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New UNF Poll Shows Overwhelming Support for Half-Cent Sales Tax for Schools
Overwhelming Majority Support Decriminalization of Recreational Marijuana in Duval

The Public Opinion Research Lab (PORL) at the University of North Florida released a new poll comprised of registered voters in Duval County that reveals approximately 74% of Duval County voters support a half-cent sales to upgrade, improve and replace aging schools throughout the school district. Only 20% are against the sales tax, with 4% stating they don't know. Support was highest among Democrats, while still showing strong support among Republicans, with 78% and 68% respectively. A referendum to vote on this sales tax was withdrawn by the Jacksonville City Council in September, which resulted in the Duval County School Board filing a lawsuit against the City of Jacksonville.

"This is the continuation of a trend we've seen during polling on this issue several times this year," said Dr. Michael Binder, faculty director of the PORL at UNF. "Duval registered voters are very supportive of the half-cent sales tax and if given the opportunity to vote, would likely pass this measure easily."

When asked about job approval for the Superintendent of Duval County Public Schools (DCSP), 44% approve of the job Diana Greene is doing as Superintendent, while 28% disapprove. Subsequently, respondents were informed that currently, the Superintendent is a position appointed by the Duval County School Board. When asked if the position should remain appointed, or if the Superintendent should be elected by Duval County voters, the majority stated the position should be elected, at 70%. Conversely, 25% stated the position should continue to be appointed.

"Generally speaking, voters are inclined to support opportunities to vote for both issues and candidates," Binder said. "The superintendent position seems similar, and even though Jacksonville's City Council was divided on the measure, there appears to be support for turning the DCPS superintendent into an elected position."

Crime remains the most important issue facing Jacksonville according to registered voters for the fifth year in a row, at 44%. Education is a distant second, with 13%, followed by

downtown redevelopment at 9%. Mayor Lenny Curry's job approval is at 47%, with 29% disapproving. Jacksonville City Council received 36% approval and 38% disapproval. A majority of respondents approve of how Mike Williams is handling his job as the Sheriff of Jacksonville, at 54%, while 31% disapprove.

"Per the usual here in Jacksonville, crime is the leading concern in the county," Binder noted. "Both Mayor Curry, who was elected by running on reducing crime, and Sheriff Williams have net positive support – though Williams' net positive support is 7 points higher."

Respondents were also asked about other potential policy issues for Duval county. Voters are split concerning the ban of single-use plastic straws in restaurants and retailers, with 42% in support of the ban and 47% in opposition. This policy is split along party lines with 49% of Democrats supporting the measure, while only 30% of Republicans are in favor of the ban. On the other hand, voters strongly support decriminalizing recreational marijuana, with 75% approval. Democrats have higher levels of support, 78%, but a majority of Republicans support decriminalization as well, at 67%.

"Similar to previous polls, marijuana legalization is extremely popular in Duval County," said Binder. "This issue has not gotten very far in City Council, but it is an issue that resonates with the populace."

For details about the methodology of the survey and additional crosstabs by partisanship, age, race, sex and education, visit the [PORL website](#).

Survey Results

What do you think is the most important problem facing Jacksonville today?

Answer Options	Jacksonville Voters n=665
Crime	44%
Downtown Redevelopment	9%
Economy/Jobs/Unemployment	8%
Education	13%
Healthcare	4%
Public Transportation	3%
Public Utilities	2%
Tax Burden	2%
The Environment	4%
Something Else	9%
Don't Know	2%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Lenny Curry is handling his job as Mayor of Jacksonville?

Answer Options	Jacksonville Voters n=649
Strongly Approve	18%
Somewhat Approve	29%
Somewhat Disapprove	13%
Strongly Disapprove	16%
Don't Know	25%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Jacksonville City Council is handling its job?

Answer Options	Jacksonville Voters n=652
Strongly Approve	6%
Somewhat Approve	30%
Somewhat Disapprove	21%
Strongly Disapprove	17%
Don't Know	25%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Mike Williams is handling his job as the Sheriff of Jacksonville?

Answer Options	Jacksonville Voters n=647
Strongly Approve	23%
Somewhat Approve	31%

Somewhat Disapprove	13%
Strongly Disapprove	18%
Don't Know	16%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Diana Greene is handling her job as the superintendent of Duval County Public Schools?

Answer Options	Jacksonville Voters n=647
Strongly Approve	19%
Somewhat Approve	25%
Somewhat Disapprove	13%
Strongly Disapprove	15%
Don't Know	29%

How would you vote on a local referendum that reads:

To upgrade aging schools through repairs and modernization, to keep schools safe and to continue to promote a conducive learning environment, to improve technology, and to replace existing or build new schools, shall the Duval County School Board be authorized to levy a 15-year half-cent sales surtax, with expenditures based upon the Surtax Capital Outlay Plan, and monitored by an independent citizens committee?

Answer Options	Jacksonville Voters n=662
For the Half-Cent Tax	74%
Against the Half-Cent Tax	20%
Would not vote	2%
Don't Know	4%

Answer Options	Democratic Voters n=275	Republican Voters n=237	NPA Voters n=152
For the Half-Cent Tax	78%	68%	78%
Against the Half-Cent Tax	15%	28%	16%
Would not vote	2%	2%	0%
Don't Know	5%	3%	5%

Currently, the Superintendent of Duval County Public Schools is a position appointed by the School Board. Do you believe the position should continue to be appointed, or should the Superintendent of Duval County Public Schools be elected by Duval County voters?

Answer Options	Jacksonville Voters n=658
Appointed	25%
Elected	70%
Don't Know	5%

Do you support or oppose decriminalizing marijuana in Duval County that would allow for civil citations rather than arrests for adults caught with less than 20 grams of marijuana?

Answer Options	Jacksonville Voters n=654
Strongly Support	61%
Somewhat Support	14%
Somewhat Oppose	5%
Strongly Oppose	16%
Don't Know	5%

Answer Options	Democratic Voters n=268	Republican Voters n=236	NPA Voters n=151
Strongly Support	66%	47%	72%
Somewhat Support	12%	20%	11%
Somewhat Oppose	5%	6%	1%
Strongly Oppose	14%	23%	11%
Don't Know	3%	5%	5%

Do you support or oppose the City of Jacksonville banning restaurants and retailers from distributing single-use plastic straws?

Answer Options	Jacksonville Voters n=653
Strongly Support	26%
Somewhat Support	16%
Somewhat Oppose	17%
Strongly Oppose	30%
Don't Know	11%

Answer Options	Democratic Voters n=273	Republican Voters n=228	NPA Voters n=150
Strongly Support	31%	18%	30%
Somewhat Support	18%	12%	17%
Somewhat Oppose	17%	20%	12%
Strongly Oppose	22%	43%	27%
Don't Know	13%	8%	13%

Survey Demographics

Telephone	Jacksonville Voters n=665
Landline	17%
Cell phone	84%

What is the highest grade in school or year of college you have completed?

Education	Jacksonville Voters n=660
Less than high school	4%
High school graduate	24%
Some college	44%
College graduate	19%
Post graduate degree	9%

Methodology

The UNF Jax Speaks Poll was conducted and sponsored by the Public Opinion Research Lab at the University of North Florida, from Thursday, Oct. 31, 2019, through Monday, Nov. 4, 2019, by live callers via the telephone; calls were made from 4 to 9 p.m. daily, with a maximum of five callbacks attempted. Interviews were conducted in English by UNF undergraduate students and employees. Data collection took place at the PORL facility with its 27-station Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. The phone numbers used for this survey were sourced from the Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019, update of the Florida Voter File. The sample frame was comprised of registered Florida voters who reside in Jacksonville. Overall, there were 665 completed surveys of Florida registered voters, 18 years of age or older.

The margin of sampling error for the total sample is +/- 3.8 percentage points. The breakdown of completed responses on a landline phone to a cell phone was 17% to 84%. Through hand dialing, an interviewer upon reaching the individual as specified in the voter file asked that respondent to participate, regardless of landline telephone or cell phone. Data were then weighted by partisan registration, age, race, sex and education. Education weights were created from the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS). Partisan registration, sex, race and age weights were created from the Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019, update of the Florida Voter File to match the active registered voters in Florida. These demographic characteristics were pulled from the voter file list.

All weighted demographic variables were applied using the SPSS version 25 rake weighting function, which won't assign a weight if one of the demographics being weighted on is missing. In this case, respondents missing a response for education were given a weight of 1. There were no statistical adjustments made due to design effects. This study had a 14.4% response rate. The American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Response Rate 3 (RR3) calculation was used which consists of an estimate of what proportion of cases of unknown eligibility are truly eligible. This survey was sponsored by the UNF PORL and directed by Dr. Michael Binder, UNF associate professor of political science.

The PORL is a full-service survey research facility that provides tailored research to fulfill each client's individual needs from political, economic, social and cultural projects. The PORL opened in 2001 and is an independent, non-partisan center, a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative and a member of the Association of Academic Survey Research Organization. As members of AAPOR, the PORL's goal is to support sound and ethical practices in the conduct of survey and public opinion research. For more information about methodology, contact Binder at porl@unf.edu or at (904) 620-2784.

UNF is a nationally ranked university in Jacksonville, Florida, that is nestled on a beautiful 1,300-acre nature preserve, featuring six colleges of distinction as well as nationally recognized flagship programs, with 56 bachelor degree programs and over 75 areas of concentration.

Public Opinion Research Lab at the University of North Florida - Jacksonville Speaks Poll November 6, 2019

What do you think is the most important problem facing Jacksonville today?

	Party				Sex		Education (College Degree)		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	Yes	No	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Subset N	662	272	237	150	295	366	184	474	386	186	36	55	65	130	113	112	114	128
Crime	45%	45%	53%	31%	39%	48%	40%	46%	46%	46%	25%	36%	28%	33%	45%	45%	59%	50%
Downtown Redevelopment	9%	8%	10%	11%	11%	7%	13%	8%	9%	5%	8%	24%	20%	11%	6%	10%	7%	5%
Economy/Jobs/Unemployment	8%	11%	3%	11%	8%	8%	8%	8%	5%	14%	14%	6%	9%	7%	10%	13%	4%	6%
Education	13%	13%	12%	17%	13%	14%	16%	12%	15%	12%	6%	6%	15%	17%	19%	13%	6%	11%
Healthcare	4%	4%	3%	7%	5%	4%	4%	4%	2%	6%	17%	11%	5%	3%	3%	5%	5%	5%
Public Transportation	3%	3%	3%	5%	4%	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%	8%	6%	6%	6%	4%	3%	-	2%
Public Utilities	2%	3%	2%	-	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%	-	-	2%	2%	2%	-	3%	4%
Tax Burden	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%	-	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%	5%
The Environment	4%	4%	2%	5%	3%	4%	5%	3%	3%	3%	8%	6%	8%	2%	3%	3%	4%	5%
Something Else	8%	6%	8%	11%	10%	7%	6%	8%	10%	5%	14%	2%	5%	15%	5%	5%	8%	8%
Don't Know	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	-	4%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	1%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Lenny Curry is handling his job as Mayor of Jacksonville?

	Party				Sex		Education (College Degree)		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	Yes	No	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Subset N	649	269	235	143	292	357	181	463	380	179	36	57	64	127	110	111	108	127
Strongly Approve	18%	12%	29%	11%	20%	16%	17%	18%	22%	12%	17%	14%	8%	11%	18%	25%	19%	22%
Somewhat Approve	28%	24%	37%	23%	28%	29%	30%	28%	30%	28%	25%	19%	31%	28%	25%	21%	31%	36%
Somewhat Disapprove	13%	15%	11%	10%	11%	14%	13%	13%	10%	18%	14%	11%	9%	13%	11%	15%	13%	12%
Strongly Disapprove	16%	26%	7%	13%	16%	16%	18%	15%	15%	20%	17%	16%	14%	10%	17%	13%	26%	17%
Don't Know	25%	23%	16%	43%	25%	25%	22%	26%	23%	22%	28%	40%	38%	37%	29%	26%	12%	13%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the Jacksonville City Council is handling its job?

	Party				Sex		Education (College Degree)		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	Yes	No	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Subset N	652	274	232	147	295	357	183	466	379	182	36	55	64	128	112	111	110	126
Strongly Approve	6%	6%	9%	3%	8%	5%	9%	6%	6%	7%	8%	6%	5%	6%	10%	9%	6%	3%
Somewhat Approve	30%	25%	35%	33%	31%	29%	33%	29%	31%	27%	25%	38%	41%	25%	35%	32%	26%	28%
Somewhat Disapprove	21%	22%	23%	17%	18%	24%	21%	22%	21%	24%	14%	16%	14%	21%	18%	16%	26%	27%

Strongly Disapprove	18%	22%	12%	18%	21%	14%	15%	19%	14%	20%	33%	20%	14%	21%	8%	16%	24%	19%
Don't Know	25%	26%	21%	30%	22%	28%	22%	26%	28%	22%	19%	20%	27%	27%	30%	26%	18%	23%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Mike Williams is handling his job as the Sheriff of Jacksonville?

	Party				Sex		Education (College Degree)		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	Yes	No	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Subset N	647	269	233	145	288	358	181	461	376	183	35	53	64	125	108	111	111	126
Strongly Approve	22%	13%	40%	13%	23%	22%	22%	23%	27%	13%	29%	17%	16%	11%	20%	26%	27%	32%
Somewhat Approve	31%	26%	38%	28%	29%	33%	37%	28%	36%	25%	20%	19%	33%	29%	36%	24%	27%	36%
Somewhat Disapprove	13%	18%	6%	16%	12%	15%	11%	14%	11%	18%	14%	9%	13%	14%	12%	17%	19%	7%
Strongly Disapprove	18%	26%	5%	23%	18%	18%	11%	21%	9%	31%	20%	34%	17%	26%	13%	15%	19%	15%
Don't Know	16%	17%	12%	20%	18%	13%	19%	14%	16%	13%	17%	21%	22%	20%	19%	17%	8%	10%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Diana Greene is handling her job as the Superintendent of Duval County Public Schools?

	Party				Sex		Education (College Degree)		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	Yes	No	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Subset N	647	272	230	143	291	356	183	458	374	182	35	54	64	124	111	110	112	126
Strongly Approve	18%	21%	15%	20%	13%	23%	22%	17%	15%	26%	26%	13%	14%	16%	18%	21%	23%	18%
Somewhat Approve	25%	29%	22%	22%	24%	26%	26%	24%	27%	24%	9%	30%	30%	21%	28%	23%	20%	30%
Somewhat Disapprove	13%	11%	16%	11%	14%	12%	13%	13%	14%	9%	11%	15%	6%	15%	14%	19%	10%	10%
Strongly Disapprove	15%	15%	17%	14%	17%	14%	10%	18%	14%	16%	29%	15%	17%	19%	15%	10%	13%	18%
Don't Know	29%	24%	31%	33%	33%	24%	28%	28%	31%	25%	26%	28%	33%	30%	25%	27%	35%	23%

How would you vote on a local referendum that reads: To upgrade aging schools through repairs and modernization, to keep schools safe and to continue to promote a conducive learning environment, to improve technology, and to replace existing or build new schools, shall the Duval County School Board be authorized to levy a 15-year half-cent sales surtax, with expenditures based upon the Surtax Capital Outlay Plan, and monitored by an independent citizens committee? Would you vote...

	Party				Sex		Education (College Degree)		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	Yes	No	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Subset N	662	275	237	152	299	364	183	473	385	187	36	55	66	132	114	111	111	128
For the Half-Cent Tax	74%	78%	68%	78%	74%	75%	78%	73%	74%	75%	64%	80%	83%	77%	75%	69%	80%	67%
Against the Half-Cent Tax	20%	15%	28%	16%	22%	18%	19%	21%	22%	16%	31%	15%	8%	14%	18%	30%	17%	27%
Would not vote	2%	2%	2%	-	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	-	-	-	2%	2%	-	3%	2%
Don't Know	4%	5%	3%	5%	4%	5%	2%	5%	3%	7%	6%	6%	9%	8%	5%	1%	-	3%

Currently, the Superintendent of Duval County Public Schools is a position appointed by the School Board. Do you believe the position should continue to be appointed, or should the Superintendent of Duval County Public Schools be elected by Duval County voters?

	Total	Party			Sex		Education (College Degree)		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
		Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	Yes	No	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Subset N	658	274	234	150	298	360	182	470	383	185	36	54	65	130	113	112	110	127
Appointed	25%	26%	27%	21%	25%	26%	40%	20%	27%	23%	8%	28%	14%	27%	23%	22%	19%	36%
Elected	70%	70%	67%	71%	71%	69%	56%	75%	68%	73%	69%	69%	80%	66%	73%	73%	75%	56%
Don't Know	5%	4%	6%	7%	5%	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%	22%	4%	6%	7%	2%	5%	6%	6%

Do you support or oppose decriminalizing marijuana in Duval County that would allow for civil citations rather than arrests for adults caught with less than 20 grams of marijuana?

	Total	Party			Sex		Education (College Degree)		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
		Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	Yes	No	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Subset N	654	268	236	151	294	358	183	465	383	180	37	54	64	132	113	111	106	127
Strongly Support	61%	66%	47%	72%	63%	59%	59%	61%	59%	64%	51%	67%	72%	74%	66%	63%	55%	39%
Somewhat Support	14%	12%	20%	11%	14%	15%	18%	13%	18%	9%	16%	4%	19%	9%	20%	14%	9%	17%
Somewhat Oppose	5%	5%	6%	1%	2%	6%	6%	4%	4%	7%	5%	-	5%	3%	5%	5%	5%	6%
Strongly Oppose	16%	14%	23%	11%	17%	16%	13%	18%	15%	17%	22%	20%	3%	7%	8%	13%	27%	34%
Don't Know	4%	3%	5%	5%	4%	5%	6%	4%	5%	2%	5%	9%	2%	7%	1%	5%	5%	5%

Do you support or oppose the City of Jacksonville banning restaurants and retailers from distributing single-use plastic straws?

	Total	Party			Sex		Education (College Degree)		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
		Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	Yes	No	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Subset N	653	273	228	150	295	359	183	465	377	185	36	55	64	132	114	112	109	121
Strongly Support	26%	31%	18%	30%	24%	28%	30%	24%	24%	25%	28%	36%	36%	24%	25%	26%	29%	22%
Somewhat Support	16%	18%	12%	17%	13%	18%	16%	15%	17%	13%	22%	9%	20%	15%	14%	16%	19%	17%
Somewhat Oppose	17%	17%	20%	12%	22%	13%	16%	18%	17%	17%	3%	27%	16%	19%	24%	18%	10%	14%
Strongly Oppose	31%	22%	43%	27%	30%	31%	29%	31%	29%	32%	44%	22%	23%	30%	23%	36%	37%	32%
Don't Know	11%	13%	8%	13%	12%	11%	9%	12%	12%	12%	3%	6%	5%	12%	15%	5%	10%	16%

Nature of the Sample	
Florida Voters	n=665
Party Registration	
Democrat	41%
Republican	36%
NPA/Other	23%

Sex	
Male	45%
Female	55%
Education (College Degree)	
Less than high school	4%
High school graduate	24%
Some college	44%
College graduate	19%
Post graduate degree	9%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	58%
African American/Black	28%
Hispanic	5%
Other	8%
Age	
18-24	10%
25-34	20%
35-44	17%
45-54	17%
55-64	17%
65+	19%