



Memo

To: Editorial Page Editors, Editorial Board Members, Columnists, and Other Interested Parties

From: Marc Stier, Director, Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center

Date: May 17, 2018

Re: Release of Statewide Polling Results

The Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center recently completed a survey of 1,150 registered voters in Pennsylvania, conducted by nationally acclaimed polling firm TargetSmart. The poll was carried out on behalf of *We The People*, a new statewide issue advocacy campaign launched today in support of Pennsylvania's working families and communities and the priorities important to them.

The poll provides dramatic evidence to support one of the key themes of the *We The People* campaign: the leadership of the General Assembly is totally out of touch with what the people of Pennsylvania want from government. At a time when that leadership is focused on cutting Medicaid and SNAP, undermining unions, and blocking tax increases on natural gas drillers, our poll finds the following:

Public Investment

By margins of 30% to 40% or more, Pennsylvanians believe that state government is investing *too little*, rather than too much in K-12 education, Pre-K education, roads and transportation infrastructure, job training, and combating opioid addiction.

Goals for the State

By margins of 55 points – and sometimes much more – Pennsylvanians believe that the state should improve the economy and create higher paying jobs; increase take home pay and improve working conditions for Pennsylvania workers; fully fund public schools; make job training, vocational training and college more affordable; make Pre-K and child care more affordable; make health care more affordable; protect our air and water; invest in roads, bridges, and public transit; combat the opioid epidemic; reform our tax system to make it more fair; and hold down prescription drug prices.

Legislative Proposals

By margins of 60% or more, Pennsylvanians want to see the government create fair scheduling laws; guarantee all workers the right to earned, paid sick days off; end both gender-based and race-based pay gaps; restore the 40-hour work week by paying lower-paid salaried workers fairly for working extra hours; make tuition affordable at public colleges; create a new paid family leave insurance system; create and expand public health insurance options to make quality affordable health care accessible to all; and invest in 21st century infrastructure.

And even on some of the issues on which there is the greatest partisan divide, the people of Pennsylvania strongly support raising the economic prospects of working people and securing our democracy.

- About 62% support, and only 28% oppose, raising the minimum wage to \$12 an hour and eliminating the tipped minimum wage.
- Fifty-four percent of Pennsylvanians side with the Supreme Court's decision to redraw district lines in Congressional elections, while only 38% support the idea of impeaching the justices of the Court.
- And despite 20 years of relentless attacks on unions, by 65% to 35% Pennsylvanians want to strengthen, not weaken, workers' rights to form and join a labor union.

Taxes

Some of these policies will, of course, cost money, and our research affirms that Pennsylvanians are concerned about taxes. But when given a choice between raising revenues to support investment in health care and education or avoiding tax increases, Pennsylvanians choose the former by a margin of 50% to 37%.

What's more, Pennsylvanians have a clear sense that the tax code is rigged — and not in their favor. They believe, by margins of 35 percentage points or more, that poor and middle-class families — and in some areas, property owners — are taxed too much, while large corporations, wealthy families, and oil and natural gas producers are taxed too little.

Given those sentiments, it's no surprise that there is broad support for proposals that would raise new revenues in a targeted way — by closing corporate loopholes (supported 69% to 27%), by a severance tax on natural gas extraction (59% to 36%), and by adopting an idea that was new to most of them, the Fair Share Tax proposal (58% to 26%), which lowers taxes on wages and interest while raising them on income from wealth (business profits, dividends, capital gains, etc.).

The poll found very similar results statewide and in selected areas of both Southeast Pennsylvania and Western Pennsylvania. Full topline results and results of oversamples in Western PA and Southeastern PA follow.