



7 APRIL 2015

Voters Standing Firm on Class Size Reduction

Washington voters are not inclined to let legislators off the hook on class size reduction. Voters passed Initiative 1351 last year mandating a reduction in class sizes in public schools. The initiative did not identify a funding source and estimates run north of \$2 billion dollars cover the costs, putting the legislature in a corner.

The House and Senate budgets take slightly different routes to get there, but both reduce class size in kindergarten through third grade and leave class sizes in higher grades as they are.

The voters aren't having it. By a 3:2 margin, respondents in this survey rejected the K-3 option: 53% said the legislature should "find a way to reduce class size in all grades"; while just 36% supported the K-3 proposal.


Senate Republicans would also like to send the measure back to the voters. There are a couple of proposals circulating to resubmit I-1351 to the voters. One would include a tax increase to cover the costs and another would ask voters to ratify the K-3 compromise. In this survey, a tax increase was more popular than the K-3 compromise. Asked how they would likely vote "if the class size initiative were put back on the ballot and included a tax increase to pay for it," 48% said they would likely vote for it, including 20% who were "certain to vote for it"; while 43% said they would likely vote no, including 26% who were "certain to vote against it."

Of those who reject the K-3 compromise, 60% would vote for a tax increase to fund I-1351; 33% would vote against it.

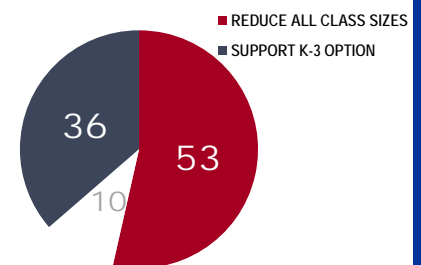
Of those who support the K-3 compromise, 39% would still vote for a tax increase; 54% would not.

This translates to 32% of all voters rejecting the K-3 compromise and willing to vote for a tax increase to fund I-1351; 20% for the K-3 compromise and against a tax increase; 18% rejecting the compromise and against a tax increase.

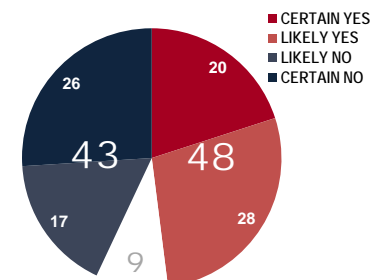
Of course, no particular tax increase was mentioned and actual support would be related to an actual tax proposal. A large lead in the polls last year evaporated as the cost factor was hammered home by I-1351 opponents, so this smaller lead may be vulnerable once real dollars are attached.

Still, these results indicate enduring support for the idea of class size reduction. They also indicate an electorate divided on the issue when costs are included. I-1351 passed last year by a slim 51-49% margin. Even with the specter of a tax increase, it still leads and it is still close. 

REDUCE CLASS SIZE ONLY IN GRADES K-3



LIKELY VOTE ON RESUBMITTED I-1351 WITH TAX INCREASE INCLUDED



Sample Profile

505 registered voters, selected at random from voter lists in Washington state, were interviewed April 1-3, 2015 by live, professional interviewers. 31% of the interviews were conducted on cell phones. The margin of sampling error is $\pm 4.5\%$ at the 95% level of confidence. This means, in theory, had this same survey been conducted 100 times, the results would be within $\pm 4.5\%$ of the results reported here at least 95 times.

REGION

King County.....	30%
Pierce + Kitsap	13%
North Sound (Snohomish to Whatcom)	17%
Western Washington (Clallam to Clark)	19%
Eastern Washington.....	21%

GENDER

Male.....	48%
Female	52%

PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Democrat.....	35%
Republican	22%
Independent	43%

AGE

18-35	10%
36-50	19%
51-64	40%
65+	30%

EDUCATION LEVEL

High School or Less	16%
Some College / Voc-Tech	27%
College Degree	36%
Graduate School	20%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

<\$50,000	22%
\$50-75,000	19%
\$75-100,000	15%
\$100,000+	24%
No Answer.....	20%

The Elway Poll

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

PROPRIETARY QUESTIONS: Each quarter, space is reserved in the questionnaire for proprietary questions. The fee for proprietary questions is \$1000 per question. You will receive the results of your question(s) with full crosstabulations within three days after the interviews are completed.

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

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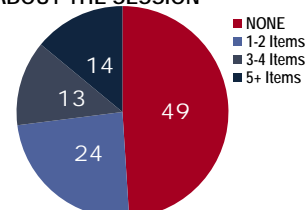
Half of Voters Paying Attention to Legislative Session

Half of the 500 voters interviewed last week said they had been paying attention to the legislative session, including 27% who said they had seen or heard something three or more times in the last week.

The last time *The Elway Poll* asked a similar question was six years ago (March 2009). At that time, 52% said they were following the current session at least “somewhat closely” and only 22% said they had not been paying attention.

Even allowing for the difference in question wording, this finding indicates that about half as many voters are paying attention to this session as were paying any attention six years ago. And half as many are paying close attention now compared to six years ago.

SEEN OR HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THE SESSION



QUESTION WORDING

Part of the education discussion is Initiative 1351, which was passed by voters last year to reduce class size in public schools. The class sizes mandated in the initiative are estimated to cost about \$2 billion dollars. Given the budget situation there are proposals in the legislature to reduce the class sizes only in grades Kindergarten through third grade. Do you support that proposal, or should the legislature find a way to reduce class sizes in all grades?

SUPPORT K-3 PROPOSAL

FIND A WAY TO REDUCE ALL CLASS SIZES

Last year's class size initiative did not include any source for that money to pay the \$2 billion dollar cost. If the class size initiative were put back on the ballot and included a tax increase to pay for it, would you be...

Certain to vote for it

Likely to vote for it

Likely to vote against it

Certain to vote against it

[UNDEC]