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Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab Poll: A Plurality of Iowans Supports State Constitutional Amendment on Gun Rights

According to a recent Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab Poll, a plurality of Iowans (45.3%) said they would support a proposed pro-gun amendment to the Iowa Constitution while 28.9% of Iowans answered that they would vote against it. The online poll, designed by University of Iowa faculty and students as a research project, surveyed 883 voting-age Iowans between Feb. 10 and Feb. 25, 2022.

The Iowa legislature passed the proposed state constitutional amendment for a second time in 2021, meaning it could appear on the general election ballot in November 2022. The proposed amendment would add the following language to the state constitution: “The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. The sovereign state of Iowa affirms and recognizes this right to be a fundamental individual right. Any and all restrictions of this right shall be subject to strict scrutiny.”

Differences in support for the proposed amendment were found based on respondent party identification and urbanicity. Party identification was a strong indication of whether Iowans would vote for the proposed amendment: 67.1% of Republicans stated they would vote for the proposed amendment compared to 24.1% of Democrats. Additionally, 45.4% of Independents responded that they would vote for the proposed amendment. Conversely, 51.1% of Democrats stated they would vote against the proposed amendment, as did 29.4% of Independents and 9.4% of Republicans.

Support for the proposed amendment also varied with respondents’ community type. More than half (52.5%) of Iowans living in rural communities, 45.4% of Iowans living in suburban communities, and 35.7% of Iowans living in urban communities said they would vote for the proposed amendment. In contrast, 23.3% of Iowans living in rural communities, 31.8% in suburban communities, and 33.7% in urban communities responded that they would vote against the proposed amendment.

Opinions toward the proposed amendment also diverged were split by respondents’ sex. More than half of male respondents (53.1%) answered that they would support the proposed amendment compared to 37.8% of female respondents. Differences also were found across age groups. About the half of respondents aged 70 and older indicated that they would vote for the proposed amendment (49.5%). Among the youngest respondent group, 18 to 34 years, 40.5% of respondents indicated that they would vote for the proposed amendment.

Likely voters appear to be slightly more favorable toward the proposed amendment. Survey respondents also were asked whether they voted in the 2020 presidential election. Of those who responded that they voted, 47% answered that they would vote for the proposed amendment, whereas 31.2% responded that they would vote against it. Among those who didn’t vote in the

2020 presidential election, a plurality of respondents answered that they don't know or declined to answer (42.5%), followed by those who would vote for the proposed amendment (38.7%) and, lastly, those who would vote against it (18.8%).

Respondent identification: The Iowa Social Science Research Center (ISRC) contracted with a respected web panel vendor to field the survey to a demographically representative sample of up to 900 respondents. Respondents invited to complete the web survey were Iowa adults, aged 18-120 years, recruited for participation via web panel. To obtain a census-representative sample, quotas were set on the following demographics: sex, age, and urbanicity.

Sample: 883 voting-age residents in Iowa, margin of error +/-3.4%.

Weighting: Reported results are weighted by age, sex, and party identification.

About the Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab

The poll was designed by the Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab, comprised of UI faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. The Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab is co-directed by Frederick J. Boehmke, professor of political science, and Kajsa Dalrymple, professor of journalism and mass communication. The poll is a teaching, research, and service project, and was implemented in collaboration with the Iowa Social Science Research Center directed by Frederick J. Boehmke. The UI Public Policy Center provided support for this poll as part of its student success mission, intended to expand experiential policy-relevant research for UI students.

Zoe Lagessie, Molly Fischer, and Nolan Hansen, Research Fellows for the Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab, assisted with the preparation of this release.

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