

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA POLL RESULTS – NOVEMBER 2008

The Research 2000 City of Philadelphia Poll was conducted from November 24 through November 26, 2008. A total of 650 registered voters were interviewed by telephone. The margin of error is plus or minus 4%.

GENERAL SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

BUDGET/SPENDING CUTS PROPOSAL:

Over two-thirds of the voters surveyed in Philadelphia (66%) are opposed to Mayor Nutter’s announced spending cuts. Only a plurality of Republicans (47%) favor the proposed budget cuts and layoffs, while strong majorities across all demographic groups are opposed to them.

QUESTION: Do you favor or oppose budget cuts and layoffs?

	<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	21%	66%	13%

WAGE TAX CUTS:

An overwhelming majority of voters (61%) favor a proposal that would keep the wage tax at its present level of 4.17% so that those monies can be put towards preventing cuts in city services as opposed to a reduction of the wage tax to 3.93%. Over two-thirds of Democrats (66%) and a majority of Independents (52%) favor this, while a plurality of Republicans (36%) favor keeping the wage tax at its present level. Support for this is strong among all demographic groups.

QUESTION: Starting next year, the City is to receive 95 million dollars from the state, which the City will use to cut the city wage tax from 4.17% to 3.93%. There is a proposal to instead keep the wage tax at the same level, and put that revenue toward preventing cuts in those city services that we just mentioned. Which of the following would you favor the most? (ROTATED):

Using State money for wage tax cuts, OR

Using State money to prevent service cuts.

Combination of both (NOT READ)

	<u>WAGE CUTS</u>	<u>PREVENT CUTS</u>	<u>COMBO</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	10%	61%	23%	6%

SUPPORT FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Exactly two-thirds of the voters surveyed (65%) either favor (33%) or strongly favor (32%) an elected official who supports using state money to maintain city services. Only 13% of the voters surveyed favor an elected official who favors (6%) or strongly favors (7%) using state money for local tax cuts. Only a plurality of Republicans (37%) favor an elected official who support local tax cuts over using the money to maintain city services.

QUESTION: Given those two options that we just discussed, are you more likely to vote for the elected official, like a Mayor or Councilperson, who supports using state revenue for tax cuts, or for the one who uses it to maintain city services?

Strongly favor elected official who supports using state money for local tax cuts

Favor elected official who supports using state money for local tax cuts

Favor elected official who supports using state money to maintain city services

Strongly favor elected official who supports using state money to maintain city services

	STRG		STRG	NOT
	<u>CUTS</u>	<u>CUTS</u>	<u>SERV</u>	<u>SURE</u>
ALL	7%	6%	33%	32%
				22%

STOP BUSINESS TAX CUTS:

Two-thirds of voters surveyed (65%) either strongly favor (31%) or favor (34%) a proposal to stop scheduled business tax cuts to avoid city bankruptcy and service cuts. Three-fourths of the Democrats surveyed (75%) favor this proposal while a plurality of Independents (46%) favor this proposal. There is a majority of support for this proposal among all demographic groups with the strongest coming from Black voters and voters between the ages of 18-29. Both of these groups favor the measure with 71% support. Only 17% of the Republicans surveyed favor this proposal while a majority (56%) are opposed.

QUESTION: There is a proposal to stop scheduled business tax cuts to avoid city bankruptcy and service cuts. Which of the following best describes your point of view on this proposal?

	<u>STRG FAVOR</u>	<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>STRG OPPOSE</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	31%	34%	14%	6%	15%

BUSINESS TAX:

An over whelming majority of voters (61%) strongly favor (29%) or favor (32%) a proposal that would make businesses such as banks no longer exempt from paying taxes in order to help make up for the financial deficit. There is a majority of support for this proposal among all demographic groups except among Republicans where a plurality of voters (42%) either oppose (23%) or strongly oppose (19%) it.

QUESTION: Presently, some businesses in the City such as banks are exempt from paying city business taxes. There is a proposal to make up some of this deficit by making these businesses pay taxes. Which of the following best describes your point of view on this proposal?

	<u>STRG FAVOR</u>	<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>STRG OPPOSE</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	29%	32%	13%	8%	18%

PROPERTY VALUES REASSESSMENT:

Over two-thirds of the voter surveyed (67%) either strongly favor (34%) or favor (33%) a proposal to reassess property values to their fair market value and then lower the rate of property taxes, so that a majority of Philadelphians would see their property tax bill decrease. Support for this proposal is strong among all demographic groups.

QUESTION: Another proposal would reassess Philadelphia property values. Presently, some taxpayers are paying a smaller share of taxes than others because of the way Philadelphia assesses property values. There is a proposal to reassess property values to their fair market value and then lower the rate of property taxes, with a majority of Philadelphians seeing a property tax bill decrease.

	<u>STRG FAVOR</u>	<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>STRG OPPOSE</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	34%	33%	11%	7%	15%

RAISE WAGE TAX:

An overwhelming majority of voters (62%) either strongly favor (29%) or favor (33%) a proposal that would raise the wage tax for the 100,000 top wage earners. There is a majority of support for this proposal among all demographic groups except among Republicans where 60% are opposed and only 20% favor it.

QUESTION: Another proposal would raise the wage tax for the 100,000 top wage earners. These taxpayers would pay an additional \$100 a year in taxes. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

	<u>STRG FAVOR</u>	<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>STRG OPPOSE</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	29%	33%	15%	11%	12%

MOST FAVORED OPTION:

When voters were asked which of four options they would favor the most as a solution to the city's financial crises, a plurality of voters (31%) favored using the state revenues intended for tax cuts, followed by reassessing property values (22%), wage tax increase (18%) and closing corporate tax loopholes (16%). Both a plurality of Men (29%) and Women (32%) favored using the state revenues intended for tax cuts as their first choice, as did pluralities of Democrats (35%), Independents (26%), White voters (28%), Black Voters (34%) and all age groupings. Republicans favored reassessing property values (31%) as their top choice, while only 12% favored using the state revenues intended for tax cuts as a solution to the city's financial crises.

QUESTION: Of all the four options described above, using state revenue intended for tax cuts, reassessing property values, closing corporate tax loophole, and wage tax increases for highest-earning Philadelphians, which do you favor most as a solution to city's fiscal crisis?

	<u>TAX CUTS</u>	<u>PROP VALUES</u>	<u>CLOSE LOOP</u>	<u>TAX INCREASE</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	31%	22%	16%	18%	13%

SECOND MOST FAVORED OPTION:

When voters asked which of the four options they would favor the second most as a solution to the city's financial crises, 26% favored using the state revenues intended for tax cuts, followed by reassessing property values (25%), wage tax increases (15%) and closing corporate loopholes (15%).

QUESTION: Of all the four options described above, using state revenue intended for tax cuts, reassessing property values, closing corporate tax loophole, and wage tax increases for highest-earning Philadelphians, which do you favor the second most as a solution to city's fiscal crisis?

	<u>TAX CUTS</u>	<u>PROP VALUES</u>	<u>CLOSE LOOP</u>	<u>TAX INCREASE</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	26%	25%	14%	15%	20%

WAITING ON UNCLE SAM:

Over two-thirds of the voters surveyed (66%) think that the Mayor should wait and see if the city receives a direct payment from the Federal Government in January or February of 2009 rather than proceeding with service cuts now. Only 10% think that the Mayor should proceed with service cuts now. A slight plurality of Republicans (36%) think the cuts should proceed, while strong majorities among all other demographic groups think that the Mayor should wait and see what happens in Washington before making service cuts.

QUESTION: Some Mayors and Governors from around the country have been calling on Congress for a federal bail-out of struggling towns and cities like ours, which may involve a direct payment of cash to Philadelphia and other cities. If a direct payment from the Federal Government does occur in January or February, what do you think the Mayor should do in the meantime? (ROTATED):

Wait and see what happens in Washington before making service cuts, OR
Go ahead with service cuts anyway?

	<u>WAIT</u>	<u>GO AHEAD</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	66%	10%	24%

COURT SHUT DOWN:

Only a plurality of voters surveyed (41%) favor shutting down Philadelphia’s Municipal Court and Court of Common Pleas as a tactic to get the state to step in and start paying for costs, while 37% are opposed. Only a majority of Republicans (52%) favor the proposal.

QUESTION: Former Managing Director Phil Goldsmith has suggested that one solution to budget problems is to have the state pay for Philadelphia Court expenses. The state was ordered to make payment for these costs which would save the city over a \$100 million a year, but has never followed through. In order to get the state to pay, the Mayor might have to shut down court until the state steps in.

Would you favor shutting down Philadelphia’s Municipal Court and Court of Common Pleas as a tactic to get the state to step in and starts paying for costs, OR

Would you oppose shutting down Philadelphia’s Municipal Court and Court of Common Pleas as a tactic to get the state to step in and start paying for costs?

	<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	41%	37%	22%

EAGLES PAYBACK:

A majority of the voters surveyed (54%) strongly agree (21%) or agree (33%) with the Mayor trying to get money back from the Philadelphia Eagles for \$8 million the city loaned the team in the 1980’s for skyboxes that the team never paid back. A majority of all demographic groups agree with the Mayor, while a plurality of Republicans agree with him (44%) as well.

QUESTION: In the 1980s, the city loaned the Philadelphia Eagles \$8 million to build skyboxes at the old Veterans Stadium. The team has never paid the city back. In light of the current budget crisis, some have suggested that Mayor Nutter try harder to get the money to prevent budget cuts. Would you agree or disagree with the Mayor trying to get the money back from the Eagles?

	<u>STRG</u> <u>AGREE</u>	<u>AGREE</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>STRG</u> <u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>NOT</u> <u>SURE</u>
ALL	21%	33%	22%	12%	12%

AFFECT ON CRIME AND VIOLENCE:

A plurality of voters (47%) think that the budget cuts and layoffs will make no difference on police dealing with crime and violence, while 33% think that it will make things worse for the police and only 20% think it will make things better for the police. Majorities and pluralities among all demographic groups think that the cuts and layoffs will make no difference on police dealing with crime and violence.

QUESTION: What impact do you think the budget cuts and layoffs described above to libraries, pools, fire, and police will have on crime and violence? (ROTATED):

	<u>WORSE</u>	<u>BETTER</u>	<u>NO DIFFERENCE</u>
ALL	33%	20%	47%

LOW TAXES VERSUS QUALITY OF SERVICES:

Over two-thirds of the voters surveyed city wide (66%) feel that the quality of services they receive is most important to them as a resident of Philadelphia rather than having lower taxes. A majority of voters along all demographic groups feel that the quality of services they receive are most important to them as residents of the city over having lower taxes. The only exception to this was among Republicans where only a plurality (38%) felt that the quality of services was most important.

QUESTION: Which of the following is most important to you as a resident of Philadelphia? (ROTATED):

	<u>LOW TAXES</u>	<u>QUALITY OF SERVICES</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	11%	66%	23%

CASINOS

An overwhelming 72% of the voters surveyed either strongly favor (37%) or favor (35%) a measure that would force casinos to be located at least 1,500 feet from a home, school and places of worship.

QUESTION: Do you favor or oppose a measure that would force casinos to be located at least 1,500 feet from a home, school and place of worship?

	<u>STRG FAVOR</u>	<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>STRG OPPOSE</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>
ALL	37%	35%	11%	7%	10%