

NC Senate District 34

2022 General Election Likely Voter Survey Data

To: David Avella, Chairman, GOPAC Education Fund and the Center for American Ideas
From: Jim Blaine, Differentiators Data

Summary

As part of a joint project sponsored by the Center for American Ideas and the GOPAC Education Fund to determine voter sentiment on key policy issues in legislative districts around North Carolina, Differentiators Data conducted a survey in North Carolina's 34th Senate District on May 31st through June 2nd. The survey of 300 likely general election voters was comprised of 1/3 live landline interviews, 1/3 live cell phones interviews, and 1/3 text to web interviews, with a margin of error of +/- 5.7%.

The Big Policy Issues

There are several big, controversial policy issues before the NC General Assembly this legislative session. The goal of this project is to assess public opinion on these policy issues in competitive legislative districts:

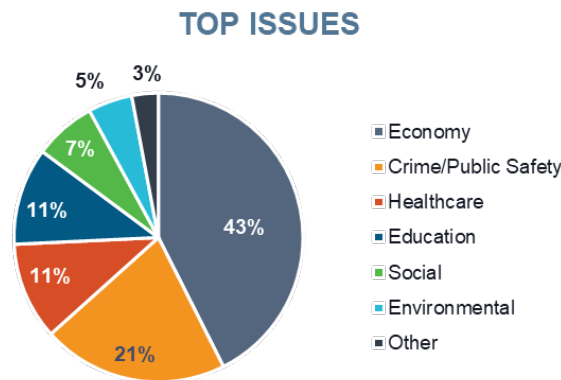
- Medical Marijuana – [Senate Bill 711](#) and [House Bill 929](#) authorize doctors to prescribe medical marijuana for the treatment of certain medical conditions and illnesses.
- Sports Betting – [Senate Bill 688](#) and [House Bill 631](#) legalize sports wagering.
- Increasing School Choice – [Senate Bill 671](#) and other legislation increases school choice options for North Carolina families.
- Reduce the Personal Income Tax – [Senate Bill 337](#), and state budget negotiations, propose further reductions in North Carolina's personal income tax rates.
- Expanding Medicaid – [House Bill 149](#) expands Medicaid program with a work requirement.

About NC Senate District 34

North Carolina Senate District 34 includes all of Cabarrus County except one overwhelmingly Republican precinct bordering Union County. Fueled by development along Interstate 85, Cabarrus is one of the fastest-growing and fastest-changing counties in the entire state. Since 2000, it has seen a nearly 200% increase in the number of voters. Once a Republican stronghold, the county has been trending more Democratic and Governor Roy Cooper nearly won the county in 2020. Politically, while Cabarrus County and SD-34 are both trending toward Democrats, this Senate district still favors the GOP. The district is represented by third-term State Senator Paul Newton, an attorney and former executive who chairs the Senate Finance Committee. Democrat Keshia Sandidge, a Cabarrus School Board member from Concord, is challenging Newton.

Where Voters Stand on the Issues

As the country struggles with record inflation and soaring gas prices, more than twice as many voters (43%) in this district say economic issues are most important to them compared to any other issue. Crime and public safety (21%) were the next most important, followed by education and healthcare (11% each):



Of the big policy issues the legislature could take up during the short session, a majority of voters support medical marijuana, reducing the state income tax, universal school choice, Medicaid expansion and Medicaid expansion with a work requirement. A plurality of voters back legalizing sports betting. Reducing the income tax, medical marijuana, and Medicaid expansion with a work requirement each exceeded 75% support from all voters and enjoyed broad support across all key demographic groups.

Voter Group	All		Sandidge		Newton		Undecided	
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
Medical Marijuana	78%	19%	91%	9%	70%	26%	66%	24%
Sports Betting	44%	40%	47%	32%	40%	46%	52%	37%
Universal School Choice	56%	38%	43%	53%	67%	27%	62%	28%
2.5% Income Tax	76%	15%	63%	28%	87%	5%	76%	14%
Medicaid Expansion	59%	34%	95%	2%	31%	60%	64%	26%
Expansion w/ work req.	90%	6%	98%	0%	84%	10%	85%	11%

Voter Group	All		Republican		Unaffiliated		Democratic		Parent	
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
Medical Marijuana	78%	19%	72%	24%	79%	19%	85%	14%	84%	13%
Sports Betting	44%	40%	39%	45%	48%	36%	46%	36%	46%	30%
Universal School Choice	56%	38%	61%	33%	62%	33%	46%	48%	58%	38%
2.5% Income Tax	76%	15%	82%	9%	77%	12%	68%	25%	74%	18%
Medicaid Expansion	59%	34%	35%	55%	59%	35%	90%	8%	63%	29%
Expansion w/ work req.	90%	6%	85%	9%	88%	7%	98%	0%	90%	5%

Unaffiliated voters support all 5 of the major policy issues by at least a 12-point margin. Even Democrats, by far the least supportive subgroup, were nearly evenly split on universal school choice (46/48). In this district, sports betting was the only issue that did not enjoy majority support, but a plurality of voters is supportive (44/40) and a majority of Undecided and African American voters support legalizing sports betting. And Medicaid expansion, even without a work requirement, is backed by every demographic subgroup except Republicans. But Republicans back expansion with a work requirement by a huge margin.

Voter Group	All		Women		Men		White		Black	
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
Medical Marijuana	78%	19%	76%	21%	81%	16%	79%	19%	74%	24%
Sports Betting	44%	40%	36%	44%	54%	34%	41%	42%	54%	32%
Universal School Choice	56%	38%	53%	39%	61%	36%	55%	40%	57%	32%
2.5% Income Tax	76%	15%	77%	14%	76%	17%	75%	16%	80%	14%
Medicaid Expansion	59%	34%	62%	33%	56%	35%	52%	40%	85%	12%
Expansion w/ work req.	90%	6%	90%	5%	90%	7%	89%	6%	94%	5%

How the Big Policy Issues Could Impact this Election

Election analysts forecast SD-34 as a tough district for Democrats to flip in 2022 and that is what this survey suggests. Senator Paul Newton, the incumbent Republican, leads Democratic challenger Keshia Sandidge, 53% to 42%, well outside this survey's margin of error. A majority of Undecided voters in the district support the passage of all 5 of the major policy issues. Support for these issues would only bolster Newton's already solid chance at re-election.

