BOND MEASURE FEASIBILITY STUDY
BASELINE SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

PREPARED FOR
RANCHO SANTIAGO CCD

MAY 24, 2019

TRUE NORTH
RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

Located in the heart of Orange County, Rancho Santiago Community College District (District) is dedicated to the success of its students and to the development of the communities it serves. By providing career and technical education programs, undergraduate degrees, university transfer courses, and certificate programs, the District helps over 50,000 students and veterans each year receive the education, counseling, and skills training they need to succeed and help strengthen the local economy.

In 2002 and 2012, the District asked voters for assistance in funding the repair, renovation, and upgrade of college classrooms and facilities by passing general obligation bonds: Measure E and Measure Q. In addition to the $535 million raised by the measures, the District has been able to leverage additional state matching funds and make use of other resources to construct new classrooms and make priority repairs and improvements. Despite these substantial investments, however, facility and technology needs remain at Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College for which the District does not have a funding source. In addition to basic facility repairs at both campuses, there is a clear need to construct and acquire classrooms, facilities, and equipment for science, engineering, healthcare, biotech, public safety, career training, and skilled trades for students and military veterans. However, to adequately fund its ongoing facility needs and access additional state matching funds, the District will need the financial support of the communities it serves through the passage of a local bond measure.

MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH   The primary purpose of this study was to produce an unbiased, statistically reliable evaluation of voters' interest in supporting a local bond measure to fund the facility repairs and improvements noted above. Additionally, should the District decide to move forward with a bond measure, the survey data provide guidance as to how to structure a measure so that it is consistent with the community's priorities and expressed needs. Specifically, the survey was designed to:

· Gauge current levels of support for a local bond measure to fund the improvement of college classrooms, facilities, and equipment,
· Identify the types of projects that voters are most interested in funding, should the measure pass,
· Expose voters to arguments in favor of—and against—the proposed bond measure to gauge how information affects support for the measure, *and*
· Estimate support for the measure once voters are presented with the types of information they will likely be exposed to during the election cycle.

It is important to note at the outset that voters' opinions about tax measures are often somewhat fluid, especially when the amount of information they initially have about a measure is limited. How voters think and feel about a measure today may not be the same way they think and feel once they have had a chance to hear more information about the measure during the election cycle. Accordingly, to accurately assess the feasibility of passing a bond measure, it was important that in addition to measuring *current* opinions about the measure (Question 2), the survey expose respondents to the types of information voters are likely to encounter during an election cycle—including arguments in favor of (Question 8) and opposed to (Question 10) the

measure—and gauge how this information ultimately impacts their voting decision (Questions 9 and 11).

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY   For a full discussion of the research methods and techniques used in this study, turn to *Methodology* on page 33. In brief, the survey was administered to a random sample of 600 registered voters in the Rancho Santiago Community College District who are likely to participate in the November 2020 election, with a subset who are also likely to participate in the lower turnout March 2020 primary election. The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (telephone and email) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Administered in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese between May 6 and May 15, 2019, the average interview lasted 16 minutes.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT   This report is designed to meet the needs of readers who prefer a summary of the findings as well as those who are interested in the details of the results. For those who seek an overview of the findings, the sections titled *Just the Facts* and *Conclusions* are for you. They provide a summary of the most important factual findings of the survey in bullet-point format and a discussion of their implications. For the interested reader, this section is followed by a more detailed question-by-question discussion of the results from the survey by topic area (see *Table of Contents*), as well as a description of the methodology employed for collecting and analyzing the data. And, for the truly ambitious reader, the questionnaire used for the interviews is contained at the back of this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 36) and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS   True North thanks the Rancho Santiago Community College District for the opportunity to assist the District in this important effort. The collective expertise, local knowledge, and insight provided by District staff improved the overall quality of the research presented here. A special thanks also to Peter Hardash (Vice Chancellor) for participating in the design of the study.

DISCLAIMER   The statements and conclusions in this report are those of the authors (Dr. Timothy McLarney and Richard Sarles) at True North Research, Inc. and not necessarily those of the Rancho Santiago Community College District. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the authors.

ABOUT TRUE NORTH   True North is a full-service survey research firm that is dedicated to providing public agencies with a clear understanding of the values, perceptions, priorities, and concerns of their residents and voters. Through designing and implementing scientific surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews, as well as expert interpretation of the findings, True North helps its clients to move with confidence when making strategic decisions in a variety of areas—such as planning, policy evaluation, performance management, establishing fiscal priorities, passing revenue measures, and developing effective public information campaigns.

During their careers, Dr. McLarney and Mr. Sarles have designed and conducted over 1,000 survey research studies for public agencies, including more than 350 revenue measure feasibility studies. Of the measures that have gone to ballot based on Dr. McLarney's recommendation,

more than 96% have been successful. In total, the research that Dr. McLarney has conducted has led to over $32 billion in voter-approved local revenue measures.

Just the Facts

The following section is an outline of the main factual findings from the survey. For the reader's convenience, we have organized the findings according to the section titles used in the body of this report. Thus, if you would like to learn more about a particular finding, simply turn to the appropriate report section.

IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES

· When asked to rate the importance of eight issues, protecting the quality of education received the highest percentage of respondents indicating that the issue was either extremely or very important (86%), followed by improving public safety (84%) and ensuring local access to affordable, high quality college education and career training (82%).

· Given the purpose of this study, it is instructive to note that preventing local tax increases (67%) was rated much lower in overall importance than protecting the quality of education (86%) and ensuring local access to an affordable, high quality college education and career training (82%). However, preventing local tax increases (67%) was rated slightly higher in importance than maintaining and upgrading classrooms and facilities at local community colleges (65%).

INITIAL BALLOT TEST

· With only the information provided in the ballot language, 59% of likely November 2020 voters surveyed indicated that they would support the proposed college bond, whereas 30% stated that they would oppose the measure, and approximately 11% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice.

· Among the voters who initially opposed the bond measure (or were unsure), the most frequently mentioned specific reasons for their position were the perception that taxes are already too high, concerns that District money has been/will be mismanaged or misspent, and a need for additional information about the measure.

TAX THRESHOLD

· At the highest tax rate tested ($22 per $100,000 of assessed valuation), 43% of voters indicated that they would support the bond. Incremental reductions in the tax rate resulted in small incremental increases in support for the measure, with 53% of voters indicating that they would support the bond at the lowest tax rate tested ($13 per $100,000 of assessed valuation).

· When the highest tax rate of $22 per $100,000 of assessed valuation was translated to an annual cost for the median home owner (approximately $76 per year), 52% of those surveyed indicated that they would support the bond.

· When the lowest tax rate of $13 per $100,000 of assessed valuation was translated to an annual cost for the median home owner ($45 per year), 61% of those surveyed indicated that they would support the bond.

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

Presented with a list of 16 projects and improvements that could be funded by the bond, voters were most interested in using the money to:

- Repair or replace leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, faulty electrical systems, and dry rotted beams where needed.
- Modernize school facilities to improve access for students with disabilities.
- Upgrade classrooms, labs, and career training facilities for science, technology, engineering, math, and biotech.
- Upgrade classrooms, labs, and career training facilities for skilled trades including industrial technology, welding, and automotive technology.
- Upgrade the Student and Veterans Service Centers to provide counseling and support services to students, military veterans, and their families.

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

When presented with arguments in favor of the measure, voters found the following arguments to be the most persuasive overall:

- *We have thousands of military veterans returning from service who need job training, job placement, counseling, and support services. Improving the Student and Veterans Centers will ensure that our veterans receive the support they need.*
- *Because the cost of attending the University of California and State University systems has become so expensive, many more students are starting their education at community colleges. This measure will ensure local students have access to an affordable, high-quality education here in our area.*
- *Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College ensure that lower and middle-income students who can't afford the high price of a university still have an opportunity to succeed in college and careers. This measure will provide the affordable, high quality education that all students deserve.*
- *More than one-third of all local high school graduates rely on our local community colleges for higher education and to prepare for careers. We need to repair and upgrade our local colleges so they can continue to serve our community well for the decades to come.*

INTERIM BALLOT TEST

- After presenting respondents with the wording of the proposed measure, potential tax rates associated with the bond, projects and improvements that could be funded, as well as positive arguments voters may encounter, overall support for the measure among likely November 2020 voters increased to 65%, with 38% of voters indicating that they would *definitely* vote yes. Approximately 27% of respondents opposed the measure at this point in the survey, and an additional 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Of the arguments in opposition to the measure, voters found the following to be the most persuasive:

- *The District passed a 198-million-dollar bond about 8 years ago to repair and improve Santa Ana College. Property owners will be paying for that bond for another 30 years. Now they want more money? That's not fair to taxpayers.*
- *People are having a hard time making ends meet with the high cost of living, especially seniors and those living on fixed incomes. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes.*

FINAL BALLOT TEST

- After presenting the wording of the proposed measure, potential tax rates, projects that could be funded, as well as arguments in favor of and against the proposal, support for the bond measure was found among 57% of likely November 2020 voters, with 30% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 34% of respondents opposed the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

- The majority of voters surveyed rated the quality of education provided in the District at **Santa Ana College** as excellent (17%) or good (37%), 16% offered that it is fair, and 5% rated it as poor or very poor. The remaining 26% of voters surveyed were unsure or unwilling to offer an opinion.
- Similarly, the majority of respondents rated the quality of education provided at **Santiago Canyon College** as excellent (16%) or good (37%), 15% offered that it is fair, and 2% rated it as poor or very poor. The remaining 31% of voters surveyed were unsure or unwilling to offer an opinion.

CONCLUSIONS

The bulk of this report is devoted to conveying the details of the study findings. In this section, however, we attempt to 'see the forest through the trees' and note how the collective results of the survey answer the key questions that motivated the research. The following conclusions are based on True North's interpretations of the survey results and the firm's collective experience conducting revenue measure studies for public agencies throughout the State.

Is a bond measure to fund facility improvements at Rancho Santiago CCD campuses feasible?

Yes. Voters consider protecting the quality of education and ensuring local access to an affordable, high quality college education and career training to be among the *most* important issues facing the community. These sentiments translate into solid natural support (59%) for a $450 million bond measure to repair, construct, and acquire classrooms, facilities, and equipment at Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College and improve student and veteran access to affordable, high quality education and career-training in science, engineering, healthcare, biotech, public safety, and skilled trades.

The results of this study suggest that, if structured appropriately and combined with an effective public outreach/education effort *and* a solid independent campaign, the proposed bond measure has a good chance of passage if placed on the ballot in 2020.

Having stated that a bond measure is feasible, it is important to note that the bond's prospects will be shaped by external factors and that a recommendation to place the measure on the ballot in 2020 comes with several qualifications and conditions. Indeed, although the results are promising, all revenue measures must overcome challenges prior to being successful. The proposed measure is no exception. The following paragraphs discuss some of the challenges and the next steps that True North recommends.

How does the election date affect support for the proposed measure?

Different election dates have different turnouts, different electorates, and—by extension—different opportunities and challenges. When compared to the November 2020 election, for example, the March 2020 election is expected to have lower turnout and a somewhat different demographic profile among participating voters. In some communities, these differences translate to substantially different levels of support for a bond measure.

Despite their different size and make-up, the survey results indicate that the March 2020 and November 2020 electorates share similar views of the proposed bond, with support at the Initial Ballot Test being just 1% higher among March 2020 voters. This pattern persisted throughout the interview, with support for the bond among likely March 2020 voters remaining within 3% of the larger November 2020 electorate.

Given the similarity in support levels for the bond between the two electorates, it allows other factors to weigh more heavily in the District's selection of an election date—including the number and types of other measures that may share the ballot, the volume of 'noise' associated with each election environment, the time available to engage and communicate with local voters, and the ability of an independent campaign to form, raise funds, and advocate for the measure.

It is also important to point out that the March 2020 turnout model for this study was slightly conservative in its profile, meaning it did not factor in the full 'blue wave' effect that was witnessed in the November 2018 election. The energy of that wave and the impact that it had on reshaping voter turnout for the November 2018 election helped to propel tax measures to historically high passage rates throughout the State, even when other issues (AB195 and Proposition 6) were creating challenging cross-currents. If a similarly-sized wave returns for March 2020, it is expected to have a slight positive impact on the bond's prospects above and beyond the results found with the turnout model used in this study.

Accordingly, our recommendation is for the District to keep both election dates open as possibilities, which means moving forward with planning, outreach, and communications according to a schedule that would allow the District to place a measure on the March 2020 ballot. As we learn more information in the coming months about the March and November election environments, we can provide a more refined recommendation.

What projects do voters identify as priorities for a future bond?

One of the goals of this study was to identify voters' preferences with respect to how the proceeds of a successful bond should be spent. This information can be used to ensure that the resulting bond project list and the measure are consistent with voters' priorities.

Voters in the Rancho Santiago Community College District clearly see a need for the proposed projects and improvements that could be funded by a bond. In fact, all 16 projects tested were favored by at least two-thirds of voters surveyed. That said, voters expressed the *greatest* interest in using bond proceeds to repair or replace leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, faulty electrical systems, and dry rotted beams where needed, modernize facilities to improve access for students with disabilities, upgrade classrooms, labs, and career training facilities for science, technology, engineering, math, and biotech, upgrade classrooms, labs, and career training facilities for skilled trades including industrial technology, welding, and automotive technology, and upgrade the Student and Veterans Service Centers to provide counseling and support services to students, military veterans, and their families.

How will the tax rate affect support for the measure?

Naturally, the willingness of voters to support a specific revenue measure is contingent, in part, on the tax rate associated with a measure. The higher the rate, all other things being equal, the lower the level of aggregate support that can be expected. It is important that the rate be set at a level that the necessary proportion of voters view as affordable.

One of the clear patterns in the survey data is that some voters are price sensitive with respect to the proposed bond. A significant percentage of voters who were initially supportive of the $450 million bond, for example, later hesitated when presented with the individual tax rates that could be associated with the bond. Although voter sensitivity regarding the "price" of the measure was partially overcome when the tax rates were converted to an annual total tax for the average home owner, as well as once voters were exposed to additional information about what the measure would accomplish and why it is needed, it will nevertheless be important to keep the overall bond amount and tax rate within voters' comfort zone.

True North will work closely with the District and the District's financial advisor in future months to select a tax rate and bond amount that best balances the District's need for revenue with the political challenges associated with passing a bond measure.

How might a public information campaign affect support for the proposed measure?

As noted in the body of this report, individuals' opinions about revenue measures are often not rigid, especially when the amount of information presented to the public on a measure has been limited. Thus, in addition to measuring current support for the measure, one of the goals of this study was to explore how the introduction of additional information about the measure may affect voters' opinions about the bond.

It is clear from the survey results that voters' opinions about the proposed bond measure are sensitive to the nature—and amount—of information that they have about the measure. Information about the specific improvements that could be funded by the bond, as well as arguments in favor of the measure, were found by many voters to be compelling reasons to support the measure. However, voters were also sensitive to opposition arguments designed to reduce support for the bond. Accordingly, one of the keys to building and *sustaining* support for the bond measure will be the presence of an effective, well-organized public outreach effort, as well as an independent campaign that focuses on the need for the measure as well as the many benefits that it will bring.

How might the economic or political climate alter support for the measure?

A survey is a snapshot in time—which means the results of this study and the conclusions noted above must be viewed in light of the current economic and political climates. Should the economy and/or political climate improve, support for the measure could increase. Conversely, negative economic and/or political developments, especially at the local

level, could dampen support for the measure below what was recorded in this study.

IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES

The first substantive question of the survey presented respondents with several issues facing residents in the District and asked them to rate the importance of each issue. Because the same response scale was used for each issue, the results provide an insight into how important each issue is on a scale of importance *as well as* how each issue ranks in importance relative to the other issues tested. To avoid a systematic position bias, the order in which the issues were presented was randomized for each respondent.

Figure 1 presents the issues tested, as well as the importance assigned to each by survey participants, sorted by order of importance.[1] Overall, protecting the quality of education received the highest percentage of respondents indicating that the issue was either extremely or very important (86%), followed by improving public safety (84%) and ensuring local access to affordable, high quality college education and career training (82%). Given the purpose of this study, it is instructive to note that preventing local tax increases (67%) was rated much lower in overall importance than protecting the quality of education (86%) and ensuring local access to an affordable, high quality college education and career training (82%). However, preventing local tax increases (67%) was rated slightly higher in importance than maintaining and upgrading classrooms and facilities at local community colleges (65%).

Question 1   *To begin, I'm going to read a list of issues facing your community and for each one, please tell me how important you feel the issue is to you, using a scale of extremely important, very important, somewhat important or not at all important.*

FIGURE 1 IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES

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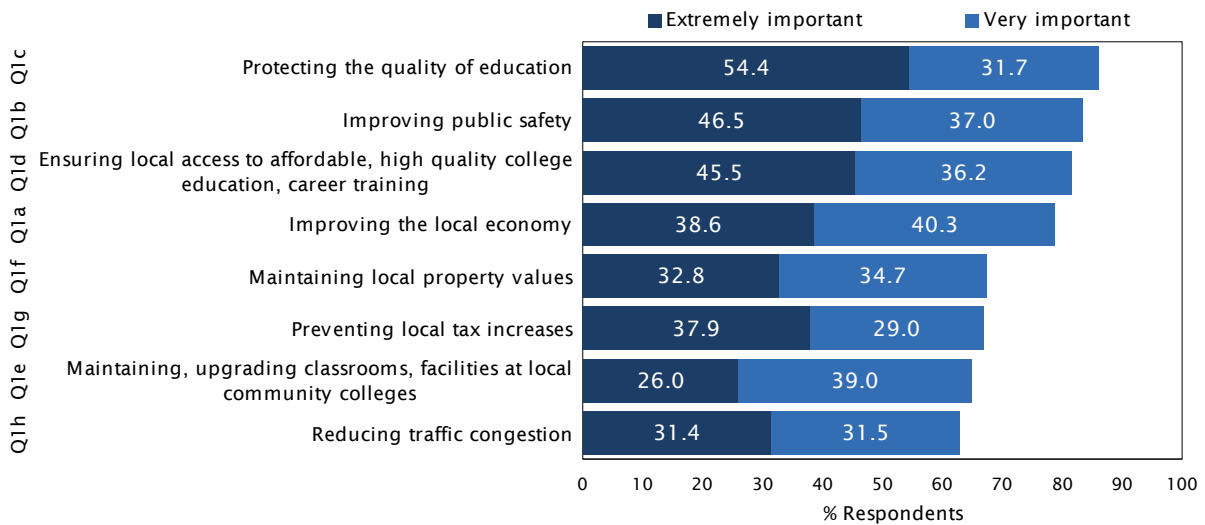
1. Issues were ranked based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the issue was either *extremely* important or *very* important.

INITIAL BALLOT TEST

The primary research objective of this survey was to estimate voters' support for a bond measure that would raise up to $450 million to repair, construct, and acquire classrooms, facilities, and equipment at Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College and improve student and veteran access to affordable, high quality education and career-training in science, engineering, healthcare, biotech, public safety, and skilled trades. To this end, Question 2 was designed to take an early assessment of support for the proposed measure.

The motivation for placing Question 2 near the front of the survey is twofold. First, voter support for a measure can often depend on the amount of information they have about a measure. At this point in the survey, the respondent has not been provided information about the proposed measure beyond what is presented in the ballot language. This situation is analogous to a voter casting a ballot with limited knowledge about the measure, such as what might occur in the absence of an effective education campaign. Question 2, also known as the Initial Ballot Test, is thus a good measure of voter support for the proposed measure *as it is today*, on the natural. Because the Initial Ballot Test provides a gauge of natural support for the measure, it also serves a second purpose in that it provides a useful baseline from which to judge the impact of various information items conveyed later in the survey on voter support for the measure.

Question 2   *Your household is within the Rancho Santiago Community College District. Next year, voters in the District may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure. In order to repair, construct, and acquire classrooms, facilities, and equipment at Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College; and improve student and veteran access to affordable, high quality education and career-training in science, engineering, healthcare, biotech, public safety, and skilled trades; shall the Rancho Santiago Community College District measure authorizing 450 million dollars in bonds at legal rates, levying 2 cents per 100 dollars of assessed value ($22 million annually) while bonds are outstanding, be approved, with citizen oversight and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 2   INITIAL BALLOT TEST
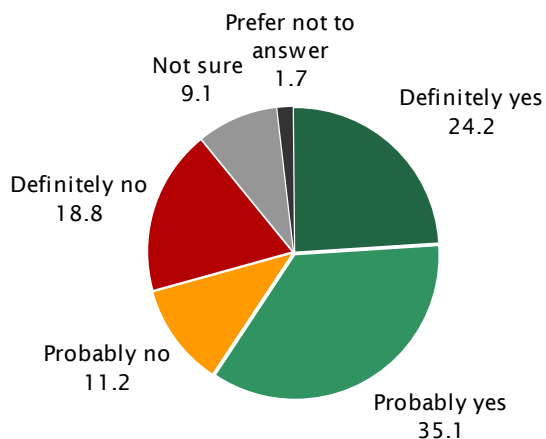
Figure 2 presents the results of the Initial Ballot Test among all respondents. Overall, 59% of likely November 2020 voters surveyed indicated that they would support the proposed college bond, whereas 30% stated that they would oppose the measure, and approximately 11% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice. For Proposition 39 school bonds in California, support at the Initial Ballot Test was approximately four percentage points above the 55% support level required for the measure to pass.

SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS   For the interested reader, Table 1 shows how support for the measure at the Initial Ballot Test varied by key demographic traits. The blue column (Approximate % of Likely Voter Universe) indicates the percentage of the electorate that each subgroup category comprises. Initial support for the proposed bond measure varied substantially across voter subgroups, with the largest differences found among partisan subgroups. Overall, initial support for the proposed bond was highest among voters who are Democrats or live in Democratic households, younger voters, renters, voters with a child in public school, and those who expect at least one of their children to attend a local community college in the future. Its also worth noting that support among likely March 2020 voters was similar to November 2020.

TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100	59.3	9.1
Hsld Local CC Attendance (QD3)	Yes	71	59.8	10.0
	No	29	63.4	6.2
Child in Hsld at Public School (QD4)	Yes	32	64.0	6.0
	No	68	58.3	11.0
Future Child Attendance at Local CC (QD5)	Yes	24	73.2	8.1
	No	71	57.3	10.1
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	54	55.7	8.7
	No	46	63.5	9.5
Party	Democrat	42	76.3	10.5
	Republican	30	37.9	4.1
	Other / DTS	29	56.7	12.1
Household Party Type	Single dem	19	76.8	12.5
	Dual dem	13	92.1	1.6
	Single rep	12	48.5	2.3
	Dual rep	10	15.2	3.0
	Other	17	54.1	9.6
	Mixed	28	56.2	15.0
Age	18 to 29	22	73.4	10.1
	30 to 39	12	59.3	14.3
	40 to 49	13	59.0	15.3
	50 to 64	27	55.6	8.5
	65 or older	27	51.6	3.4
Registration Year	2019 to 2016	53	63.9	7.5
	2015 to 2010	25	55.5	9.0
	2009 to 2004	11	58.4	17.1
	Before 2004	10	45.2	8.4
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	74	61.3	8.3
	No	26	53.5	11.1
Likely Nov 2019 Voter	Yes	53	57.3	7.6
	No	47	61.5	10.6
City of Residence	Anaheim	14	63.6	7.2
	Garden Grove	8	59.5	5.6
	Orange	31	53.7	11.3
	Santa Ana	39	64.0	8.5
	Other city, area	8	50.0	10.0
Likely Mar 2020 Voter	Yes	69	60.3	8.4
	No	31	57.0	10.6
Gender	Male	49	59.0	6.8
	Female	51	60.2	11.2

REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE   Respondents who did not support the measure at Question 2 were asked if there was a particular reason for their position. Question 3 was posed in an open-ended manner, allowing respondents to mention any reason that came to mind without being prompted by, or restricted to, a particular list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 3 below.

Among the specific reasons offered for not supporting the measure, a perception that taxes are already too high was the most common (24%), followed by the concern that District money has been/will be mismanaged or misspent (18%) and a desire for additional information about the measure (15%).

Question 3   *Is there a particular reason why you do not support or are unsure about the measure I just described?*

FIGURE 3 REASONS FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE
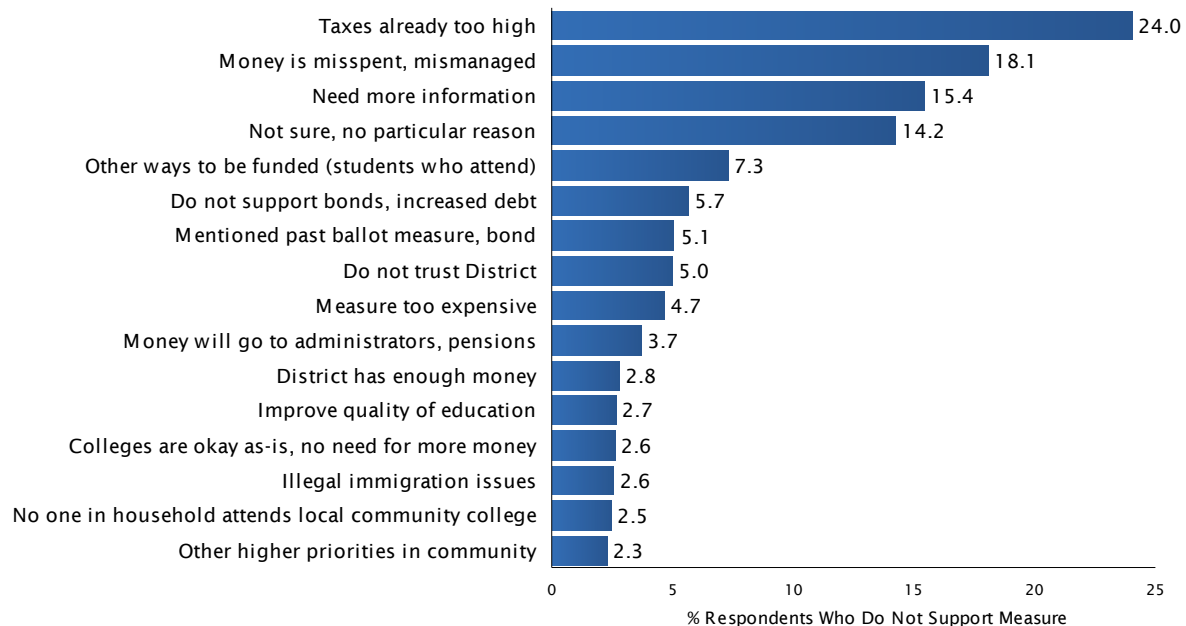
TAX THRESHOLD

Naturally, voter support for a revenue measure is often contingent on the cost of the measure. The higher the tax rate, all other things being equal, the less likely a voter is to support the measure. One of the goals of this study was thus to gauge the impact that changes in the tax rate can be expected to have on voter support for the proposed college bond measure.

Questions 4, 5, and 6 were designed to do just that. Respondents were first instructed that the amount each home owner will pay if the measure passes depends on the *assessed* value of their home—not the market value. Voters were then presented with the highest tax rate ($22 per $100,000 assessed valuation) and asked if they would support the proposed measure at that rate. If a respondent did not answer 'definitely yes', they were asked whether they would support the measure at the next lowest tax rate. The three tax rates tested using this methodology and the percentage of respondents who indicated they would vote in favor of the measure at each rate are shown in Figure 4.

Question 4   *The amount each home owner will pay if the community college bond passes depends on the assessed value of their home - not the current market value of the home. If you heard that the annual property taxes on your home would increase: _____ per 100,000 dollars of assessed valuation, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure?*

FIGURE 4 TAX THRESHOLD
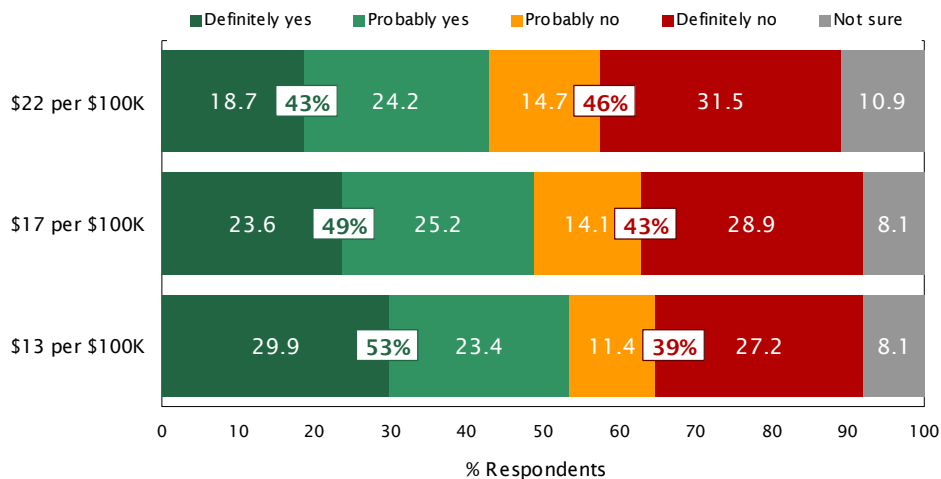
The most obvious pattern revealed in Figure 4 is that some voters are price sensitive when it comes to their support for the proposed college bond measure. As the cost of the measure to their household increases, support for the bond decreases. At the highest tax rate tested ($22 per $100,000 of assessed valuation), 43% of voters indicated that they would support the bond. Incremental reductions in the tax rate resulted in small incremental increases in support for the measure, with 53% of voters indicating that they would support the bond at the lowest tax rate tested ($13 per $100,000 of assessed valuation).

ANNUALIZED IMPACT FOR MEDIAN HOME OWNER   Because voters occasionally overestimate their current assessed valuation and/or have difficulty translating the tax rate into an annualized total, the survey also tested a different approach for conveying the tax rate information. In addition to presenting rates as described above, voters were also provided with the total annual cost of the bond for the median homeowner (see questions 5 and 6) based on the $22 and $13 tax rates tested in Question 4. The results are presented below in Figure 5.

Voters responded more positively when the cost of the measure was expressed as an annual total for the median home owner when compared with a rate per $100,000 of assessed valuation. At the highest tax rate tested ($22 per $100,000 of assessed valuation), 43% of voters indicated that they would support the proposed bond measure. When that rate was translated to an annual cost for the median home owner (approximately $76 per year), 52% of those surveyed indicated that they would support the bond. Support was similarly higher when the tax rate of $13 per $100,000 AV (53%) was translated to an annualized total of $45 for the median home owner (61%).

Question 5   *Let me put it another way: If you knew that this measure would cost the typical home owner about $76 per year, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure?*

Question 6   *If you knew that this measure would cost the typical home owner about $45 per year, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure?*

FIGURE 5 SUPPORT OF MEASURE AT $76 & $45 PER YEAR
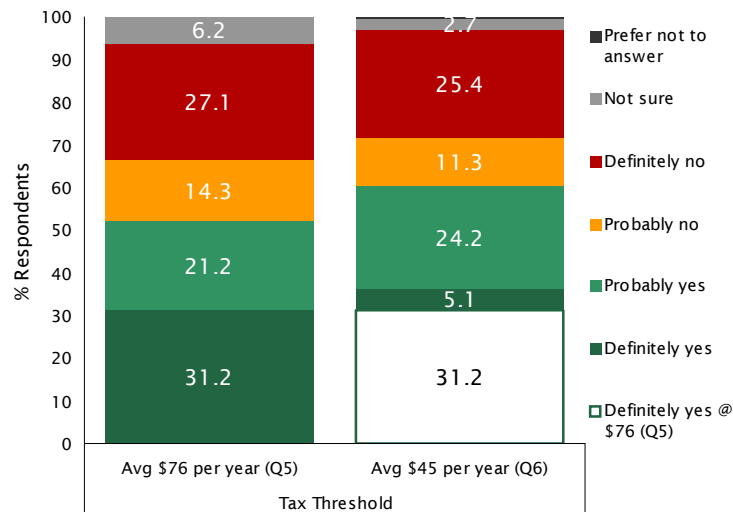
PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

The ballot language presented in Question 2 indicated that the proposed bond measure would be used to repair, construct, and acquire classrooms, facilities, and equipment at Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College and improve student and veteran access to affordable, high quality education and career-training in science, engineering, healthcare, biotech, public safety, and skilled trades. The purpose of Question 7 was to provide respondents with the full range of projects and programs that may be funded by the proposed measure, as well as identify which of these improvements voters most favored funding with bond proceeds.

After reading each improvement that may be funded by the measure, respondents were asked if they would favor or oppose spending some of the money on that particular improvement assuming that the measure passes. Descriptions of the improvements tested, as well as voters' responses, are shown in Figure 6 below.[2]

Question 7   *The measure we've been discussing would provide funding for a variety of projects and improvements. If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion?*

FIGURE 6 PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

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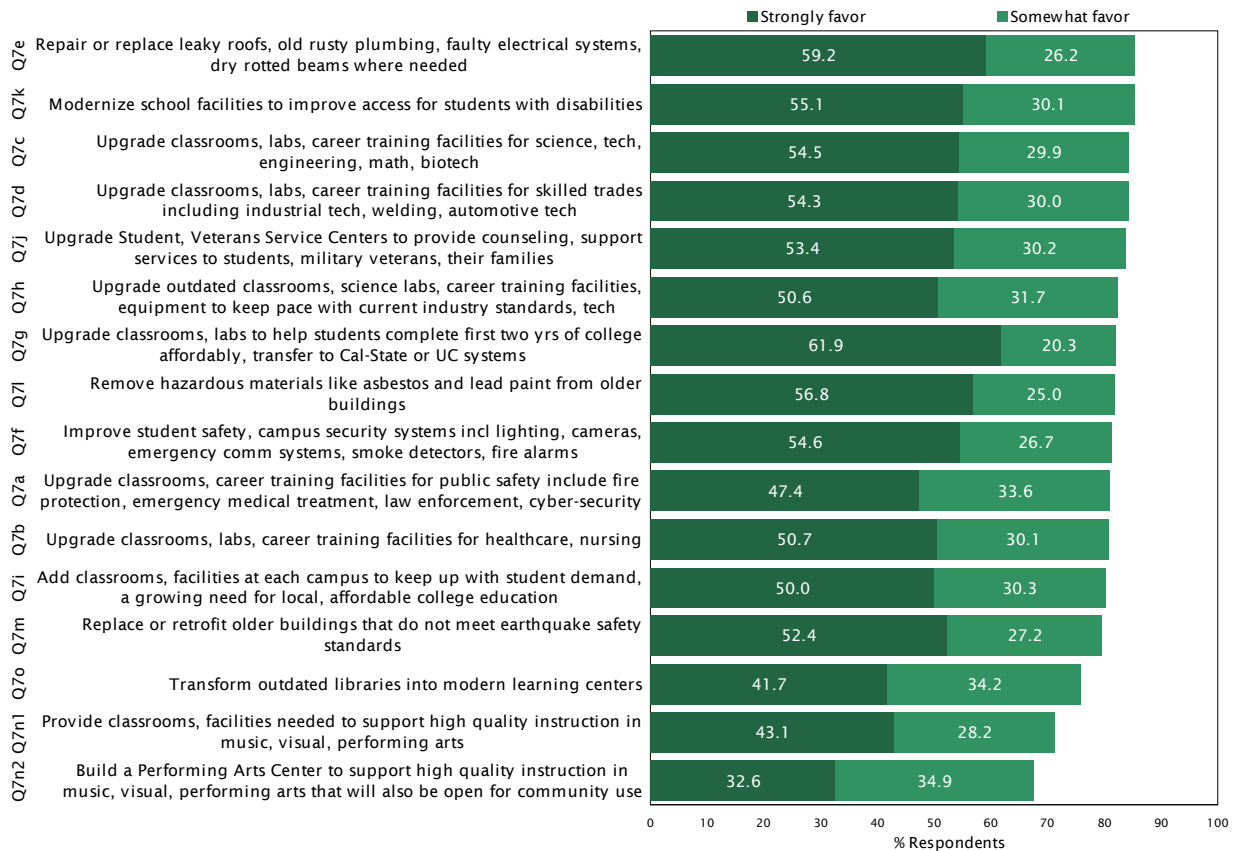
2. For the full text of the improvements tested, turn to Question 7 in *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 36.

Overall, the improvements that resonated with the largest percentage of voters were repairing or replacing leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, faulty electrical systems, and dry rotted beams where needed (85% strongly or somewhat favor), modernizing school facilities to improve access for students with disabilities (85%), upgrading classrooms, labs, and career training facilities for science, technology, engineering, math, and biotech (84%), upgrading classrooms, labs, and career training facilities for skilled trades including industrial technology, welding, and automotive technology (84%), and upgrading the Student and Veterans Service Centers to provide counseling and support services to students, military veterans, and their families (84%).

Considering the *intensity* of voters' reactions to the projects and improvements, another popular project was upgrading classrooms and labs to help local students complete the first two years of college affordably, and transfer to the Cal-State or UC systems (62% strongly favor).

PROJECT RATINGS BY INITIAL SUPPORT   Table 2 presents the top five projects (showing the percentage of respondents who *strongly* favor each) by position at the Initial Ballot Test. Not surprisingly, individuals who initially opposed the measure were generally less likely to favor spending money on a given project or service when compared with supporters.

TABLE 2 TOP PROJECTS & PROGRAMS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Item	Project or Improvement Summary	% Strongly Favor
Probably or Definitely **Yes** (*n* = 356)	Q7g	Upgrade classrooms, labs to help students complete first two yrs of college affordably, transfer to Cal-State or UC systems	78
	Q7e	Repair or replace leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, faulty electrical systems, dry rotted beams where needed	76
	Q7c	Upgrade classrooms, labs, career training facilities for science, tech, engineering, math, biotech	73
	Q7l	Remove hazardous materials like asbestos and lead paint from older buildings	72
	Q7h	Upgrade outdated classrooms, science labs, career training facilities, equipment to keep pace with current industry standards, tech	71
Probably or Definitely **No** (*n* = 180)	Q7j	Upgrade Student, Veterans Service Centers to provide counseling, support services to students, military veterans, their families	34
	Q7k	Modernize school facilities to improve access for students with disabilities	33
	Q7e	Repair or replace leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, faulty electrical systems, dry rotted beams where needed	32
	Q7d	Upgrade classrooms, labs, career training facilities for skilled trades including industrial tech, welding, automotive tech	32
	Q7l	Remove hazardous materials like asbestos and lead paint from older buildings	30
Not Sure (*n* = 54)	Q7g	Upgrade classrooms, labs to help students complete first two yrs of college affordably, transfer to Cal-State or UC systems	68
	Q7c	Upgrade classrooms, labs, career training facilities for science, tech, engineering, math, biotech	62
	Q7m	Replace or retrofit older buildings that do not meet earthquake safety standards	55
	Q7k	Modernize school facilities to improve access for students with disabilities	51
	Q7a	Upgrade classrooms, career training facilities for public safety include fire protection, emergency medical treatment, law enforcement, cyber-security	51

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

If the Board chooses to place a bond measure on an upcoming ballot, voters will be exposed to various arguments about the bond in the ensuing months. Proponents of the measure will present arguments to try to persuade voters to support a measure, just as opponents may present arguments to achieve the opposite goal. For this study to be a reliable gauge of voter support for the proposed bond measure, it is important that the survey simulate the type of discussion and debate that will occur prior to the vote taking place and identify how this information ultimately shapes voters' opinions about the bond.

The objective of Question 8 was thus to present respondents with arguments in favor of the proposed measure and identify whether they felt the arguments were convincing reasons to support it. Arguments in opposition to the measure were also presented and are discussed later in this report (see *Negative Arguments* on page 24). Within each series, specific arguments were administered in random order to avoid a systematic position bias.

Question 8 *What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people are saying about the measure we've been discussing. Supporters of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to SUPPORT the measure?*

FIGURE 7 POSITIVE ARGUMENTS
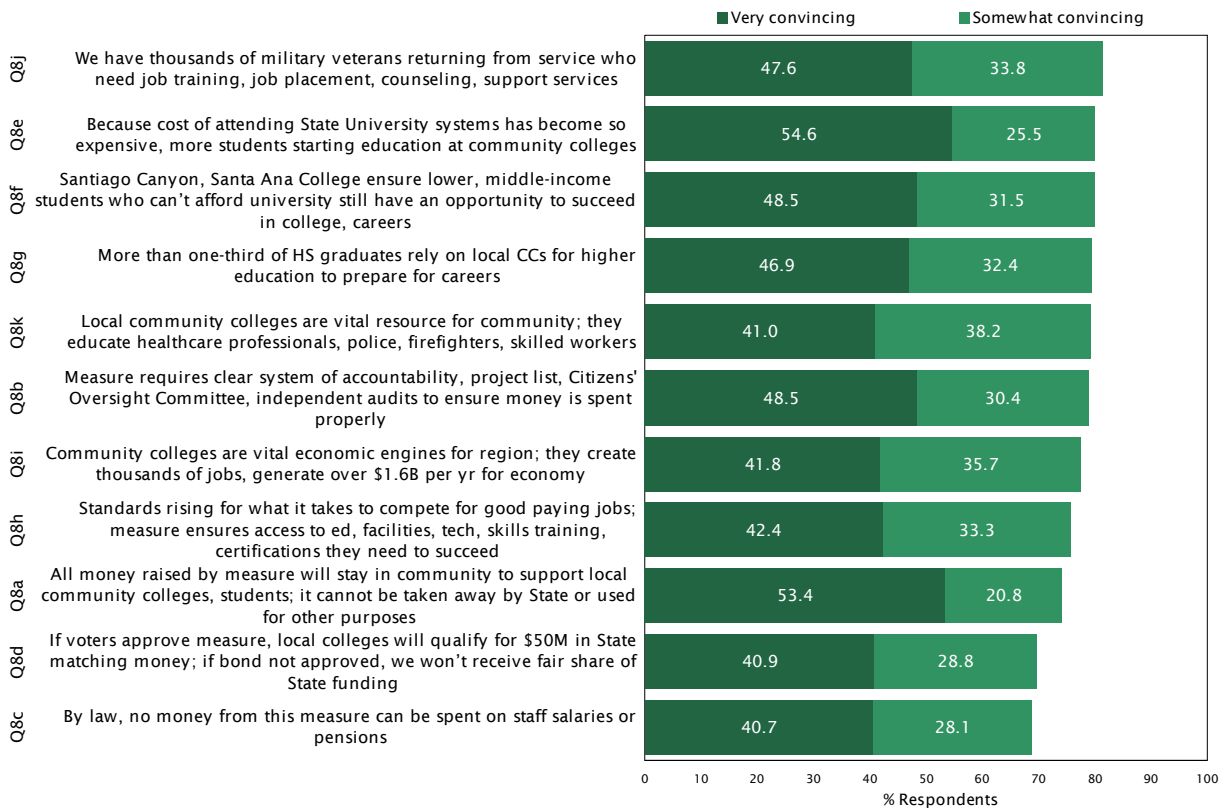
Figure 7 presents the truncated positive arguments tested, as well as voters' reactions to the arguments. The arguments are sorted from most convincing to least convincing based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the argument was either a 'very convincing' or

'somewhat convincing' reason to support the measure. Using this methodology, the most compelling positive arguments were: *We have thousands of military veterans returning from service who need job training, job placement, counseling, and support services. Improving the Student and Veterans Centers will ensure that our veterans receive the support they need* (81% very or somewhat convincing), *Because the cost of attending the University of California and State University systems has become so expensive, many more students are starting their education at community colleges. This measure will ensure local students have access to an affordable, high-quality education here in our area* (80%), *Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College ensure that lower and middle-income students who can't afford the high price of a university still have an opportunity to succeed in college and careers. This measure will provide the affordable, high quality education that all students deserve* (80%), and *More than one-third of all local high school graduates rely on our local community colleges for higher education and to prepare for careers. We need to repair and upgrade our local colleges so they can continue to serve our community well for the decades to come* (79%).

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT   Table 3 on the next page lists the top five most convincing positive arguments (showing the percentage of respondents who cited it as *very* convincing) according to respondents' vote choice at the Initial Ballot Test. The most striking pattern in the table is that the positive arguments resonated with a higher percentage of voters who were initially inclined to support the measure when compared with voters who initially opposed the measure or were unsure. Nevertheless, two arguments were ranked among the top five most compelling by all three groups.

TABLE 3 TOP POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely **Yes** (*n* = 356)	Q8e	Because cost of attending State University systems has become so expensive, more students starting education at community colleges	71
	Q8a	All money raised by measure will stay in community to support local community colleges, students; it cannot be taken away by State or used for other purposes	70
	Q8f	Santiago Canyon, Santa Ana College ensure lower, middle-income students who can't afford university still have an opportunity to succeed in college, careers	65
	Q8g	More than one-third of HS graduates rely on local CCs for higher education to prepare for careers	64
	Q8b	Measure requires clear system of accountability, project list, Citizens' Oversight Committee, independent audits to ensure money is spent properly	60
Probably or Definitely **No** (*n* = 180)	Q8j	We have thousands of military veterans returning from service who need job training, job placement, counseling, support services	27
	Q8a	All money raised by measure will stay in community to support local community colleges, students; it cannot be taken away by State or used for other purposes	23
	Q8b	Measure requires clear system of accountability, project list, Citizens' Oversight Committee, independent audits to ensure money is spent properly	23
	Q8e	Because cost of attending State University systems has become so expensive, more students starting education at community colleges	21
	Q8c	By law, no money from this measure can be spent on staff salaries or pensions	20
Not Sure (*n* = 54)	Q8e	Because cost of attending State University systems has become so expensive, more students starting education at community colleges	62
	Q8b	Measure requires clear system of accountability, project list, Citizens' Oversight Committee, independent audits to ensure money is spent properly	60
	Q8h	Standards rising for what it takes to compete for good paying jobs; measure ensures access to ed, facilities, tech, skills training, certifications they need to succeed	54
	Q8c	By law, no money from this measure can be spent on staff salaries or pensions	53
	Q8k	Local community colleges are vital resource for community; they educate healthcare professionals, police, firefighters, skilled workers	51

INTERIM BALLOT TEST

After informing respondents about the potential tax rates associated with the bond, projects and improvements that could be funded, as well as exposing them to positive arguments they may encounter about the bond, the survey again presented voters with the ballot language used previously to gauge how their support for the proposed college bond measure may have changed. As shown in Figure 8, overall support for the measure among likely November 2020 voters increased to 65%, with 38% of voters indicating that they would *definitely* vote yes. Approximately 27% of respondents opposed the measure at this point in the survey, and an additional 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

Question 9 *Sometimes people change their mind about a measure once they have more information about it. Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it again. In order to repair, construct, and acquire classrooms, facilities, and equipment at Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College; and improve student and veteran access to affordable, high quality education and career-training in science, engineering, healthcare, biotech, public safety, and skilled trades; shall the Rancho Santiago Community College District measure authorizing 450 million dollars in bonds at legal rates, levying 2 cents per 100 dollars of assessed value ($22 million annually) while bonds are outstanding, be approved, with citizen oversight and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 8 INTERIM BALLOT TEST
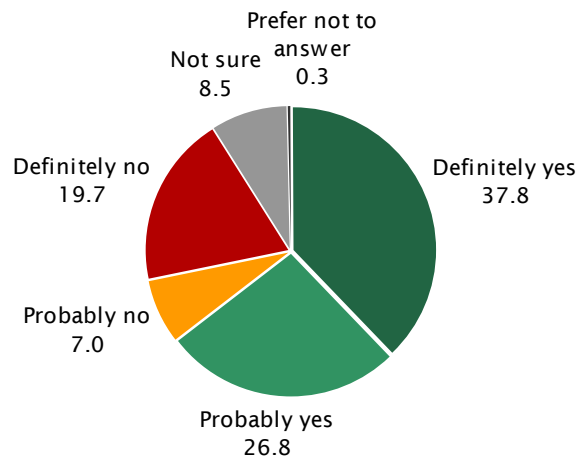
SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS   Table 4 on the next page shows how support for the measure at this point in the survey varied by key voter subgroups, as well as the percentage change in subgroup support when compared with the Initial Ballot Test. Positive differences appear in green, negative differences in red.

TABLE 4 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INTERIM BALLOT TEST

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q2)
Overall		100	64.6	+5.3
Hsld Local CC Attendance (QD3)	Yes	71	65.6	+5.9
	No	29	68.2	+4.8
Child in Hsld at Public School (QD4)	Yes	32	64.7	+0.7
	No	68	66.1	+7.8
Future Child Attendance at Local CC (QD5)	Yes	24	74.7	+1.5
	No	71	64.5	+7.2
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	54	58.6	+2.8
	No	46	71.6	+8.2
Party	Democrat	42	82.8	+6.5
	Republican	30	38.2	+0.3
	Other / DTS	29	65.4	+8.7
Household Party Type	Single dem	19	85.9	+9.2
	Dual dem	13	93.5	+1.5
	Single rep	12	49.8	+1.2
	Dual rep	10	24.7	+9.4
	Other	17	61.2	+7.2
	Mixed	28	59.8	+3.6
Age	18 to 29	22	86.1	+12.6
	30 to 39	12	66.5	+7.3
	40 to 49	13	67.9	+8.9
	50 to 64	27	57.8	+2.2
	65 or older	27	51.4	-0.2
Registration Year	2019 to 2016	53	71.4	+7.5
	2015 to 2010	25	56.7	+1.2
	2009 to 2004	11	65.9	+7.6
	Before 2004	10	46.5	+1.3
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	74	64.6	+3.3
	No	26	64.5	+11.0
Likely Nov 2019 Voter	Yes	53	58.9	+1.6
	No	47	70.9	+9.4
City of Residence	Anaheim	14	69.0	+5.4
	Garden Grove	8	60.2	+0.7
	Orange	31	61.8	+8.2
	Santa Ana	39	67.0	+3.0
	Other city, area	8	59.8	+9.8
Likely Mar 2020 Voter	Yes	69	63.9	+3.6
	No	31	66.0	+9.0
Gender	Male	49	62.3	+3.2
	Female	51	67.6	+7.4

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Whereas Question 8 presented respondents with arguments in favor of the measure, Question 10 presented respondents with arguments designed to elicit opposition to the measure. In the case of Question 10, however, respondents were asked if they felt that the argument was a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to *oppose* the measure. The arguments tested, as well as voters' opinions about the arguments, are presented in Figure 9.

Question 10   *Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure are saying. Opponents of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?*

FIGURE 9 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS
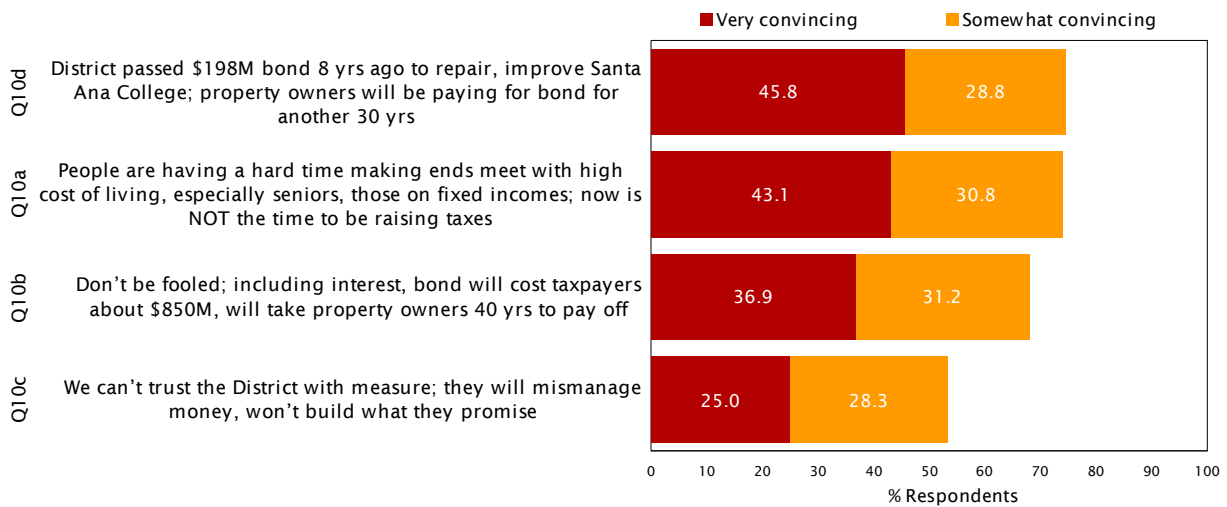
The most compelling negative arguments tested were: *The District passed a 198-million-dollar bond about 8 years ago to repair and improve Santa Ana College. Property owners will be paying for that bond for another 30 years. Now they want more money? That's not fair to taxpayers* (75% very or somewhat convincing) and *People are having a hard time making ends meet with the high cost of living, especially seniors and those living on fixed incomes. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes* (74%).

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT   Table 5 on the next page lists the negative arguments (showing the percentage of respondents who cited each as *very* convincing) according to respondents' vote choice at the Initial Ballot Test.

TABLE 5 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely **Yes** (*n* = 356)	Q10d	District passed $198M bond 8 yrs ago to repair, improve Santa Ana College; property owners will be paying for bond for another 30 yrs	27
	Q10a	People are having a hard time making ends meet with high cost of living, especially seniors, those on fixed incomes; now is NOT the time to be raising taxes	27
	Q10b	Don't be fooled; including interest, bond will cost taxpayers about $850M, will take property owners 40 yrs to pay off	19
	Q10c	We can't trust the District with measure; they will mismanage money, won't build what they promise	14
Probably or Definitely **No** (*n* = 180)	Q10d	District passed $198M bond 8 yrs ago to repair, improve Santa Ana College; property owners will be paying for bond for another 30 yrs	76
	Q10a	People are having a hard time making ends meet with high cost of living, especially seniors, those on fixed incomes; now is NOT the time to be raising taxes	70
	Q10b	Don't be fooled; including interest, bond will cost taxpayers about $850M, will take property owners 40 yrs to pay off	69
	Q10c	We can't trust the District with measure; they will mismanage money, won't build what they promise	53
Not Sure (*n* = 54)	Q10d	District passed $198M bond 8 yrs ago to repair, improve Santa Ana College; property owners will be paying for bond for another 30 yrs	59
	Q10a	People are having a hard time making ends meet with high cost of living, especially seniors, those on fixed incomes; now is NOT the time to be raising taxes	52
	Q10b	Don't be fooled; including interest, bond will cost taxpayers about $850M, will take property owners 40 yrs to pay off	39
	Q10c	We can't trust the District with measure; they will mismanage money, won't build what they promise	10

FINAL BALLOT TEST

Voters' opinions about ballot measures are often not rigid, especially when the amount of information presented to the public on a measure has been limited. A key goal of the survey was thus to gauge how voters' opinions about the proposed measure may be affected by the information they could encounter during the course of an election cycle. After providing respondents with the wording of the proposed measure, potential tax rates, projects that could be funded, and arguments in favor of and against the proposal, the survey again asked voters whether they would vote 'yes' or 'no' on the proposed college bond measure.

Question 11 *Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time. In order to repair, construct, and acquire classrooms, facilities, and equipment at Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College; and improve student and veteran access to affordable, high quality education and career-training in science, engineering, healthcare, biotech, public safety, and skilled trades; shall the Rancho Santiago Community College District measure authorizing 450 million dollars in bonds at legal rates, levying 2 cents per 100 dollars of assessed value ($22 million annually) while bonds are outstanding, be approved, with citizen oversight and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 10 FINAL BALLOT TEST
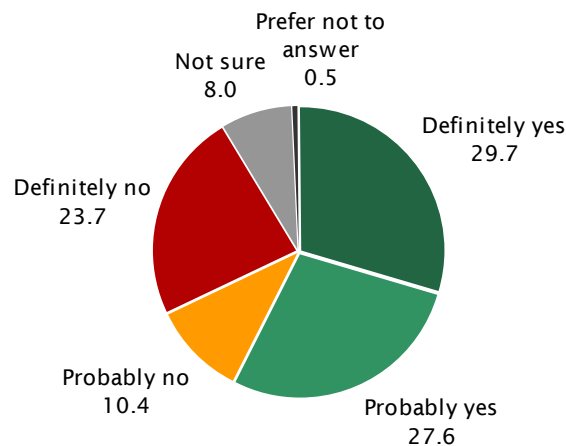
At this point in the survey, support for the bond measure was found among 57% of likely November 2020 voters, with 30% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 34% of respondents opposed the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

CHANGE IN SUPPORT

Table 6 provides a closer look at how support for the proposed bond measure changed over the course of the interview by calculating the difference in support between the Initial, Interim, and Final Ballot Tests within various subgroups of voters. The percentage of support for the measure at the Final Ballot Test is shown in the column with the heading *% Probably or Definitely Yes*. The columns to the right show the difference between the Final and the Initial, and the Final and Interim Ballot Tests. Positive differences appear in green, and negative differences appear in red.

TABLE 6 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT FINAL BALLOT TEST

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Change From Interim Ballot Test (Q9)
Overall		100	57.3	-2.0	-7.3
Hsld Local CC Attendance (QD3)	Yes	71	58.5	-1.3	-7.1
	No	29	59.5	-3.9	-8.7
Child in Hsld at Public School (QD4)	Yes	32	57.6	-6.4	-7.1
	No	68	59.8	+1.5	-6.3
Future Child Attendance at Local CC (QD5)	Yes	24	67.1	-6.0	-7.5
	No	71	58.3	+1.0	-6.2
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	54	53.4	-2.4	-5.2
	No	46	61.9	-1.5	-9.7
Party	Democrat	42	74.0	-2.3	-8.8
	Republican	30	32.7	-5.2	-5.5
	Other / DTS	29	58.5	+1.8	-6.9
Household Party Type	Single dem	19	72.4	-4.4	-13.6
	Dual dem	13	87.4	-4.7	-6.1
	Single rep	12	44.1	-4.4	-5.6
	Dual rep	10	23.0	+7.8	-1.6
	Other	17	57.8	+3.8	-3.4
	Mixed	28	50.9	-5.3	-8.8
Age	18 to 29	22	75.9	+2.4	-10.2
	30 to 39	12	66.8	+7.6	+0.3
	40 to 49	13	45.3	-13.7	-22.6
	50 to 64	27	51.4	-4.2	-6.4
	65 or older	27	49.3	-2.3	-2.1
Registration Year	2019 to 2016	53	60.9	-3.0	-10.6
	2015 to 2010	25	54.5	-1.0	-2.2
	2009 to 2004	11	57.3	-1.0	-8.6
	Before 2004	10	45.2	No change	-1.3
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	74	55.3	-6.0	-9.3
	No	26	62.9	+9.4	-1.6
Likely Nov 2019 Voter	Yes	53	55.7	-1.6	-3.2
	No	47	59.0	-2.5	-11.8
City of Residence	Anaheim	14	65.8	+2.2	-3.1
	Garden Grove	8	50.8	-8.6	-9.3
	Orange	31	54.8	+1.1	-7.0
	Santa Ana	39	58.0	-6.0	-9.0
	Other city, area	8	54.2	+4.3	-5.5
Likely Mar 2020 Voter	Yes	69	59.8	-0.5	-4.1
	No	31	51.7	-5.4	-14.3
Gender	Male	49	58.1	-0.9	-4.2
	Female	51	57.2	-3.0	-10.4

Voter subgroups generally responded to the negative arguments with a reduction in their support for the measure when compared with levels recorded at the Interim Ballot Test. The general trend over the course of the entire survey (Initial to Final Ballot Test) was also one of modestly declining support for most voter subgroups, averaging -2 percentage points overall.

Whereas Table 6 displays change in support for the measure over the course of the interview at the group level, Table 7 presents individual-level changes that occurred between the Initial and Final Ballot Tests for the measure. On the left side of the table is shown each of the response options to the Initial Ballot Test and the percentage of respondents in each group. The cells in the body of the table depict movement within each response group (row) based on the information provided throughout the course of the survey as recorded by the Final Ballot Test. For example, in the first row we see that of the 24.2% of respondents who indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Initial Ballot Test, 17.8% indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Final Ballot Test. An additional 4.8% moved to the probably support group, 0.9% moved to the probably oppose group, 0.3% moved to the definitely oppose group, and 0.3% percent stated they were now unsure of their vote choice.

To ease interpretation of the table, the cells are color coded. Red shaded cells indicate declining support, green shaded cells indicate increasing support, whereas white cells indicate no movement. Moreover, within the cells, a white font indicates a fundamental change in the vote: from yes to no, no to yes, or not sure to either yes or no.

TABLE 7 MOVEMENT BETWEEN INITIAL & FINAL BALLOT TEST

Initial Ballot Test (Q2)		Final Ballot Test (Q11)				
		Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	24.2% →	17.8%	4.8%	0.9%	0.3%	0.3%
Probably support	35.1% →	10.1%	17.5%	1.5%	1.0%	4.9%
Probably oppose	11.2% →	0.5%	2.3%	5.3%	2.0%	1.1%
Definitely oppose	18.8% →	0.2%	0.2%	1.5%	16.7%	0.1%
Not sure	10.8% →	1.0%	2.8%	1.2%	3.7%	2.1%

As one might expect, the information conveyed in the survey generally had the greatest impact on individuals who either weren't sure about how they would vote at the Initial Ballot Test or were tentative in their vote choice (probably yes or probably no). Moreover, Table 7 makes clear that although the information presented in the survey did impact some voters, it did not do so in a consistent way for all respondents. Some respondents found the information provided during the course of the interview to be a reason to become more supportive of the measure, while a slightly larger percentage found the same information reason to be less supportive. Although 22% of respondents made a *fundamental*[3] shift in their opinion regarding the measure over the course of the interview, the net impact is that support for the measure at the Final Ballot Test (57%) was approximately two percentage points lower than support at the Initial Ballot Test (59%).

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3. This is, they changed from a position of support, opposition, or undecided at the Initial Ballot Test to a different position at the Final Ballot Test.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

To understand *why* voters take the positions they do with respect to a revenue measure, it is often instructive to look beyond the specifics of the measure itself. In particular, how voters perceive the quality of education being provided by the District can have a meaningful impact on their support for the proposed bond measure.

Accordingly, respondents were asked to rate the quality of education provided by the Rancho Santiago Community College District at Santa Ana College (Question D1) and Santiago Canyon College (Question D2) using a five-point scale of excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor. As shown in Figure 11, 54% of voters surveyed rated the quality of education at Santa Ana College as excellent (17%) or good (37%), 16% offered that it is fair, and 5% rated it as poor or very poor. The remaining 26% of voters surveyed were unsure or unwilling to offer an opinion.

Question D1 *In general, how would you rate the quality of education provided at Santa Ana College? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?*

FIGURE 11 QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT SANTA ANA COLLEGE
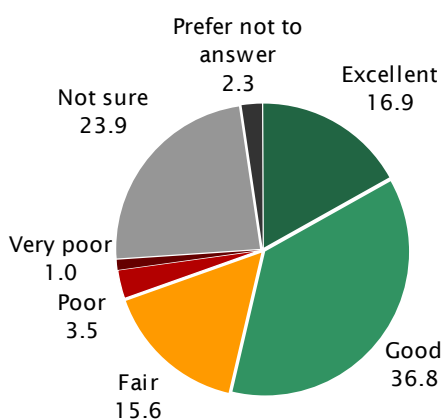
For the interested reader, figures 12 and 13 show how perceptions of the quality of education at Santa Ana College varied (among those with an opinion) across key voter subgroups. It is worth noting the positive relationship between having a high opinion of the District's performance in providing a quality education at Santa Ana College and support for the proposed bond measure at the Initial Ballot Test.

FIGURE 12 QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT SANTA ANA COLLEGE BY HSLD LOCAL CC ATTENDANCE, CHILD IN HSLD AT PUBLIC SCHOOL & POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT
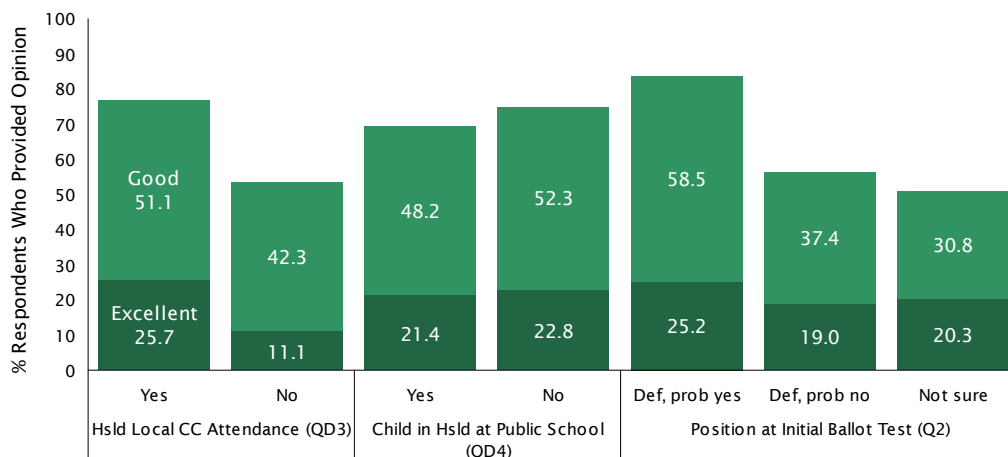
FIGURE 13 QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT SANTA ANA COLLEGE BY FUTURE CHILD ATTENDANCE AT LOCAL CC & CITY OF RESIDENCE
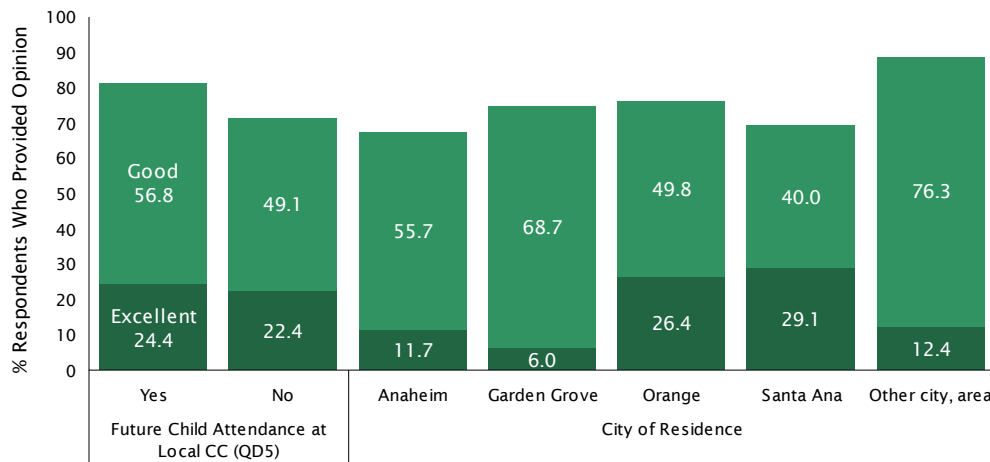
In the same fashion as the question for Santa Ana College, voters were asked to rate the quality of education provided at Santiago Canyon College. The results were comparable, with the majority of respondents rating the quality of education provided by the District at Santiago Canyon College as excellent (16%) or good (37%), 15% offering that it is fair, and 2% rating it as poor or very poor. The remaining 31% of voters surveyed were unsure or unwilling to offer an opinion.

Question D2   *In general, how would you rate the quality of education provided at Santiago Canyon College? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?*

FIGURE 14 QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT SANTIAGO CANYON COLLEGE
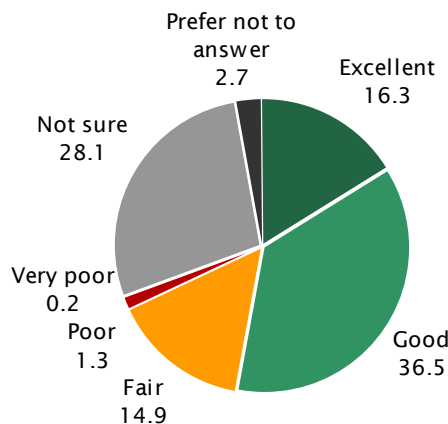
Figures 15-16 on the next page show how perceptions of the quality of education at Santiago Canyon College varied (among those with an opinion) across key voter subgroups. Respondents who supported the proposed bond measure at the Initial Ballot Test, those in a household that had attended Santa Ana College or Santiago Canyon College, and voters who expected at least one of their children to attend a local community college in the future were the subgroups most likely to have a high opinion of the District's performance in providing a quality education at Santiago Canyon College.

FIGURE 15 QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT SANTIAGO CANYON COLLEGE BY HSLD LOCAL ATTENDANCE, CHILD IN HSLD AT PUBLIC SCHOOL & POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST
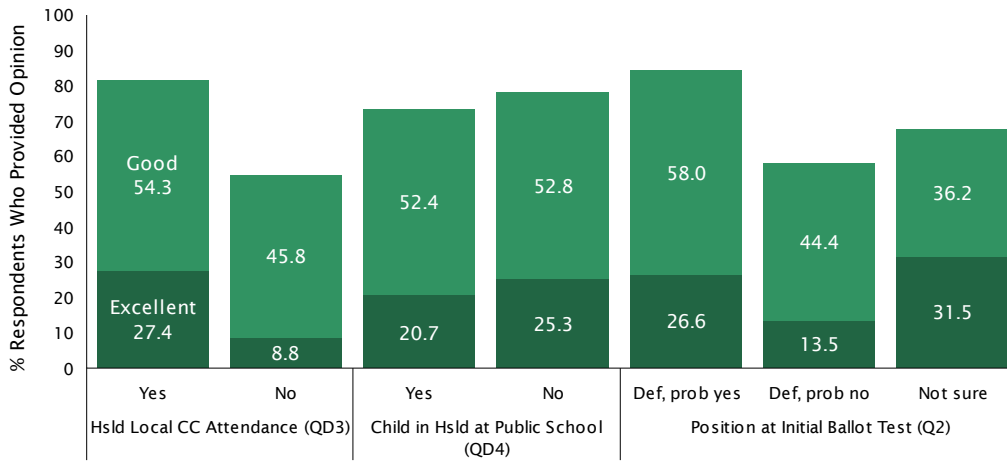
FIGURE 16 QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT SANTIAGO CANYON COLLEGE BY FUTURE CHILD ATTENDANCE AT LOCAL CC & POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

TABLE 8 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

| Total Respondents	600
Hsld Local CC Attendance (QD3)	
Yes	68.3
No	27.9
Prefer no to answer	3.8
Child in Hsld at Public School (QD4)	
Yes	31.2
No	65.6
Prefer no to answer	3.2
Future Child Attendance at Local CC (QD5)	
Yes	22.1
No	71.0
Prefer no to answer	6.9
Party	
Democrat	41.7
Republican	29.7
Other / DTS	28.6
Age	
18 to 29	21.7
30 to 39	12.4
40 to 49	12.6
50 to 64	26.8
65 or older	26.6
Registration Year	
2019 to 2016	53.0
2015 to 2010	28.7
2009 to 2004	9.7
Before 2004	8.6
Household Party Type	
Single dem	18.8
Dual dem	13.3
Single rep	12.0
Dual rep	10.4
Other	17.4
Mixed	28.1
Homeowner on Voter File	
Yes	54.1
No	45.9
Likely to Vote by Mail	
Yes	74.1
No	25.9
Likely Nov 2019 Voter	
Yes	52.6
No	47.4
Likely March 2020 Voter	
Yes	68.8
No	31.2
Gender	
Male	49.1
Female	50.3
Prefer not to answer	0.6
City of Residence	
Anaheim	14.4
Garden Grove	7.7
Orange	30.5
Santa Ana	39.2
Other city, area	8.2

In addition to questions directly related to the proposed measure, the study collected basic demographic information about respondents and their households. Some of this information was gathered during the interview, although much of it was collected from the voter file. The profile of the likely November 2020 voter sample used for this study is shown in Table 8.

M E T H O D O L O G Y

The following sections outline the methodology used in the study, as well as the motivation for using certain techniques.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT   Dr. McLarney of True North Research worked closely with the Rancho Santiago Community College District to develop a questionnaire that covered the topics of interest and avoided possible sources of systematic measurement error, including position-order effects, wording effects, response-category effects, scaling effects, and priming. Several questions included multiple individual items. Because asking the items in a set order can lead to a systematic position bias in responses, items were asked in random order for each respondent.

Some of the questions asked in this study were presented only to a subset of respondents. For example, only individuals who did not support the bond at the Initial Ballot Test (Question 2) were asked the follow-up open-ended Question 3 regarding their reasons for not supporting the measure. The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 36) identifies the skip patterns that were used during the interview to ensure that each respondent received the appropriate questions.

PROGRAMMING, PRE-TEST & TRANSLATION   Prior to fielding the survey, the questionnaire was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) programmed to assist interviewers when conducting the telephone interviews. The CATI program automatically navigates the skip patterns, randomizes the appropriate question items, and alerts the interviewer to certain types of keypunching mistakes should they happen during the interview. The survey was also programmed into a passcode-protected online survey application to allow online participation for sampled voters. The integrity of the questionnaire was pre-tested internally by True North and by dialing into voter households in the District prior to formally beginning the survey. The final version was professionally translated into Spanish and Vietnamese to allow for data collection in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese languages.

SAMPLE   The survey was administered to a stratified and clustered random sample of registered voters in the District who are likely to participate in the November 2020 election, with a subset who are also likely to participate in the lower turnout March 2020 primary election. Consistent with the profile of this universe, the sample was stratified into clusters, each representing a combination of age, gender, and household party type. Individuals were then randomly selected based on their profile into an appropriate cluster. This method ensures that if a person of a particular profile refuses to participate in the study, they are replaced by an individual who shares their same profile.

STATISTICAL MARGIN OF ERROR   By using the probability-based sampling design noted above, True North ensured that the final sample was representative of voters in the District who are likely to participate in the November 2020 election. The results of the sample can thus be used to estimate the opinions of *all* voters likely to participate in the November 2020 election. Because not all voters participated in the study, however, the results have what is known as a statistical margin of error due to sampling. The margin of error refers to the difference between what was found in the survey of 600 voters for a particular question and what

would have been found if all of the estimated 190,454 likely November 2020 voters identified in the District had been surveyed for the study.

Figure 17 provides a graphic plot of the *maximum* margin of error in this study. The maximum margin of error for a dichotomous percentage result occurs when the answers are evenly split such that 50% provide one response and 50% provide the alternative response. For this survey, the maximum margin of error is ± 3.99%.

FIGURE 17   MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR DUE TO SAMPLING
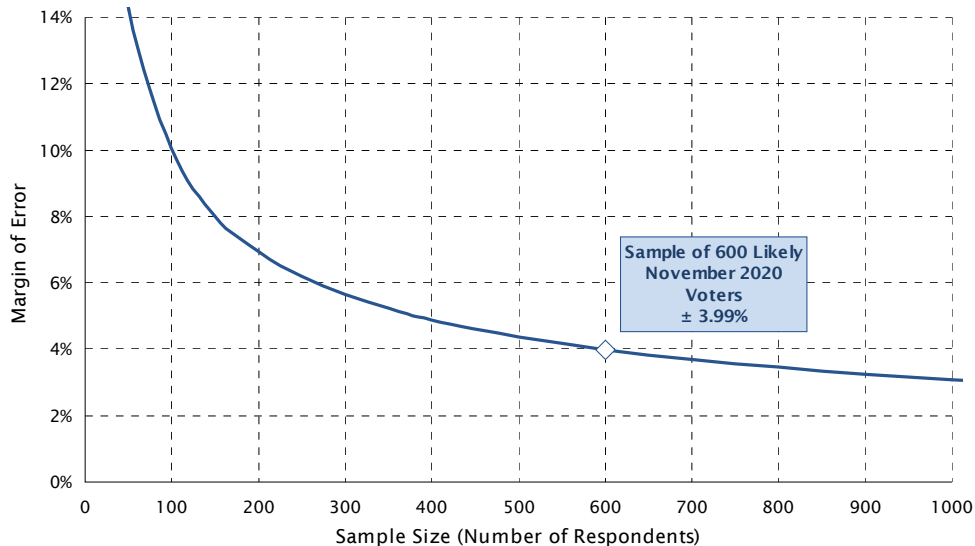
Within this report, figures and tables show how responses to certain questions varied by sub-groups such as age, gender, and partisan affiliation. Figure 17 is thus useful for understanding how the maximum margin of error for a percentage estimate will grow as the number of individuals asked a question (or in a particular subgroup) shrinks. Because the margin of error grows exponentially as the sample size decreases, the reader should use caution when generalizing and interpreting the results for small subgroups.

RECRUITING & DATA COLLECTION   The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (telephone and email) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Telephone interviews averaged 16 minutes in length and were conducted during weekday evenings (5:30PM to 9PM) and on weekends (10AM to 5PM). It is standard practice not to call during the day on weekdays because most working adults are unavailable and thus calling during those hours would likely bias the sample.

Voters recruited via email were assigned a unique passcode to ensure that only voters who received an invitation could access the online survey site, and that each voter could complete the survey only one time. During the data collection period, an email reminder notice was also sent to encourage participation among those who had yet to take the survey. A total of 600 surveys were completed between May 6 and May 15, 2019.

DATA PROCESSING   Data processing consisted of checking the data for errors or inconsistencies, coding and recoding responses, weighting, and preparing frequency analyses and cross-tabulations.

ROUNDING   Numbers that end in 0.5 or higher are rounded up to the nearest whole number, whereas numbers that end in 0.4 or lower are rounded down to the nearest whole number. These same rounding rules are also applied, when needed, to arrive at numbers that include a decimal place in constructing figures and charts. Occasionally, these rounding rules lead to small discrepancies in the first decimal place when comparing tables and figures for a given question.

Section 1: Introduction to Study

Hi, may I please speak to _____. My name is _____, and I'm calling on behalf of TNR, an independent public opinion research firm. We're conducting a survey of voters about important issues in Orange County and I'd like to get your opinions.

If needed: This is a survey about important issues in your community. I'm NOT trying to sell anything and I won't ask for a donation.
If needed: The survey should take about 12 minutes to complete.
If needed: If now is not a convenient time, can you let me know a better time so I can call back?

If the person asks why you need to speak to the listed person or if they ask to participate instead, explain: For statistical purposes, at this time the survey must only be completed by this particular individual.

If the person says they are an elected official or is somehow associated with the survey, politely explain that this survey is designed to measure the opinions of those not closely associated with the study, thank them for their time, and terminate the interview.

Section 2: Importance of Issues

Q1	To begin, I'm going to read a list of issues facing your community and for each one, please tell me how important you feel the issue is to <u>you</u>, using a scale of extremely important, very important, somewhat important or not at all important. Here is the (first/next) issue: _____. Do you think this issue is extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not at all important?

	Randomize.	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Improving the local economy	39%	40%	19%	2%	0%	0%
B	Improving public safety	47%	37%	14%	2%	0%	0%
C	Protecting the quality of education	54%	32%	9%	3%	1%	1%
D	Ensuring local access to affordable, high quality college education and career training	45%	36%	13%	5%	0%	0%
E	Maintaining and upgrading classrooms and facilities at our local community colleges	26%	39%	26%	8%	0%	1%
F	Maintaining local property values	33%	35%	26%	5%	1%	0%
G	Preventing local tax increases	38%	29%	22%	10%	1%	1%
H	Reducing traffic congestion	31%	32%	34%	3%	0%	0%

Section 3: Initial Ballot Test			
Your household is within the Rancho Santiago Community College District. Next year, voters in the District may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure.			

Q2	In order to: ◇ Repair, construct, and acquire classrooms, facilities, and equipment at Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College ◇ And improve student and veteran access to affordable, high quality education and career-training in science, engineering, healthcare, biotech, public safety, and skilled trades Shall the Rancho Santiago Community College District measure authorizing **450** million dollars in bonds at legal rates, levying 2 cents per 100 dollars of assessed value ($22 million annually) while bonds are outstanding, be approved, with citizen oversight and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? *Get answer, then ask*: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?			
	1	Definitely yes	24%	*Skip to Q4*
	2	Probably yes	35%	*Skip to Q4*
	3	Probably no	11%	*Ask Q3*
	4	Definitely no	19%	*Ask Q3*
	98	Not sure	9%	*Ask Q3*
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%	*Skip to Q4*

Q3	Is there a particular reason why you do <u>not</u> support or are unsure about the measure I just described? *If yes, ask:* Please briefly describe your reason. Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories below.	
	Taxes already too high	24%
	Money is misspent, mismanaged	18%
	Need more information	15%
	Not sure, no particular reason	14%
	Other ways to be funded (students who attend)	7%
	Do not support bonds, increased debt	6%
	Mentioned past ballot measure, bond	5%
	Do not trust District	5%
	Measure too expensive	5%
	Money will go to administrators, pensions	4%
	Colleges are okay as-is, no need for more money	3%
	District has enough money	3%
	Improve quality of education	3%
	Illegal immigration issues	3%

	Other higher priorities in community	2%
	No one in household attends local community college	2%

	Section 4: Tax Threshold						
Q4	The amount each home owner will pay if the community college bond passes depends on the assessed value of their home – <u>not</u> the current market value of the home. If you heard that the annual property taxes on your home would increase: _____ per 100,000 (one hundred thousand) dollars of assessed valuation, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure? *Get answer, then ask:* Is that definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)? *If needed:* The assessed value of your home is listed on your property tax bill.						

Read in sequence starting with the highest amount (A), then the next highest (B), and so on. If respondent says 'definitely yes', record 'definitely yes' for all LOWER dollar amounts and go to next question.

	Ask in Order	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Probably No	Definitely No	Not Sure	Prefer not to answer
A	$22	19%	24%	15%	31%	10%	1%
B	$17	24%	25%	14%	29%	7%	1%
C	$13	30%	23%	11%	27%	7%	1%

Q5	Let me put it another way: If you knew that this measure would cost the <u>typical</u> home owner about **$76** per year, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure? *Get answer, then ask:* Is that definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?		
	1	Definitely yes	31%	*Skip to Q7*
	2	Probably yes	21%	*Ask Q6*
	3	Probably no	14%	*Ask Q6*
	4	Definitely no	27%	*Ask Q6*
	98	Not sure	6%	*Ask Q6*
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%	*Skip to Q7*

Q6	If you knew that this measure would cost the <u>typical</u> home owner about **$45** per year, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure? *Get answer, then ask:* Is that definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?	
		Definitely yes @ $76 (Q5)	31%
	1	Definitely yes	5%
	2	Probably yes	24%
	3	Probably no	11%
	4	Definitely no	25%
	98	Not sure	3%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%

	Section 5: Projects & Programs						
Q7	The measure we've been discussing would provide funding for a variety of projects and improvements. If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion? *Get answer, if favor or oppose, then ask:* Would that be strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?						
	Randomize. Split Sample N1/N2 using odd/even clusters.	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Upgrade classrooms and career training facilities for **public safety** include fire protection, emergency medical treatment, law enforcement, and cyber-security	47%	34%	7%	6%	3%	3%
B	Upgrade classrooms, labs, and career training facilities for **healthcare** and nursing	51%	30%	6%	7%	4%	3%
C	Upgrade classrooms, labs, and career training facilities for **science**, technology, engineering, math, and biotech	54%	30%	5%	6%	2%	3%
D	Upgrade classrooms, labs, and career training facilities for **skilled trades** including industrial technology, welding, and automotive technology	54%	30%	6%	5%	2%	3%
E	Repair or replace leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, faulty electrical systems, and dry rotted beams where needed	59%	26%	4%	6%	2%	2%
F	Improve student safety and campus security systems including security lighting, cameras, emergency communications systems, smoke detectors, and fire alarms	55%	27%	6%	7%	2%	3%
G	Upgrade classrooms and labs to help local students complete the first two years of college affordably, and transfer to the Cal-State or UC (You-See) systems.	62%	20%	6%	7%	2%	3%
H	Upgrade outdated classrooms, science labs, career training facilities, and equipment to keep pace with current industry standards and technology	51%	32%	6%	7%	2%	3%
I	Add classrooms and facilities at each campus to keep up with student demand and a growing need for local, affordable college education	50%	30%	7%	8%	2%	3%
J	Upgrade the Student and Veterans Service Centers to provide counseling and support services to students, military veterans and their families	53%	30%	3%	7%	4%	3%
K	Modernize school facilities to improve access for students with disabilities	55%	30%	4%	6%	2%	3%
L	Remove hazardous materials like asbestos and lead paint from older buildings	57%	25%	5%	8%	3%	3%

		Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
M	Replace or retrofit older buildings that do not meet earthquake safety standards	52%	27%	7%	8%	2%	3%
N1	Provide the classrooms and facilities needed to support high quality instruction in music, visual and performing arts	43%	28%	14%	7%	4%	3%
N2	Build a Performing Arts Center to support high quality instruction in music, visual and performing arts that will also be open for community use	33%	35%	12%	15%	2%	4%
O	Transform outdated libraries into modern learning centers	42%	34%	9%	8%	3%	3%

Section 6: Positive Arguments

What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people are saying about the measure we've been discussing.

Q8	Supporters of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to **SUPPORT** the measure?						
	Randomize.	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	All money raised by the measure will stay in our community to support our local community colleges and students. It cannot be taken away by the State or used for other purposes.	53%	21%	15%	9%	1%	1%
B	This measure requires a clear system of accountability, including a project list detailing exactly how the money will be used, a Citizens' Oversight Committee, and independent audits to ensure the money is spent properly.	48%	30%	12%	7%	1%	1%
C	By law, no money from this measure can be spent on staff salaries or pensions.	41%	28%	18%	9%	3%	1%
D	If voters approve this measure, our local colleges will qualify for about 50 million dollars in State matching money. If the bond is not approved, we won't receive our fair share of State funding.	41%	29%	18%	8%	3%	1%
E	Because the cost of attending the University of California and State University systems has become so expensive, many more students are starting their education at community colleges. This measure will ensure local students have access to an affordable, high-quality education here in our area.	55%	25%	13%	5%	1%	1%

F	Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College ensure that lower and middle-income students who can't afford the high price of a university still have an opportunity to succeed in college and careers. This measure will provide the affordable, high quality education that all students deserve.	48%	32%	11%	7%	1%	1%
G	More than one-third of all local high school graduates rely on our local community colleges for higher education and to prepare for careers. We need to repair and upgrade our local colleges so they can continue to serve our community well for the decades to come.	47%	32%	12%	6%	2%	1%
H	The standards are rising for what it takes to compete for good paying jobs in today's economy. This measure will ensure local students have access to the education, facilities, technology, skills training, and certifications they need to succeed.	42%	33%	17%	5%	1%	1%
I	Our community colleges are vital economic engines for our region. They create thousands of jobs and generate over **1.6 (one-point-six) billion** dollars per year for our economy in engineering, healthcare, and other industries. This measure will help strengthen our colleges and our economy.	42%	36%	16%	5%	1%	1%
J	We have thousands of military veterans returning from service who need job training, job placement, counseling and support services. Improving the Student and Veterans Centers will ensure that our veterans receive the support they need.	48%	34%	10%	5%	2%	1%
K	Our local community colleges are a vital resource for our community. They educate the healthcare professionals that serve our medical needs, the police and firefighters that keep us safe, and the skilled workers who fuel our economy.	41%	38%	13%	5%	2%	1%

Section 7: Interim Ballot Test		
Sometimes people change their mind about a measure once they have more information about it. Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it again.		

Q9	In order to:
	
	  ◇ Repair, construct, and acquire classrooms, facilities, and equipment at Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College
	  ◇ And improve student and veteran access to affordable, high quality education and career-training in science, engineering, healthcare, biotech, public safety, and skilled trades
	
	 Shall the Rancho Santiago Community College District measure authorizing **450** million dollars in bonds at legal rates, levying 2 cents per 100 dollars of assessed value ($22 million annually) while bonds are outstanding, be approved, with citizen oversight and all money locally controlled?
	
	 If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? *Get answer, then ask*: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?	

	1	Definitely yes	38%
	2	Probably yes	27%
	3	Probably no	7%
	4	Definitely no	20%
	98	Not sure	8%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%

Section 8: Negative Arguments		
Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure are saying.		
Q10	Opponents of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?	

	Randomize	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	People are having a hard time making ends meet with the high cost of living – especially seniors and those living on fixed incomes. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes.	43%	31%	19%	5%	1%	1%
B	Don't be fooled. Including interest, this bond will cost taxpayers about **850 million** dollars and will take property owners 40 years to pay off.	37%	31%	19%	8%	4%	1%
C	We can't trust the District with this measure. They will mismanage the money and won't build what they promise.	25%	28%	29%	13%	4%	1%

D	The District passed a 198-million-dollar bond about 8 years ago to repair and improve Santa Ana College. Property owners will be paying for that bond for another 30 years. Now they want more money? That's not fair to taxpayers.	46%	29%	17%	5%	3%	1%

Section 9: Final Ballot Test

Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time.

Q11	In order to: ◇ Repair, construct, and acquire classrooms, facilities, and equipment at Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College ◇ And improve student and veteran access to affordable, high quality education and career-training in science, engineering, healthcare, biotech, public safety, and skilled trades Shall the Rancho Santiago Community College District measure authorizing **450** million dollars in bonds at legal rates, levying 2 cents per 100 dollars of assessed value ($22 million annually) while bonds are outstanding, be approved, with citizen oversight and all money locally controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? *Get answer, then ask*: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?	
	1	Definitely yes	30%
	2	Probably yes	28%
	3	Probably no	10%
	4	Definitely no	24%
	98	Not sure	8%
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%

Section 10: Background & Demographics

Thank you so much for your participation. I have just a few background questions for statistical purposes.

D1	In general, how would you rate the quality of education provided at **Santa Ana College**? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?	
	1	Excellent	17%
	2	Good	37%
	3	Fair	16%
	4	Poor	4%
	5	Very Poor	1%
	98	Not sure	24%
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%

Questionnaire & Toplines

D2	In general, how would you rate the quality of education provided at **Santiago Canyon College**? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?	
	1	Excellent	16%
	2	Good	37%
	3	Fair	15%
	4	Poor	1%
	5	Very Poor	0%
	98	Not sure	28%
	99	Prefer not to answer	3%
D3	Have you or a member of your household ever taken a class at Santa Ana College or Santiago Canyon College?	
	1	Yes	68%
	2	No	28%
	98	Not sure	1%
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%
D4	Do you have any children in your home who attend a local public school?	
	1	Yes	31%	*Ask D5*
	2	No	66%	*Skip to End*
	99	Prefer not to answer	3%	*Skip to End*
D5	Looking to the future, do you expect any of your children to attend a local community college for a portion of their higher education?	
	1	Yes	71%
	2	No	17%
	98	Not sure	10%
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%
Those are all of the questions that I have for you. Thanks so much for participating in this important survey.		

Post-Interview & Sample Items		
S1	Gender	
	1	Male	49%
	2	Female	50%
	3	Prefer not to answer	1%

S2	Party		
	1	Democrat	42%
	2	Republican	30%
	3	Other	3%
	4	DTS	25%
S3	**Age on Voter File**		
	1	18 to 29	22%
	2	30 to 39	12%
	3	40 to 49	13%
	4	50 to 64	27%
	5	65 or older	27%
	99	Not coded	0%
S4	**Registration Date**		
	1	2019 to 2016	53%
	2	2015 to 2010	25%
	3	2009 to 2004	11%
	4	Before 2004	10%
S5	**Household Party Type**		
	1	Single Dem	19%
	2	Dual Dem	13%
	3	Single Rep	12%
	4	Dual Rep	10%
	5	Single Other	14%
	6	Dual Other	4%
	7	Dem & Rep	5%
	8	Dem & Other	12%
	9	Rep & Other	7%
	0	Mixed (Dem + Rep + Other)	4%

S6	Homeowner on Voter File	
1	Yes	54%
2	No	46%
S7	**Likely to Vote by Mail**	
1	Yes	74%
2	No	26%
S8	**Likely November 2019 Voter**	
1	Yes	53%
2	No	47%
S9	**Likely March 2020 Voter**	
1	Yes	69%
2	No	31%
S10	**Likely November 2020 Voter**	
1	Yes	100%
2	No	0%
S11	**City of Residence**	
	Anaheim	14%
	Garden Grove	8%
	Orange	31%
	Santa Ana	39%
	Other city, area	8%

Questionnaire & Toplines