

## MEMORANDUM

**TO: Interested Parties**  
**FROM: Guy Molyneux and Geoff Garin**  
**DATE: November 21, 2017**  
**RE: Tennessee Voter Survey on Republican Tax Plan**

*From November 17 to 19, 2017, Hart Research Associates conducted a survey among 400 registered voters in Tennessee, with a margin of error of  $\pm$ five percentage points. The survey measured voters' views of the Republican tax plan now being considered in the US Senate. This memo reports the survey's key findings.*

**OVERVIEW: Tennessee voters reject the tax plan proposed by Republicans in Congress by three to two. They believe that the plan favors the wealthy, while not reducing their own taxes, and reject the claim that corporate tax cuts will lift wages. Many facts about the plan prove deeply troubling to voters, especially higher health premiums, tax hikes on the middle class, increased deficits, and cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and education. Finally, as voters learn more about the tax plan, their opposition grows and intensifies, and they conclude that Senator Corker should oppose it.**

**1) By three to two, Tennessee voters oppose the Republican tax plan now being debated in the US Senate.**

Just 30% of Tennessee voters currently approve of the Republican tax plan, while nearly half (47%) disapprove. Significantly, strong sentiment on the issue is even more lopsided, with more than twice as many voters strongly disapproving (28%) as strongly approving (13%).

- In partisan terms, Democrats are much more unified in opposition to the plan (7% approve, 80% disapprove) than are Republicans in support (58% approve, 19% disapprove). And voters in the center are sharply negative, with independents disapproving by 52% to 18%.
- Opposition to the plan is especially widespread among voters younger than 40 (61% disapprove), women (50%), and those in the western part of the state (55%).
- Among those most familiar with the plan (57% of voters), a solid 55% disapprove, including 39% who strongly disapprove.

### **2) Tennessee voters believe that the tax plan mainly will benefit the wealthy, and do not expect to receive a tax cut themselves.**

A 54% majority say the tax plan mostly will benefit the wealthy, while far fewer expect it to help middle-class (24%) or low-income (6%) Americans. This runs directly counter to voters' own preference, which is that wealthy families pay more rather than less in federal taxes (48% to 15%).

- Just 18% expect that the Republican plan will lower their own taxes, while almost twice that proportion believe that it will increase their taxes (33%) and a 39% plurality anticipate no impact either way.
- Only 20% of Tennessee voters believe that the plan's corporate tax cuts will be used to raise wages for employees, while 72% reject this claim.
- By a 19-point margin, making sure that the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share in taxes is considered a higher priority than across-the-board tax cuts (58% to 39%).

### **3) Tennessee voters react very negatively to many features and consequences of the tax plan, especially higher health premiums, tax hikes on the middle class, increased deficits, and cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and education. Opponents of the tax plan have many powerful arguments at their disposal in this debate.**

When voters learn about specific provisions and outcomes of the tax plan, their reaction often is extremely negative. The following facts about the tax plan elicit the strongest negative response, with about three-quarters saying that each makes them less favorable to the plan:

- The healthcare changes in the plan will raise health insurance premiums by \$3,000 for thousands of Tennessee families with individual insurance (77% less favorable, 54% much less favorable).
- It raises taxes on tens of millions of middle-class households (76% less favorable, 53% much less favorable).
- It increases the federal debt by \$1.5 trillion (76% less favorable, 50% much less favorable).
- It increases the budget deficit by an average of more than \$100 billion per year (75% less favorable, 51% much less favorable).
- It will result in cuts to Medicare of \$25 billion a year for the next decade (75% less favorable, 50% much less favorable).
- The loss of revenue from tax cuts likely will require funding cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and education (74% less favorable, 56% much less favorable).

Two elements of the plan are popular with Tennessee voters: increasing the child credit to \$2,000 (62% more favorable) and reducing individual tax rates in most brackets (59% more favorable). However, these positive features are overwhelmed by voters' more numerous—and more strongly felt—concerns.

**4) After learning more about the tax plan, Tennessee voters' opposition grows and intensifies: a 57% majority disapproves—43% strongly—while just 33% approve. And just one-third (34%) want Senator Corker to vote yes on the plan, while 56% say he should oppose it.**

After voters learn more about the Republican tax plan, opposition increases by 10 points to 57%, while just a third (33%) approve. Strong opposition expands by an even larger 15 points to 43%, three times the proportion who strongly approve (14%).

- Opposition grows by an extraordinary 20 points—from 52% to 72%—among political independents.

By 22 points, Tennessee voters say that Senator Corker should oppose rather than support the Republican tax plan (56% to 34%) when it comes to a vote in the US Senate.