure the results are not biased.

3. Did you weight the data?

Yes. We apply weights to the data. For this survey, an iterative proportional fitting algorithm generated weights based on NCSBE voter registration data.

4. What did respondents know about the survey before agreeing to take the survey?

During survey recruitment, respondents saw a title that the survey was about higher education. In the introductory screen, respondents read, “We are hoping to understand what aspects of the college experience matter most for life outcomes.”

5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online opt-in surveys over traditional random-dial surveys?

Traditional telephone surveys have an advantage over online surveys in that assumptions of equal probability of selection are more appropriate. Furthermore, online surveys do not capture opinions of respondents who lack internet access. However, our opinion is that declining telephone response rates and the growth in online sample pool sizes has narrowed quality differences between the two modes. In the case of this survey, we wanted respondents to read ballot questions and explanations. This would be implausible over a telephone.

Additional information about opt-in surveys in general is available from AAPOR and the [Pew Research Center](#).

The Elon University Poll Team



Dr. Jason Husser is Director of the Elon University Poll and Associate Professor of Political Science & Policy Studies at Elon University. Dr. Husser holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Vanderbilt University. He researches American political behavior and survey methodology.



Dr. Kaye Usry is Assistant Director of the Elon University Poll and Assistant Professor of Political Science & Policy Studies at Elon University. Her research interests are in American politics and political psychology.



Owen Covington is Director of the Elon University News Bureau. A native North Carolinian, Owen Covington joined the staff of Elon University in 2016 after spending 17 years in the field of journalism as a reporter and editor for daily and weekly news outlets in North Carolina and Kentucky. As director of the Elon University News Bureau, Covington oversees the promotion of Elon and its students, faculty and staff both through stories told across Elon's media channels as well as through interactions with state, national and international media. He is involved in media relations, including responding to requests from print, digital and broadcast media outlets, and works to promote content generated by a variety of Elon news sources.

For more information on the Elon University Poll, visit elon.edu/elonpoll

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