



PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: GLEN BOLGER

RE: SURVEY OF NEVADA VOTERS ON CREATING AN
APPEALS COURT

DATE: JANUARY 21, 2014

Key Findings

1. *Voters approve of the job the Nevada Supreme Court is doing.*

Forty-nine (49%) of voters approve of the job the Nevada Supreme Court is doing, while just 17% disapprove. Despite having a soft image (three in ten voters don't have an opinion), the Supreme Court has a decidedly positive rating.

2. *The Nevada Court of Appeals amendment is well-positioned to pass and receives support from a broad array of voters.*

A majority, a full 55%, of voters vote yes, in favor of establishing a Court of Appeals, while 36% vote no, against the measure. Democrats favor the amendment (68% yes/23% no) at a higher rate than Republicans (46% yes/43% no). Independents are the most opposed, with only 44% voting yes, and 50% voting no. Given that there is not a big vote support spread by party, this is not a partisan issue.

A majority of voters support the amendment in each of the four Congressional districts. The strongest area of support is in the Las Vegas media market, where 56% of voters vote yes and 34% vote no.

The measure is supported across all age groups. A full 70% of 18-34 year-olds vote yes, while 26% vote no. Among senior citizens, 55% vote yes and 36% vote no.

Fifty-five percent (55%) of all women vote yes on the amendment, while 37% vote no. Support is similar amongst men, 54% vote yes and 34% vote no.

3. ***After hearing the messages of both supporters and opponents, voters still favor the amendment by a sizeable margin.***

After asking the initial ballot, we asked a descriptive ballot.

Thinking more about the ballot amendment, I'd like to read you a description of what both sides have been saying, and please tell me which one comes closest to your own opinion (**ROTATE**).

58% Supporters of creating a Nevada Court of Appeals say that the state Supreme Court is currently required to hear and decide every appeal on every case. This means they get bogged down hearing appeals on drivers license revocations, and hearing legal complaints by prisoners about food in jails, taking time away from important cases like family law. Supporters say Nevada has been growing and we need to modernize and speed up the legal system so that cases that are important to people's lives are not delayed.

...while...

38% Opponents of creating a Nevada Court of Appeals say that the court system does not need to grow in size. They say the courts will become too powerful, cost too much money, and create more bureaucracy. Opponents say that the voters turned down a proposal for a Court of Appeals in 2010, and bringing it back means the politicians are ignoring the will of the Nevada voters.

4. ***A fifth of those who oppose creating a Court of Appeals say they need to know more. Supporters of the measure believe everyone has a right to an appeal and that a Court of Appeals would allow the Supreme Court to focus on more important issues.***

When respondents voting no were asked why they opposed the amendment, many responded that they didn't know enough to make a decision. Some had heard about the amendment for the first time and needed to hear the arguments for and against before they could make a decision.

Supporters said they believed a new Court of Appeals would help speed up trials, allow more people to have an appeals process, and have an overall positive impact on the community. Supporters are concerned that justice delayed is justice denied.

The Bottom Line

The ballot amendment to create a Nevada Court of Appeals is well positioned to pass. Voters across the state, from all political backgrounds and localities, see the importance of a well functioning court system and are likely to support the amendment in November.

Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies is pleased to present the key findings of a survey conducted in Nevada on December 10-12, 2013 among 500 likely voters (N=150 cell) respondents with a margin of error of $\pm 4.38\%$.