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Contact:
David Yepsen
618.453.4009
John Jackson
618.453.4003

Gas Tax “Lockbox,” Term Limits and Independent Redistricting Draw Big Support

Likely voters in Illinois overwhelmingly support a proposed state constitutional amendment requiring gas taxes be spent only on road projects, according to a poll by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The survey also shows massive support for term limits and for having an independent commission draw legislative district lines instead of state lawmakers. The sample of 865 likely voters was taken Sept. 27 – Oct. 2 and has a margin of error of 3.3 percentage points.

- There are 80 percent of likely voters who support what’s been dubbed the “lockbox” amendment requiring that gas taxes, tolls and license fees be dedicated to roads, bridges and other transportation projects. Only 13 percent oppose it, and the rest are undecided.

Supporters argue state policy makers have sometimes shifted these dollars to non-transportation projects over the years, taking dollars from needed infrastructure projects. Opponents contend leaders need to have flexibility in the way they manage state finances and meet all the priorities they face.

Support is strongest downstate, where 87 percent support the measure. Seventy-eight percent support the measure in the Chicagoland suburbs and 73 percent in Chicago.

- While term limits for legislators aren’t on the November ballot, they are on the hearts of voters. There are over 80 percent who favor a constitutional amendment limiting the number of terms a state representative or state senator can serve. There are 17 percent opposed. Gov. Bruce Rauner is pressing lawmakers to act.
- Recently, the state Supreme Court ruled that an amendment establishing an independent commission to draw legislative district lines was unconstitutional. However, 72 percent of likely voters support that idea, while 18 percent are opposed.

The Simon Institute has been polling on this question since 2010 and the support for redistricting reform this year is at a record high.

“The massive support for these three measures is evidence of just how upset Illinois voters are with the way things are done in Springfield,” said David Yepsen, the director of the Institute.

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The margin of error for the entire sample of 1,000 voters is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. The margin of error for likely voters (n=865) is plus or minus 3.3 percentage points. This means that if we conducted the survey 100 times, in 95 of those instances, the population proportion would be within plus or minus the reported margin for error for each subsample. For subsamples, the margin of error increases as the sample size goes down. The margin of error was not adjusted for design effects.

Live telephone interviews were conducted by Customer Research International of San Marcos, Texas using the random digit dialing method. The telephone sample was provided to Customer Research International by Scientific Telephone Samples. Potential interviewees were screened based on whether they were registered voters and quotas based on area code and sex (<60% female). Interviewers asked to speak to the youngest registered voter at home at the time of the call. Cell phone interviews accounted for 60 percent of the sample. A Spanish language version of the questionnaire and a Spanish-speaking interviewer were made available.

Field work was conducted from September 27-October 2. No auto-dial or “robo” polling is included. Customer Research International reports no Illinois political clients. The survey was paid for with non-tax dollars from the Institute’s endowment fund. The data were not weighted in any way. Crosstabs for the referenced questions will be on the Institute’s polling web site, simonpoll.org.

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute is a member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research’s (AAPOR) Transparency Initiative. AAPOR works to encourage objective survey standards for practice and disclosure. Membership in the Transparency Initiative reflects a pledge to practice transparency in reporting survey-based findings.

Simon Institute polling data are also archived by four academic institutions for use by scholars and the public. The four open source data repositories are: The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research (<http://ropercenter.cornell.edu/polls/>), The University of Michigan’s Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (<http://openicpsr.org>), the University of North Carolina’s Odum Institute Dataverse Network (<http://arc.irss.unc.edu/dvn/dv/PSPPPI>), and the Simon Institute Collection at OpenSIUC (<http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ppi/>).

Note: The “Paul Simon Public Policy Institute Poll,” the “Simon Poll” and the “Southern Illinois Poll” are the copyrighted trademarks of the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University. Use and publication of these polls is encouraged- but only with credit to the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at SIU Carbondale.

Frequency Tables¹

Gas Tax

On the ballot in November is an amendment to the Illinois Constitution that would make sure that funds from the gasoline tax, tolls, license fees, and other transportation levies can only be spent on roads, bridges, and other transportation-related projects. If that question were on the ballot today, would you vote for or against it?

Response	Percent (n=865)
For	79.5%
<i>For</i>	77.3%
<i>Lean For</i>	2.2%
Against	13.2%
<i>Against</i>	12.4%
<i>Lean Against</i>	0.8%
Other/Don't know (not read)	7.3%

Note: if the respondent was unsure the interviewer asked, "Well, which way are you leaning?"

Term Limits

A proposal to limit state legislators to a total of eight years of service, whether in the House of Representatives, the State Senate, or a combination of the two. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

Response	Percent (n=865)
Favor	80.5%
<i>Strongly Favor</i>	64.3%
<i>Somewhat Favor</i>	16.2%
Oppose	17.2%
<i>Somewhat Oppose</i>	7.3%
<i>Strongly Oppose</i>	9.9%
Other/Don't know (not read)	2.3%

¹ Values are rounded and may not sum to 100%.

Redistricting

Other people have proposed a constitutional amendment that would have legislative district maps created and recommended by a commission that is independent of the elected representatives. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

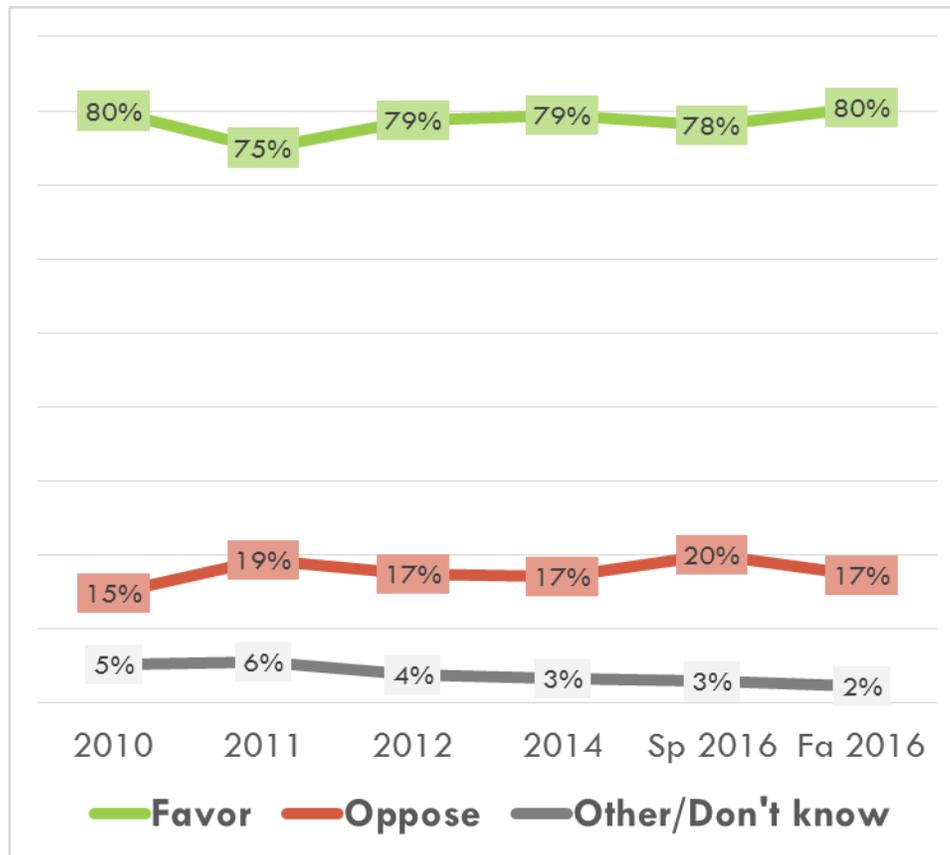
Response	Percent (n=865)
Favor	71.7%
<i>Strongly Favor</i>	<i>51.6%</i>
<i>Somewhat Favor</i>	<i>20.1%</i>
Oppose	18.2%
<i>Somewhat Oppose</i>	<i>8.1%</i>
<i>Strongly Oppose</i>	<i>10.1%</i>
Other/Don't know (not read)	10.2%

Demographic Crosstab Tables²

Gas Tax by AREA

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
For	73.0%	77.6%	87.1%
<i>For</i>	70.6%	75.7%	84.4%
<i>Lean For</i>	2.4%	1.9%	2.7%
Against	18.3%	13.9%	8.7%
<i>Against</i>	17.1%	13.4%	7.6%
<i>Lean Against</i>	1.2%	0.5%	1.1%
Other/don't know	8.8%	8.6%	4.2%

Term Limits Historical Trend



**In 2010, 2011, 2012 the question was this "limit state representatives to five consecutive two-year terms and state senators to three consecutive four-year terms." In year after it was worded the same - "a proposal to limit state legislators to a total of eight years of service, whether in the House of Representatives, the State Senate, or a combination of the two."*

² Values are rounded so may not sum to 100%.

Redistricting Commission Historical Trend

