



14 OCTOBER 2014

I-1351: Class Size Reduction Measure Leading by Nearly 3:1

Washington voters seem poised to add to the legislature's perennial migraine over education funding. Four weeks from election day, two-thirds of the 500 voters in a new *Elway Poll* said they were inclined to vote for I-1351 to reduce class sizes in public schools.

The state Supreme Court says the legislature already is in violation of the state constitution by failing to fully fund basic education. I-1351 opponents say passing this measure could add another \$2 to \$4 billion obligation to the education budget.

But Washington voters have been consistent in their support for smaller class sizes. An initiative to reduce class sizes (I-728) passed in 2000 with 72% of the vote. I-728 was never implemented by the legislature and was repealed in 2012.

In this survey, respondents were read the I-1351 ballot title and asked how they were "inclined to vote as things stand today":

66% said they would definitely (40%) or probably (26%) vote for it; while 24% said they would definitely (13%) or probably (11%) vote no. 11% were undecided.

Support for the measure was uniform across typically divergent categories of voters. The initiative had majority support in every demographic category in the survey. What's more, it had over 60% support in every category except Republicans (55% of whom were inclined to vote for it).

Voter turnout appears not to make much difference: 61% of those who always vote and 66% of those who rarely vote were inclined to vote for I-1351.

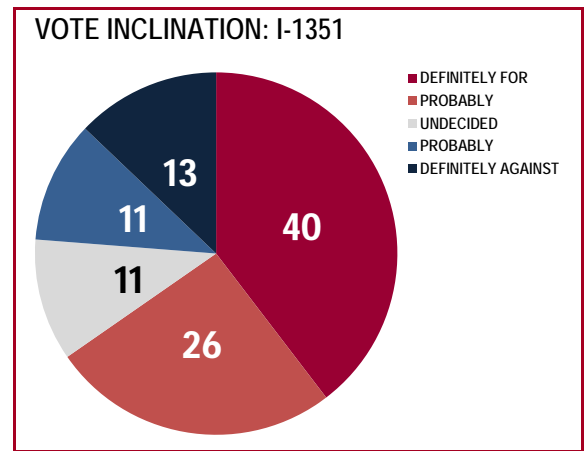
One thing that did appear to make a difference is the amount of attention voters were paying to this year's election. The more attention voters have paid, the less likely they are to support the I-1351:

50% of voters who have been following the election "very closely" were inclined to vote for I-1351; 69% of those who have been paying "some" or "little" attention intended to vote for it; and 73% of those who said they had not been paying attention to the election so far intended to vote for it

It is not entirely unprecedented for initiative support to collapse in the closing weeks of a campaign. Three times in the last 20 years a measure has polled above 60% in October and gone on to lose; 29 times the initiative leading in October won in November. Those 3 exceptions each had organized opposition. I-1351 does not.

I-1351 opponents' challenge is to find a way to get a significant number of voters to: 1) re-consider the measure for its implications, not just its goal; and, 2) agree that it may be well-meaning but misguided, even counter-productive. That would be a tall order in 3 weeks, even for a well-organized, well-funded campaign. But there is no well-funded, well-organized opposition to I-1351.

Time, the lack of organized opposition, and a strong underlying public sentiment in favor of smaller class sizes are all on the side of I-1351 proponents. ☒



Sample Profile

500 registered voters, selected at random from registered voter lists in Washington state, were interviewed October 6-9 2014 by live, professional interviewers. 26% of the interviews were conducted on cell phones. The margin of sampling error is ±4.5% at the 95% level of confidence. This means, in theory, had this same survey been conducted 100 times, the results would be within ±4.5% of the results reported here at least 95 times.

REGION	
Seattle	11%
King County	19%
Pierce/Kitsap	15%
No. Puget Sound.....	17%
Western WA.....	17%
Eastern WA.....	21%
GENDER	
Male	47%
Female.....	53%
PARTY ID	
Democrat	32%
Republican	25%
Independent.....	43%
VOTE HISTORY	
0-2 votes in last 4 elections.....	45%
"Likely Voters" (3 of 4).....	19%
"Perfect Voters" (4 of 4)	36%
FIREARMS IN HOME	
Yes.....	35%
No	50%
No Answer	15%
AGE	
18-35.....	6%
36-50.....	23%
51-64.....	38%
65+.....	30%
EMPLOYMENT	
Self / Business Owner.....	15%
Private Sector	21%
Public Sector.....	11%
Education	6%
Not employed.....	9%
Retired	35%
INCOME	
\$50,000 or less	24%
\$50 to 99,000	35%
Over \$100,000	22%
No Answer	19%

The Elway Poll

The Elway Poll is an independent, non-partisan analysis of public opinion in Washington and the Northwest, published since 1992.

PROPRIETARY QUESTIONS: Each quarter, space is reserved in the questionnaire for organizations to insert their own, proprietary questions. Sponsors are thus able to ask their own questions for a fraction of the cost of a full survey. Results, with demographic crosstabulations, are provided within three days after the interviews are completed.

CROSSTABS: A full set of cross-tabulation tables is available for \$100.

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QUESTION WORDING:

Another measure on the ballot will be Initiative Measure No. 1351, which concerns K-12 education. This measure would direct the legislature to allocate funds to reduce class sizes and increase staffing support for students in all K-12 grades, with additional class-size reductions and staffing increases in high-poverty schools. As things stand today, how are you inclined to vote? Would you say...

- Definitely for Initiative 1351
- Probably for it
- Probably against it
- Definitely against Initiative 1351