



TO: Beacon Center of Tennessee
**FROM: David B. Hill, Ph.D., Director and
Randy Ellison, Senior Research Consultant**
DATE: June 8, 2012
SUBJECT: Davidson County Property Tax Poll

New Poll Shows Davidson County Voters Strongly Oppose Property Tax Hike

By a three to one margin, likely voters in Davidson County oppose Mayor Karl Dean's proposal for a 13% property tax increase.

While likely voters feel that things in the Nashville area are generally going in the right direction and approve of the way that the Metro Nashville City Council is handling its job, 68% oppose the mayor's proposed budget with its 13% increase in property taxes.

These poll numbers demonstrate deep and widespread opposition to the property tax and spending increases included in the Mayor's budget proposal. Opposition is strongest among a diverse set of voters: Conservative/Moderate Democrats (81%), Minority Democrats (81%), Conservatives (77%), and African-American likely voters (75%).

When given the option between increasing property taxes to avoid cuts to education, police personnel, 20% reductions in certain city departments, and funding for \$125 million in new spending OR cutting unnecessary waste, more than six out of ten (63%) likely voters support maintaining current levels of spending and cutting unnecessary waste.

The debate and vote on the budget will likely have a long-term impact on members of the Metro Council. By a three to one margin, 57% say that they are likely to vote against their current councilman if he or she supports this increase in property taxes.

KEY POLL RESULTS

- More than half of likely voters (53%) believe that things in the Nashville area are generally going in the right direction today. Just 29% believe that the city is on the wrong track.
- Job approval of the Metro Council is quite strong with 59% of likely voters indicating approval for the way the Metro Nashville City Council is handling its job.
- While likely voters in Davidson County currently give the council high marks, they oppose Mayor Dean's proposal for a 13% property tax increase by a three to one margin.
- When likely voters are asked if they support Mayor Karl Dean’s proposed 13% property tax increase and a spending increase of 7.85% in his recommended budget for the city, 68% say they oppose the proposed tax and budget plan.

Metro Nashville-Davidson County Mayor Karl Dean is proposing a 13% property tax increase in his recommended budget for the city. The proposed budget includes a spending increase of 7.85%. Please tell me if you support or oppose this proposed tax and budget plan, which is currently being debated by the Metro Council?

Support	21%
Strongly	9%
No Strongly	13%
Oppose	68%
Not Strongly	21%
Strongly	47%
Unsure	10%
Refused	1%

- While the Metro Council’s job approval numbers are quite strong, a vote for the property tax increase could negatively impact the reelection chances of council members who vote for the property tax increase.

When Davidson County voters are asked if they are more likely to vote for or against their councilman in the next election if he or she votes to approve the property tax increase, 57% said they are more likely to vote against their council member if he or she supports the tax and budget plan.

- When given the option between increasing property taxes to avoid cuts to education, police personnel, 20% reductions in certain city departments, and funding for \$125 million in new spending **OR** maintaining current levels of spending and cutting unnecessary waste to avoid a tax increase, **63% of voters prefer maintaining current spending, cutting waste and avoiding a tax increase.**
- Opposition against the property tax increase cuts across all demographic groups.

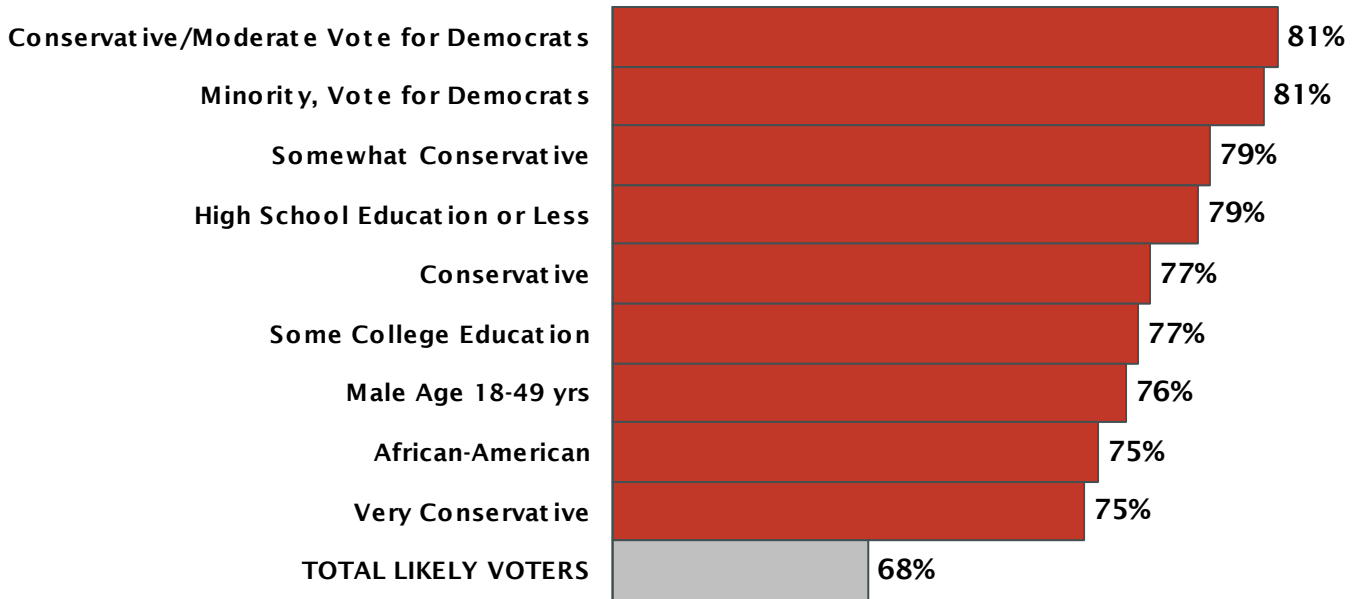
Among likely African American voters, 75% oppose the increase.

Among voters 60 years of age or older, 70% oppose the increase and nearly three out of four (72%) voters who identify themselves as retired oppose the increase.

- Democrats enjoy a significant advantage in party affiliation in Davidson County with 44% of likely voters identifying themselves as Democrats, 23% as Republican and 27% as Swing Voters.
- However, opposition to the tax increase is strong among Democrats (67%), Republicans (67%) and Swing Voters (70%). Even among the 26% of likely voters who identify themselves as Liberal or Somewhat Liberal, just 38% support the measure while 55% oppose.
- The profile of likely voters who oppose the increase in property taxes is deep and widespread. Here's a breakdown of selected categories demonstrating the greatest opposition to the property tax increase.

Mayor Karl Dean’s Proposal For A 13% Property Tax Increase In His Recommended Budget For The City, Including A Spending Increase Of 7.85%

(Profile Of Selected Categories With The Highest Percentages Of “Oppose”)



METHODOLOGY

- This memorandum summarizes results from a telephone poll of 403 registered voters in Davidson County conducted June 5-7, 2012. Results only include interviews with registered voters who, based on their past voting behavior, are likely to vote in a county-wide election.
- The estimation error associated with a sample of 403 is 4.9% at the 95% confidence interval. This means that in 95 of 100 cases, the results of this poll are within plus or minus 4.9 points of the results that would have been obtained if all likely voters had been interviewed. Note that special care was taken to ensure the geographic, party affiliation and demographic divisions of the actual electorate are properly represented in the results of the poll.

ABOUT

Hill Research Consultants is a full-service public opinion and marketing research firm organized in 1988. Serving a nationwide clientele, the firm specializes in research on politics and public affairs, education, transportation, real estate, healthcare, high tech, sports marketing, and corporate image.

Clients of the firm include leading elected public officials, schools, state and local government agencies, major corporations, chambers of commerce, membership associations, advocacy groups, advertising agencies and public relations firms.

For more information, Please contact us at www.hillresearch.com, by email at info@hillresearch.com, or by phone at 888.338.4455.