

## Independent Senator Ed O'Neill Reports Results From District Survey (May-June, 2009)

LINCOLN - Independent Senator Ed O'Neill's first on-line questionnaire has been completed, and the results show voters with clear opinions about many of the our state's current issues.

Senator O'Neill created the on-line survey to give voters in District 17 an opportunity to voice their opinions about everything from the economy and gambling to ethics in the legislature and consolidating municipal functions. The survey was offered on Senator O'Neill's website as well as his e-newsletter, *The District View*.

According to a spokesperson for Senator O'Neill's campaign team, the questionnaire was an exploratory program with limited response which they plan to continue.

"We want to make sure that voters in District 17 have the opportunity to let Senator O'Neill know how they feel about the issues. This first survey reached a small voter group, but it has been very useful for us. We've learned a lot about the process of making the survey accessible and user-friendly. We will build on what we started in the year to come, and we'll work to have the survey reach a larger percentage of voters in the district as well as throughout the state," O'Neill's spokesperson concluded.

### **Holding The Line On Taxes**

The largest percentage of agreement for any survey question was on the subject of holding the line on taxes. Ninety-five percent of people responding felt that it is very important for the state and municipalities to hold the line on taxes. In a related question, 72% felt that it was very important to hold the line on taxes, even if that meant cutting back on some services.

In the area of state government, 89% feel that special interest groups have too much influence in Rhode Island's legislature, and 88% think that laws should be strengthened pertaining to ethics violations in the General Assembly.

Eighty-four percent of people taking the survey would like to do away with the Master Lever single-party voting system, and 91% would like to see the use of voter photo IDs at election time.

Ninety-two percent would like to have additional information about bond issues available at the polls on voting day.

### **Gambling In Rhode Island**

On the subject of gambling, the survey responses were split. Forty-two percent were opposed to full casino gambling in Rhode Island, while 39% were in favor. Nineteen percent of people responding were undecided. As to the question of the state taking over operations at Twin River, 73% opposed the idea, while 19% needed more information in order to make a decision.

On the business front, 91% of respondents felt that Rhode Island employers should be required to use the e-Verify system to check for illegal workers. Eighty-six percent would support the idea of reducing taxes for businesses in order to attract new companies and retain business already in the state. 73% felt Rhode Island

should switch to 401K retirement packages to reduce unfunded pension liabilities while 19% needed more information to decide.

In the area of education, 77% supported the development of charter schools. Fifty-three percent felt that the state should do away with the Caroulo Act while 41% responding to that question needed to know more about it.

The survey results were very clear on the voter's overall confidence in the Rhode Island economy. When asked what their level of confidence that the state's economy will rebound in the next two years, 48% of voters responded with being "very pessimistic", and a total of 77% indicated that they were either "very pessimistic or pessimistic".

Nine percent of people taking the survey said that they were optimistic about the state's economy.

### Survey Statistics

Total Responding: 114

How important do you think it is that state and local governments hold the line on taxes?  
Very Important: 94.69% Somewhat Important: 5.31% Not Important: 0%

Would you support holding the line on taxes, even if it meant cutbacks in some services?  
Yes: 72.57% No: 1.77% It would depend on the type of cutbacks: 28.32%

Should the straight-ticket "Master Lever" voting system in Rhode Island be abolished ?  
Yes: 84.21% No: 14.04% Don't Know: 1.75%

Would you like to see the use of Voter Photo IDs at voting time?  
Yes: 91.23% No: 5.26% Not sure: 4.39%

Do you think special interest groups have too much influence in our legislature?  
Yes: 89.38% No: 6.19% Not sure: 4.42%

Should Rhode Island's ethics rules pertaining to the legislature be strengthened?  
Yes: 88.6% No: 4.39% Need more information: 7.02%

Would you support reducing business taxes to keep companies from moving out of state and to attract new business to Rhode Island?  
Yes: 85.96% No: 7.02% Not sure: 7.02%

Should the use of E-Verify be a requirement for employers in Rhode Island?  
Yes: 91.23% No: 4.39% Not sure: 4.39%

Should Rhode Island have full casino gambling?  
Yes: 38.94% No: 42.48% Not sure: 19.47%

Do you think the state should take over operations at Twin River?  
Yes: 6.14% No: 73.68% Need more information: 20.18%

## *O'Neill Survey Results*

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Should Rhode Island change to 401K retirement packages as a means of reducing unfunded pension liabilities?

Yes: 72.81% No: 8.77% Need more information: 19.3%

Do you favor the idea of reducing costs by consolidating municipal functions such as school districts, fire departments and police?

Yes: 82.46% No: 7.02% Need more information: 10.53%

Do you support the development of Charter Schools?

Yes: 77.19% No: 11.4% Not sure: 11.4%

Do you think Rhode Island should do away with the Caruolo Act?

Yes: 53.1% No: 5.31% Need more information: 41.59%

Would you like to receive more information (explanation) of bond issues and ballot initiatives prior to voting?

Yes: 92.11% No: 7.89%

On a scale of 1-5, how confident are you that Rhode Island's economy will rebound in the next two years? ( 1 is very pessimistic - 5 is very optimistic )

1 - 54(47.79%) 2 - 33(29.2%) 3 - 16(14.16%) 4 - 5(4.42%) 5 - 5(4.42%) 113