

October 13, 2014

To: Morgan Holm (OPB) & Corey Hanson (Fox12)
Fr: John Horvick (DHM Research)
Re: OPB/Fox12 Election Survey Key Findings

The following memo highlights key findings and observations from the OPB/Fox12 Election Survey. The purpose is to assist with coverage of the survey results and story development. For the purpose of citations, please refer to this firm as "DHM Research" in all stories related to this survey.

Research Design: Between October 8 and 11, 2014, DHM Research conducted a telephone survey of 516 likely voters in Oregon. This included voters who had voted in at least 2 of the last 4 elections, and who had registered after the last general election. The sample size is sufficient to assess opinions generally, and allows a review by multiple subgroups including age, gender, and other demographics.

Voters were contacted randomly using multiple samples including landline and cell numbers. In gathering responses, a variety of quality control measures were employed, including questionnaire pre-testing and validations.

For a representative sample, quotas were set by age, gender, party, and area of the state. In the annotated questionnaire, results may add up to 99% or 101% due to rounding.

Statement of Limitations: Any sampling of opinions or attitudes is subject to a margin of error. The margin of error is a standard statistical calculation that represents differences between the sample and total population at a confidence interval, or probability, calculated to be 95%. This means that there is a 95% probability that the sample taken for this study would fall within the stated margins of error if compared with the results achieved from surveying the entire population.

For a sample size of 516, the margin of error for each question falls between +/-2.6% and +/-4.3%, at the 95% confidence level. The reason for the difference lies in the fact that, when response categories are relatively even in size, each is numerically smaller and thus slightly less able – on a statistical basis – to approximate the larger population.

DHM Research: DHM Research has been providing opinion research and consultation throughout the Pacific Northwest and other regions of the United States for over three decades. The firm is non-partisan and independent and specializes in research projects to support public policy-making. www.dhmresearch.com

RACE FOR GOVERNOR

John Kitzhaber (D) is leading Dennis Richardson (R) 50% to 29%. Kitzhaber is in a strong position to be re-elected to a fourth term.

- The revelations about Cylvia Hayes's illegal marriage, to an immigrant for the purposes of citizenship, occurred during the fielding of the survey. The daily results do not indicate any trends or statistically significant changes in support for Kitzhaber before or after the news broke. Whether this story gains traction with the voters in the next few weeks remains to be seen, but there is nothing in these results to suggest that it has had an immediate impact.

RACE FOR SENATE

Jeff Merkley (D) is also in a strong position to be re-elected to a second term. He is currently leading Monica Wehby (R) 47% to 26%.

- Wehby is surprisingly weak among Republicans. Just over half (55%) of Republicans said that they plan to vote for her, while 22% remain undecided. Nor is Wehby being helped by independents. Independents are breaking towards Merkley by more than a two to one margin (46% to 18%).

BALLOT MEASURES

The survey measured support/opposition to five of the November ballot measures. Two are closely contested (marijuana legalization and GMO labeling), one has potential (open primaries), and two are unlikely to pass (higher education bonding and driver cards).

- **Marijuana legalization (M91): 52% yes; 41% no; 7% undecided**
 - M91 is leaning towards passage, but the final result is not certain. The pro-legalization side has an 11-point margin, but is polling just barely over fifty-percent. Success will likely hinge on turnout, as support is highest among 18-34 year olds (70%), independents (68%) and newly registered/less frequent voters (63%). M91 is opposed by 63% of Republicans.
- **GMO labeling (M92): 49% yes; 44% no; 7% undecided**
 - The pro-labeling side currently holds a 5-point edge. Its success will depend on being able to maintain this thin margin by turning out its base supporters. Like marijuana, the challenge will be that the strongest supporters of labeling are those that are least likely to vote: 18-34 year olds (62%) and newly registered/less frequent voters (62%). M92 is opposed by 61% of Republicans.
- **Open primary (M90): 36% yes; 38% no; 26% undecided**
 - Support and opposition to the open primary is nearly split, with a large percentage of voters still undecided. Historically, 36% support three weeks before the election would predict failure, but the future outcome of M90 is more uncertain than usual. Both pro- and anti-M90 campaigns are well-funded and expect to spend heavily in the coming weeks. With such a high number of

undecided voters, and the campaigns ramping up their efforts to reach them, the potential to pass is still there—as is the potential for failure.

- **Higher education bonding (M86): 35% yes; 41% no; 25% undecided**
 - Support for the higher education bonding measure is similar to M90, but has fewer resources to move public opinion. Unlike open primaries, there is not a well-funded campaign backing M86. Without that, history shows that “undecided” voters are more likely to turn into “no” voters when they cast their ballots.
- **Driver cards (M88): 31% yes; 60% no; 8% undecided**
 - This measure is not likely to pass. The strongest level of support is among Democrats (44%), but fewer than half of those voters back it. At the same time, 83% Republicans, 60% of independents, and 67% of men oppose it.

VOTER INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT

With just three weeks before the election, and only days before ballots are mailed, Oregon voters show little excitement about the major candidates and issues.

- Voters in the survey were asked, open-ended, to name the Republican and Democratic candidates for governor and senate. Despite months of campaigning, and millions spent in advertising, less than half of those surveyed could identify three of the four candidates.
 - 62% of voters identified John Kitzhaber as the Democratic candidate for governor.
 - 34% of voters identified Dennis Richardson as the Republican candidate for governor. Notably, just 37% of registered Republican voters identified Richardson.
 - 46% of all voters, and just 50% of registered Democrats, identified Jeff Merkley as the Democratic candidate for senate.
 - 42% of all voters, and an equal percent of registered Republicans (42%), identified Monica Wehby as the Republican candidate for senate.
- The lack of awareness extended even to persistent voters. Among those who voted in all of the last four elections, 71% identified John Kitzhaber, 46% identified Dennis Richardson, 59% identified Jeff Merkley, and 54% identified Monica Wehby.

When asked to compare their enthusiasm to previous mid-term elections, about two-thirds (64%) said that feel about the same level of excitement this time around. One in five (22%) are more enthusiastic this year, and one in ten (13%) are less so.

- The most enthusiastic voters are Republicans (28%), as well as Wehby (32%) and Richardson (29%) supporters.
- If the election were held today, it is unlikely that the relatively higher level of enthusiasm among Republicans would be enough to lead to victories for Wehby or Richardson, but it may impact the ballot measures. As noted above, marijuana legalization and GMO labeling are both closely contested and show sharp partisan differences, with Democrats more supportive and Republicans less so. Both measures would be disadvantaged if Democratic voters are not motivated to turn out.

Jobs and economy are the most important issue to voters, with marijuana legalization a close second.

- 19% of voters said that jobs and economy were the most important issues in the election. It was the biggest concern for nearly all demographic groups, but especially men (26%).
- 13% of voters said that marijuana was the most important issue. Including 22% of 18-34 year olds.

POVERTY

The survey asked a series of questions about Oregonians' experiences with poverty, both personally and among those in their lives. Some of the key findings include:

- When asked to self-identify their economic class, one-half (50%) said that they were "middle class." About three in ten, identified as "lower middle class" (21%) or "lower class" (8%), while less than two in ten identified as "upper middle class" (15%) or "upper class" (2%).
- A follow up question asked: What is the minimum annual income a family of four, with two adults and two children, would need to make to be considered middle class? The overall average response was \$60,600, but there were notable demographic differences.
 - By area of state, the average among those in Portland metro area was \$63,300, compared to \$57,200 in the Willamette Valley and \$59,900 in the Rest of the State.
 - While there were no statistically significant differences by political party, there were differences by support for the senate candidates. The average among those who plan to vote for Merkely was \$62,200 versus \$56,600 among Wehby supporters. A significant difference did not exist between Kitzhaber and Richardson supporters.
 - How much a person makes currently impacted their perceptions of much income is needed to be considered middle class. Those with current incomes below \$50,000, said that family of four would need to earn about \$53,000 per year to be considered middle class, while among those with incomes of \$75,000 and above the average was about \$68,000.
- One-half (51%) of Oregon voters said that they had experienced living in poverty at some point in their lives.
 - Unsurprisingly, those with lower incomes were more likely to say they have experienced poverty, including 73% of those making less than \$25,000 per year.
 - Across the state, voters in the Willamette Valley (62%) were the most likely to have experienced poverty, and those in the Portland metro area (42%) the least likely.
 - Of those who had experienced poverty, 16% experienced it only as a child, 56% only as an adult, and 28% as both a child and an adult.
- Encounters with people experiencing poverty varies among Oregon voters:
 - 26% have a neighbor who is experiencing poverty
 - 40% have a close family member who is experiencing poverty
 - 44% have a close friend who is experiencing poverty
 - 44% know someone who they interact with on daily basis who is experiencing poverty

- 57% know someone who they interact with on a weekly basis who is experiencing poverty
- Voters who took the survey were asked to choose which of two perspectives about government aid to the poor was closest to their opinion:
 - A) Government aid to the poor does more harm than good by making people more dependent on government assistance; or
 - B) Government aid to the poor does more good than harm because people can't get out of poverty until their basic needs are met.

35% of voters choose A (more harm than good), while 52% choose B (more good than harm). 13% said neither or that they did not now.

- As expected, Democrats and Republicans had divergent responses to this choice, but the strength of differences is notable. Nearly three times as many Republicans (59%) than Democrats (18%) said that aid does more harm than good. Conversely, Democrats were much more likely than Republicans to say that government aid does more good than harm (71% vs. 26%).
- Interestingly, voters' current income or their past personal experiences with poverty did not influence their opinions about government aid. Nor did age, area of the state, or gender.

EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS

If being "somewhat" prepared for a major earthquake is sufficient, than most Oregonians say they are ready. But if it is going to take more than that, there is a lot of work to do.

- The survey asked voters how prepared they are for a major earthquake and how prepared they feel their community and the state is.
 - 17% said they personally are "very" prepared
 - 9% said that their community is "very" prepared
 - 6% said that the state is "very" prepared
- Low income voters were significantly more likely to say that they are "not at all" prepared for a major earthquake. Between 19-22% of those making less than \$50,000 said that they were "not at all prepared" compared to 4-10% of those making \$75,000 or more.
- Oregonians do not feel a great sense of urgency to prepare for a major earthquake. Voters in the survey were presented with two statements and asked which is closest to their opinion:
 - A) There is a real likelihood that Oregon will experience a major earthquake in my lifetime and I feel that the state should be making major taxpayer investments to upgrade infrastructure like schools and bridges, and to educate the public about the risk; or
 - B) The risk of a major earthquake in Oregon happening in my lifetime is low. There are many more pressing challenges for the state that should be the immediate focus of taxpayer investments. We should address the risk of earthquakes later.

A bare majority (52%) choose statement A, while 39% choose B, and 10% said neither or that they did not know.

- Democrats (61%) and women (56%) were the most likely to choose statement A. Republicans (46%) and men (46%) were the most likely to choose statement B. It stands out that Republicans and men would be more likely to choose statement B – that the risk of earthquakes can be addressed later – because they were also more likely to say that Oregon is “not too/not at all” prepared for a major earthquake.