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## WASON CENTER RELEASES PART I OF STATE OF THE COMMONWEALTH SURVEY

**SURVEY SHOWS VIRGINIA VOTER SUPPORT ON A RANGE OF ISSUES.**

by [Tom Kramer](#) | February 2, 2021

*Read time: about 1 min*

As the 2021 General Assembly debates new laws and the state budget, Virginia voters strongly back legalizing marijuana use, requiring employers to provide paid sick leave and repealing the death penalty, according to a survey released today by the [Wason Center for Civic Leadership](#).

Asked to name priorities for increased state spending, voters ranked health care and K-12 education highest and tourism and prisons lowest.

“These findings should help inform decisions as the 2021 session moves into its final weeks,” said Wason Center academic director Dr. Quentin Kidd.

Here are the highlights of the survey results:

- **Workplace:** Virginia voters show very strong support for requiring employers with at least 25 employees to provide paid sick leave (88%) and strong support for allowing public employees to unionize and bargain collectively (68%).
- **Criminal justice:** More than two out of three voters support legalizing the recreational use of marijuana (68%). Majorities favor repealing the death penalty (56%) and eliminating mandatory minimum sentences for some offenses (55%).

- **State budget:** A majority of Virginia voters support increasing state spending on health care (69%); K-12 education (66%); economic development (60%); social services, such as food and housing aid (60%); and public safety (60%), while 50% support higher spending on environmental protection. Few voters overall favor state spending decreases. Even in areas where decreases find the most voter support, support for increases is about equal or higher, including tourism (27% decrease vs. 26% increase); prisons and jails (24% vs. 28%); and cultural institutions, such as museums (22% vs. 31%).
- **Environment:** A very strong majority of Virginia voters support providing state tax rebates to encourage the purchase of electric vehicles (70%). “Support for electric vehicles is likely a response to the increased salience of climate issues, given the environmental risks Virginia faces associated with sea-level rise and warmer temperatures,” said Dr. Rebecca Bromley-Trujillo, research director of the Wason Center.

The results of this study are based on interviews of 1,039 Virginia residents, including 897 registered voters, conducted online January 18-25, 2021. Unlike the margin of error calculated for a random sample survey, the precision of online polling is measured using a credibility interval. This poll has a Bayesian credibility interval of +/- 4.8%.

For more information and to read the full report visit [cnu.edu/wasoncenter](https://cnu.edu/wasoncenter).

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