

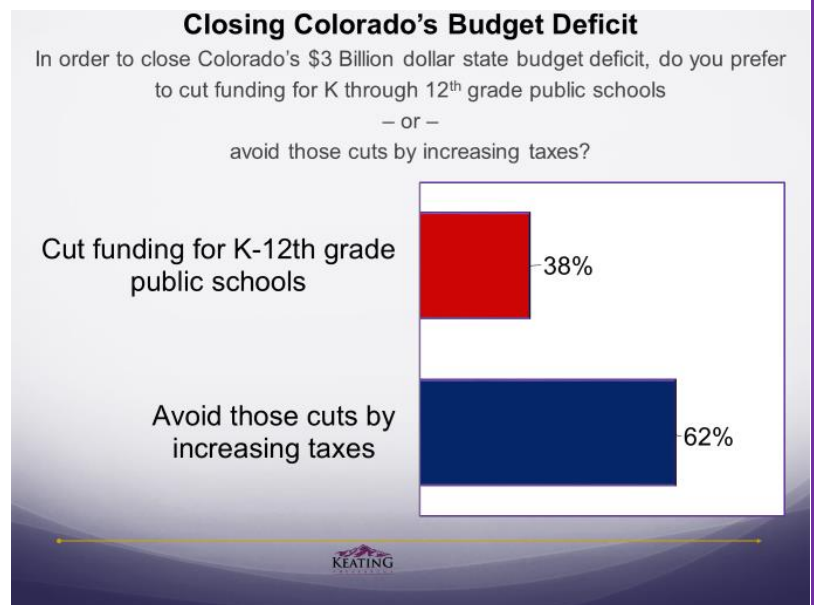
To: Interested Parties
From: Chris Keating, Keating Research
Date: May 20, 2020
Re: Budget deficit - Coloradans prefer to increase taxes on those making more than \$250,000 in order to avoid cutting state funding for education



This memo is based on the results of an online poll of 600 likely November 2020 voters statewide in Colorado conducted by **Keating Research** from May 14-18, 2020. This poll is designed to accurately represent likely November 2020 voters based on party registration, gender, age, region and ethnicity. For this sample of 600 the worst case margin of error at the 95% level is plus or minus 4.0%. Please consult the topline results for the full wording of the questions in this poll. **Keating Research** is recognized by Democrats and Republicans alike as providing the most accurate polling in Colorado.


To close Colorado's state budget deficit, a majority 62% of Coloradans prefer to avoid cuts to K through 12th grade public school funding by increasing taxes.


Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Colorado is facing an estimated \$3.3 Billion budget shortfall. Today Colorado has a choice – to increase taxes or to cut funding for critical state services. When Colorado voters are asked which option they would choose, the majority 6-of 10 (62%) choose to increase taxes in order to avoid cuts to K through 12th grade public schools, while the minority 38% choose to cut funding for K through 12th grade public schools.




If taxes are increased in order to close Colorado's more than \$3 Billion dollar budget shortfall and balance the budget, 7-of-10 (71%) Colorado voters support increasing taxes only on the higher income households – those with income above \$250,000.

Increasing taxes only on those making over \$250,000 is supported by the majority across every group around the state of Colorado, because it would increase taxes just for the top five percent of earners in Colorado.

 **Democrats** (89% support), **Unaffiliated** (68% support) and **Republicans** (55% support) all support increasing taxes only on those making over \$250,000.

 **Women** (72% support) and **Men** (70% support), **Young** (age 18-49) voters (70% support) and **Older** (age 50+) voters (72% support) all support increasing taxes only on those making over \$250,000.

 And Coloradans in every region around the state support increasing taxes only on those making over \$250,000 including **Denver / Boulder counties** (76% support), the **5 Suburban Counties of Adams / Arapahoe / Broomfield / Jefferson / Douglas** / (69% support), the **Front Range counties of Larimer / Weld / Pueblo / El Paso** (67% support), and the remaining **53 more rural counties** (78% support).

When Colorado voters are offered all three possible options on how to close the state’s \$3 Billion state budget shortfall - **increasing taxes only on those making over \$250,000 is the clear choice:**

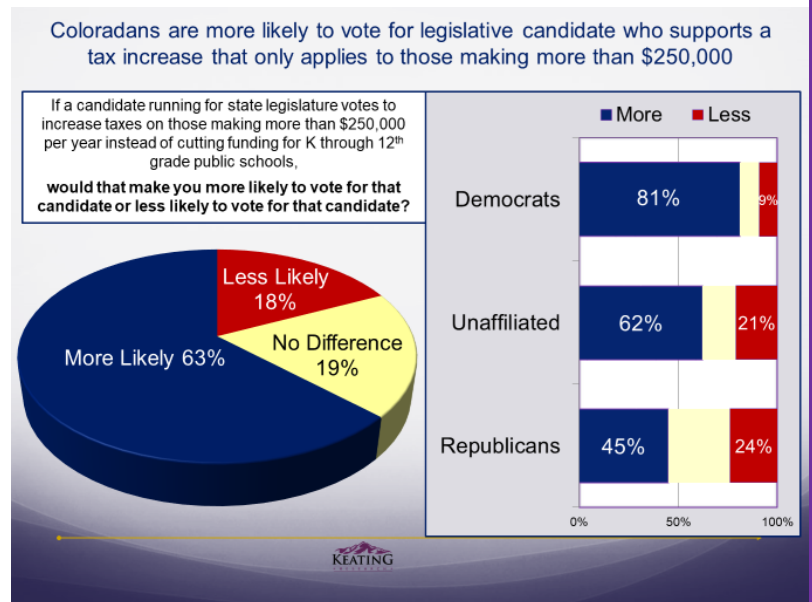
68% - a two-thirds majority - prefer increasing taxes only on those making over \$250,000.

13% prefer to increase taxes on everyone, for a total of 81% that prefer to increase taxes.

19% - about one-out-of-five Coloradans prefer cutting K through 12th grade public school funding.

If a candidate for state legislature votes to increase taxes only on those making more than \$250,000 per year instead of cutting funding for K through 12th grade public education, a 3-to-1 majority of Colorado voters say they would be more likely to vote for that candidate.

The Colorado state legislature is up for election in November - and the majority of voters are looking for the candidate who is willing to take a stand by voting to increase income taxes only on those making more than \$250,000 per year, instead of cutting funding for K through 12th grade public education. Only 18% of Colorado voters would be less likely to vote for the candidate who votes to increase taxes on those making more than \$250,000 per year.



By 9-to-1, 81% of registered Democrats

are more likely to vote for a candidate who votes to increase taxes only on those making more than \$250,000.

By 3-to-1, 62% of those registered as Unaffiliated with any party are more likely to vote for a candidate who votes to increase taxes only on those making more than \$250,000.

By 2-to-1, 45% of registered Republicans are more likely to vote for a candidate who votes to increase taxes only on those making more than \$250,000.

If the state must cut spending in order to balance the budget, Coloradans view K through 12th grade public school funding as the last thing to cut. Prisons and Transportation spending are at the top of the list.

When Colorado voters are asked what they would rank six areas of state spending in order of what they would cut first to what they would cut last, voters are most likely to rank cutting funding for *prisons* (47%) or *transportation* (42%) as the first or second state service to cut, while only one-in-five (19%) Coloradans rank K through 12th grade public schools as the one of the first services to cut.

Coloradans admire the job teachers are doing during the coronavirus pandemic.

The vast majority - 81% - of Colorado voters approve of the job teachers are doing during the coronavirus pandemic, while only 12% disapprove. Those who have a child are even more supportive of teachers - 84% approve of the job teachers are doing.

Three-of-four Colorado voters approve of the job their local school is doing during the coronavirus pandemic, while only 17% disapprove. Those who have a child are even more supportive of their local school - 78% approve of the job their local school is doing.

Governor Polis (67% approve of the job he is doing) and mayors and local governments (66% approve of the job they are doing) also receive equally high marks for the job they are doing handling the coronavirus pandemic.

If students return to school in the fall, Coloradans prefer schools prioritize classroom instruction to close student learning gaps due to online instruction.

If it's considered safe for students and educators to return to school in the fall, a 61% majority of Colorado voters feel that its most important to prioritize *classroom instruction and teaching in order to close student learning gaps*, another 26% want to prioritize *social and mental health supports for students*, and the remaining 13% want to prioritize *standardized testing to asses potential student learning gaps due to online instruction*.

