

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Interested Parties  
**FROM:** Global Strategy Group  
**RE:** Oklahoma Policy Survey Results  
**DATE:** April 30, 2013

### Oklahoma Voters Oppose Specifics of Income Tax Cut Plan

While a bare majority of voters say they support an income tax cut in theory, support plummets when voters hear specifics about the plan. **Voter opposition is highest after learning the disparity between the size of tax cuts for average middle income families and the wealthiest Oklahomans.** Opposition becomes nearly as strong when voters hear that income tax cuts will lead to less funding for state services such as education, public safety and health care. Key findings from Global Strategy Group's recent poll of 601 registered Oklahoma voters are as follows:

#### **Opposition to income tax cuts jumps most when voters learn the plan favors the affluent**

While a bare majority of voters support the plan to reduce the state's top personal income tax rate (52% support/25% oppose), voter opposition skyrockets (rising 35 points to 60% oppose) when voters learn that "over 40 percent of Oklahomans will not receive a tax cut at all, the average reduction for middle income families would be less than \$50, and the largest cuts would go to the wealthiest 5% of Oklahoma households." Less than a third of all voters still support the plan (31%) after learning the disproportionate impact of the plan on the state's residents.

- Based on this new information, Democrats (72%) and Independents (67%) overwhelmingly oppose the plan. Even a plurality (46%) of registered Republicans oppose it.
- Half of all self-described conservatives (51%) say they oppose the income tax plan, including a large majority of conservative Democrats (71%).
- ***The bottom line – voters strongly oppose income tax reductions that will mainly benefit the wealthiest households.***

#### **Voters are also troubled by the loss of funding for state services**

A majority of voters (56%) say they oppose the income tax cut plan once they learn that "Oklahoma will collect \$125 million less in tax revenues to fund state services, such as education, public safety and health care." Barely one-third remain supportive of the proposal (34%).

- Democrats (68%) and Independents (60%) are strongly opposed to the proposed cuts with Republicans just as likely to be against the plan (43%) as for it (45%).
- Ideologically, opposition extends to nearly half of all conservatives (47%) and most conservative Democrats (70%).
- ***The bottom line – voters strongly oppose any income tax reductions that will cause reduced funding for state services they regard as important.***

### **Voters strongly oppose cuts to important services to pay for an income tax reduction**

Voters disagree with that Oklahoma should cut funding for public health services, its public schools, and public safety as a means of paying for income tax cuts. This is a similar conclusion to what we found in our 2012 survey. The evidence is consistent and clear:

- 80% of voters disagree – including 65% who strongly disagree – that “I would favor cutting funding for **Oklahoma’s public safety services** including police, fire and emergency services so that savings can be passed along to taxpayers in the form of a tax cut.” This is the exact same finding from our 2012 survey where 80% also disagreed.
- 77% of voters disagree – including 65% who strongly disagree – that “I would favor cutting funding for **Oklahoma’s public schools**, so that savings can be passed along to taxpayers in the form of a tax cut.” These findings track closely with the 81% who disagreed with this statement in the 2012 survey.
- 77% of voters disagree – including 61% who strongly disagree – that “I would favor cutting funding for **Oklahoma’s public health services**, including Soonercare, mental health services, and care for children with developmental disabilities so that savings can be passed along to taxpayers in the form of a tax cut.”
- Disagreement with these statements is universal with 67%+ of Republicans and 70%+ of self-described conservatives disagreeing with each of them.
- ***The bottom line – voters believe that protecting funding for public safety, schools, public safety and public health services is a much higher priority than reducing income taxes.***

### **Oklahomans value education investments and job training more than income tax cuts**

A large majority of voters continue to say the best way to attract businesses to locate and invest in Oklahoma is through an “educated and well trained workforce” (68%) over “low personal income tax rates (24%). This mirrors our findings in 2012 when 70% favored investments and only one in five favored tax cuts (21%).

#### **ABOUT THIS POLL**

This poll was conducted by Global Strategy Group (GSG) among 601 voters registered in Oklahoma on April 25-28, 2013. The margin of error on this poll is +/- 4.0%. The margin of error on subsamples is larger. GSG is a leading public opinion pollster whose clients include elected officials across the country at all levels of government, major non-profit institutions and Fortune 500 companies.

Q1. Are you at least 18 years old and registered to vote at this address [READ ADDRESS]? Yes ..... 100%

And thinking about some issues facing state government in Oklahoma...

Q2. As you may know, there is a proposal in front of the state legislature to reduce Oklahoma's top personal income tax rate in the coming years. Do you support or oppose this proposal? [IF ANSWER] Do you feel that way strongly or just somewhat?

	Strongly support .....	32%
	Somewhat support.....	21
	Somewhat oppose.....	7
	Strongly oppose.....	18
<b>VOL:</b>	(Don't Know/Refused) .....	23
	SUPPORT (NET).....	52%
	OPPOSE (NET).....	25

Q3. An analysis of the proposal to reduce the state's top personal income tax rate says that under this plan, over 40 percent of Oklahomans will not receive a tax cut at all, the average reduction for middle-income families would be less than 50 dollars, and the largest tax cuts would go to the wealthiest five percent of Oklahoma households. Having heard this, do you support or oppose this proposal? [IF ANSWER] Do you feel that way strongly or just somewhat?

	Strongly support .....	18%
	Somewhat support.....	14
	Somewhat oppose.....	13
	Strongly oppose.....	47
<b>VOL:</b>	(Don't Know/Refused) .....	8
	SUPPORT (NET).....	31%
	OPPOSE (NET).....	60

Q4. An analysis of the proposal to reduce the state's top personal income tax rate says that under this plan, Oklahoma will collect 125 million dollars less in tax revenues to fund state services, such as education, public safety and health care. Having heard this, do you support or oppose this proposal? [IF ANSWER] Do you feel that way strongly or just somewhat?

	Strongly support .....	19%
	Somewhat support.....	15
	Somewhat oppose.....	13
	Strongly oppose.....	44
<b>VOL:</b>	(Don't Know/Refused) .....	10
	SUPPORT (NET).....	34%
	OPPOSE (NET).....	56

I'm now going to read you a few statements. For each, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement.

	AGREE		DISAGREE		(DK/Ref.)	NET	
	Strong	Some	Some	Strong		AGREE	DISAGREE
• I would favor cutting funding for Oklahoma's public health services, including Soonercare, mental health services, and care for children with developmental disabilities so that savings can be passed along to taxpayers in the form of a tax cut.....	10%	8	16	61	5	18%	77
• I would favor cutting funding for Oklahoma's public schools so that the savings can be passed along to taxpayers in the form of a tax cut .....	10%	10	13	65	3	20%	77
<i>2012</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>81</i>
• I would favor cutting funding for Oklahoma's public safety services, including police, fire and emergency services so that savings can be passed along to taxpayers in the form of a tax cut .....	8%	9	15	65	3	17%	80
<i>2012</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>80</i>

Q8. Which of the following do you think is more important to attract businesses to locate and invest in Oklahoma?

	2013	2012
Low personal income tax rates .....	24%	27%
An educated and well trained workforce .....	68	70
VOL: (Neither) .....	2	3
VOL: (Don't Know/Refused) .....	6	6

Finally, I would like to ask you a few final questions for statistical purposes only.

P1. No matter how you are planning to vote this year, when it comes to politics, do you generally think of yourself as a strong Democrat, a not very strong Democrat, a strong Republican, a not very strong Republican, or an Independent? [IF INDEPENDENT] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

Strong Democrat .....	20%
Weak Democrat .....	13
Independent / Closer to the Democrats .....	7
Independent .....	11
Independent / Closer to the Republicans .....	9
Weak Republican .....	11
Strong Republican .....	26
VOL: (Don't Know/Refused) .....	3
DEMOCRAT (NET) .....	33%
INDEPENDENT (NET) .....	30
REPUBLICAN (NET) .....	37
DEMOCRAT W/ LEANERS (NET) .....	40%
REPUBLICAN W/ LEANERS (NET) .....	46

D101. What is your age?

18-29 .....	15%
30-44 .....	24
45-54 .....	18
55-64 .....	18
65+ .....	23
VOL: (Refused) .....	2

D102. What is the last grade that you completed in school?

Some grade school .....	*
Some high school .....	3
Graduated high school .....	26
Technical/Vocational .....	3
Some college .....	22
Graduate college .....	31
Graduate professional .....	13
VOL: (Refused) .....	1

D105. When it comes to politics, do you generally think of yourself as very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, very conservative?

Very liberal .....	5%
Somewhat liberal .....	11
Moderate .....	28
Somewhat conservative .....	28
Very conservative .....	24
VOL: (Refused) .....	5
LIBERAL (NET) .....	16%
CONSERVATIVE (NET) .....	52

D900. What would you say is your total annual family income before taxes? Is it less than 20 thousand, 20 to 40 thousand, 40 to 60 thousand, 60 to 80 thousand, 80 to 100 thousand or more than 100 thousand?

Less than \$20,000 .....	13%
\$20,000-\$40,000 .....	15
\$40,001-\$60,000 .....	19
\$60,001-\$80,000 .....	11
\$80,001-\$100,000 .....	7
More than \$100,000 .....	15
VOL: (Don't Know/Refused) .....	20

---

Gender [BY OBSERVATION]	Male.....	46%
	Female.....	54
Region [FROM SAMPLE]	Oklahoma City DMA - Oklahoma County.....	19%
	Oklahoma City DMA - Rest .....	29
	Tulsa DMA - Tulsa County .....	16
	Tulsa DMA - Rest .....	20
	Outer Markets.....	16
Party Registration [FROM SAMPLE]	Democrat.....	45%
	Independent.....	12
	Republican.....	42