

April 29, 2021

Release is effective immediately

Hawkeye Poll: *Plurality of Iowans supports constitutional amendment on gun rights*

According to a recent Hawkeye Poll — conducted by University of Iowa faculty and students between March 23 and April 12 — a plurality of Iowans supports a proposed constitutional amendment to protect Iowan's right to bear arms with a large percentage currently undecided.

The legislature recently passed the proposed amendment for a second time and it could appear on the ballot as soon as 2022. It would add the following language to the state constitution: "The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. The sovereign state of Iowa affirms and recognizes this right to be a fundamental individual right. Any and all restrictions of this right shall be subject to strict scrutiny."

When asked if they would vote for or against this amendment if it were on the ballot, 39.4% of respondents said they would vote for it, 29.6% said they would vote against it, and 31.0% indicated that they were not sure or declined to answer. Support increased among likely voters, with 41.5% of those who voted in 2020 currently in favor of the amendment, 32.1% indicating they would vote against it, and 26.4% not sure or who declined to answer. "These results indicate that the fate of this amendment will come down to the ability of proponents and opponents to persuade the very large percentage of undecided voters to support their position", said Fred Boehmke, a Professor of Political Science at the University of Iowa. "It also suggests the potential for an expensive, high profile campaign to persuade them."

Support varied a lot by party identification. Among Republicans, 60.6% would vote in favor compared to 12.9% who would vote against it. 26.5% were not sure or declined to answer. Among Democrats, 54.4% would vote against it compared to 21.7% in favor and 23.8% declining or not sure. Independents fell between, with 37.3% in favor and 25.5% opposed. 37.2% of independents either declined to answer or were not sure how they would vote.

Support was strongest among rural residents, but a plurality of urban and suburban residents also favored the amendment. Among rural residents, 44.1% would vote for it compared to 23.3% who would vote against it. Suburban residents more narrowly favored of the amendment, with 37.6% who would vote for it and 36.1% who would vote against it. Urban residents reported strong support, with 38.1% in favor and 32.3% against it.

Support increased with respondent age. 30.8% of those under 34 would vote for it, increasing to 39.8% among those 35-54, 44.4% of those 55-69, and 46.4% of those aged 70 and over.

The University of Iowa Department of Political Science has conducted the Hawkeye Poll since 2007. A series of national and state public opinion polls, this experience serves as an important learning

opportunity for students. Over 1000 students have had the opportunity to directly participate in the research and survey process and to acquire valuable career-related knowledge about survey research and public polling in general. This year 17 students collaborated to design and implement a poll of Iowans. Learn more about the course at <https://now.uiowa.edu/2019/11/taking-iowas-pulse-hawkeye-poll>.

Respondent Identification: The Iowa Social Science Research Center (ISRC) assisted with data collection. Responses were gathered by phone (89) and by web (902). For the phone portion, the ISRC obtained a random sample of Iowans consisting of 40% household landline numbers and 60% mobile phone numbers. All respondents who stated they were over age 18 and willing to participate in the survey were included. After training, students in the class used the ISRC's computer-assisted interviewing resources to complete the calling and interviews. No quotas were set for the phone component. For the web portion, the ISRC contracted with a respected web panel vendor to field the survey to a demographically representative sample of 902 web respondents. Respondents invited to complete the web survey were Iowa adults, aged 18-120 years, recruited for participation via web panel. To obtain a census-representative sample, quotas were set on the following demographics: sex, age, and party identification.

Sample: 991 voting-age resident in Iowa (902 by web and 89 by phone), margin of error +/-3.2%

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

About the Hawkeye Poll

The poll was conducted by the Hawkeye Poll Cooperative, comprised of University of Iowa faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students in the Political Science departments. The poll is a teaching, research, and service project, which uses the facilities of the Iowa Social Science Research Center directed by Frederick J. Boehmke, professor of political science and faculty advisor for the poll. The Department of Political Science, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the University of Iowa Public Policy Center support the poll; financial support was provided through a Student Technology Fee award (#1290-91).

Caleb McCullough, Rylee Wilson, and Jon Rodriguez assisted with the preparation of this release.

CONTACT:

Frederick Boehmke, Faculty Advisor for the Hawkeye Poll, 319-335-2342 (office), 716-866-9277 (cell), frederick-boehmke@uiowa.edu.