



## PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

### Allowing Foreign Entities to Influence Ballot Initiatives with Campaign Contributions

- QUESTIONNAIRE -

February 2022

**Fielded by:** Nielsen Scarborough  
**Sample Size:** 2,702 Registered Voters

**Field Dates:** January 27 - February 28, 2022  
**Margin of Error:** +/- 1.9%

#### [Introduction]

In this survey, we'd like your opinions about some current issues. There are no right or wrong answers, so please answer the questions based on what seems right to you.

Today, we are going to do a survey on several current issues. This survey will take about 20 to 30 minutes to answer. Since you have taken a survey with us before, you know that we will make no effort to sell anything to you and your answers will remain confidential. If at any time you find that you do not want to answer a question, feel free to skip it and move on to the next one.

#### [Q1 - Q30 Released Separately]

#### [Allowing Foreign Entities to Influence Ballot Initiatives with Campaign Contributions]

We are now going to focus on state and local ballot initiatives.

As you may know, a ballot initiative is a question put on a ballot that asks voters to decide for or against a specific proposal. If a majority of voters favor the initiative, it then becomes law.

Currently, there is a debate about the fact that there are no federal limits on who can spend money to try to influence the campaigns for or against a ballot initiative, such as contributing to a campaign or paying for advertising. Several states have passed laws to prohibit such contributions.

There is a proposal in Congress to create a federal law that would prohibit foreign individuals, companies, or governments from spending money in an effort to influence the outcome of a ballot initiative.<sup>1</sup>

Here is an argument in favor:<sup>2</sup>

Q31. The American government is supposed to be ruled by and for American citizens. Allowing foreign businesses and governments to use their money to influence our votes on ballot initiatives violates this principle. This is why we made it illegal for foreigners to spend money to influence our elections. For example, a city trying to vote on a local project to ban the use of certain polluting chemicals should not have to worry about the foreign corporation that makes those chemicals spending millions to influence the outcome just so they can keep selling their polluting chemicals.

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<sup>1</sup> [Stop Foreign Interference in Ballot Measures Act \(H.R. 1516\)](#) by Rep. Katie Porter and Sen. Gillibrand ([S. 3136](#)); [Protecting Ballot Measures from Foreign Influence Act \(H.R. 6177\)](#) by Reps. Banks (R) and Spanberger (D) and by Sens. Rubio (R) and Warner (D) ([S. 3345](#)); [Stop Foreign Funds in Elections Act \(H.R. 5841\)](#) by Rep. Fitzpatrick (R)

<sup>2</sup> [March 15, 2021 testimonies to Maine Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs](#); [Center for American Progress Testimony to Boston Legislature](#)

Q31.	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total Convincing	Somewhat Unconvincing	Very Unconvincing	Total Unconvincing	Refused / DK
<b>National</b>	57.8%	26.4%	<b>84.2%</b>	10.3%	3.6%	<b>13.9%</b>	1.9%
Republicans	54.4%	28.1%	<b>82.5%</b>	10.4%	4.9%	<b>15.3%</b>	2.2%
Democrats	64.6%	24.7%	<b>89.3%</b>	8.3%	1.5%	<b>9.8%</b>	0.9%
Independents	49.9%	26.0%	<b>75.9%</b>	14.9%	5.6%	<b>20.5%</b>	3.7%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>							
Very red	54.2%	24.9%	<b>79.1%</b>	14.5%	3.3%	<b>17.8%</b>	3.1%
Somewhat red	61.2%	22.2%	<b>83.4%</b>	8.4%	6.1%	<b>14.5%</b>	2.0%
Lean red	62.3%	27.1%	<b>89.4%</b>	5.6%	3.5%	<b>9.1%</b>	1.6%
Lean blue	58.0%	26.5%	<b>84.5%</b>	13.1%	1.5%	<b>14.6%</b>	0.9%
Somewhat blue	58.2%	26.1%	<b>84.3%</b>	10.6%	1.7%	<b>12.3%</b>	3.3%
Very blue	53.2%	31.8%	<b>85.0%</b>	8.2%	5.8%	<b>14.0%</b>	0.9%

Here is an argument against:<sup>3</sup>

Q32. Ballot initiatives can have big impacts on other countries and their businesses. It is only fair that the people, businesses and governments we influence with our laws get to make their case to US voters. If another country was going to pass a law that would harm US businesses, we would want our businesses to be able to make their case to that country's citizens. We don't have to protect the American people from hearing whatever arguments can be made—they might make a worthwhile point. Democracy is best when we hear from all sides.

Q32.	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total Convincing	Somewhat Unconvincing	Very Unconvincing	Total Unconvincing	Refused / DK
<b>National</b>	9.7%	27.2%	<b>36.9%</b>	31.1%	30.8%	<b>61.9%</b>	1.3%
Republicans	9.8%	26.9%	<b>36.7%</b>	30.8%	30.8%	<b>61.6%</b>	1.7%
Democrats	8.5%	27.3%	<b>35.8%</b>	31.6%	32.1%	<b>63.7%</b>	0.6%
Independents	12.3%	27.7%	<b>40.0%</b>	30.8%	27.3%	<b>58.1%</b>	1.9%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>							
Very red	8.7%	25.4%	<b>34.1%</b>	34.3%	29.9%	<b>64.2%</b>	1.7%
Somewhat red	10.0%	25.6%	<b>35.6%</b>	28.4%	34.5%	<b>62.9%</b>	1.5%
Lean red	11.8%	26.2%	<b>38.0%</b>	30.3%	31.2%	<b>61.5%</b>	0.4%
Lean blue	6.7%	27.0%	<b>33.7%</b>	32.8%	32.2%	<b>65.0%</b>	1.3%
Somewhat blue	11.6%	26.7%	<b>38.3%</b>	33.9%	25.7%	<b>59.6%</b>	2.1%
Very blue	9.7%	31.2%	<b>40.9%</b>	26.7%	31.4%	<b>58.1%</b>	1.0%

Q33. So, here again is the proposal.

Create a federal law that would prohibit foreign individuals, companies, or governments from spending money in an effort to influence the outcome of a ballot initiative.

How acceptable would you find this proposal?

Q33.	Unacceptable (0-4)	Just Tolerable (5)	Acceptable (6-10)	Refused / Don't Know
<b>National</b>	22.9%	8.4%	67.9%	0.8%
Republicans	24.4%	8.9%	66.1%	0.6%
Democrats	19.5%	6.7%	73.4%	0.4%
Independents	27.5%	11.4%	59.1%	2.0%

<sup>3</sup> [Maine State Chamber of Commerce Testimony](#); [Hydro-Quebec Testimony](#)

Cook's PVI (D-R)				
Very red	24.5%	8.0%	67.1%	0.4%
Somewhat red	17.6%	10.0%	70.8%	1.5%
Lean red	23.9%	6.9%	68.8%	0.4%
Lean blue	23.4%	7.1%	68.9%	0.7%
Somewhat blue	23.9%	9.6%	65.6%	0.9%
Very blue	23.8%	10.0%	65.3%	0.8%

Q34. In conclusion, do you favor or oppose this proposal?

Q34.	Favor	Oppose	Refused / Don't Know
<b>National</b>	79.4%	19.6%	1.0%
Republicans	76.9%	22.1%	1.1%
Democrats	84.3%	15.3%	0.4%
Independents	74.0%	23.9%	2.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R)			
Very red	73.7%	25.3%	1.0%
Somewhat red	80.7%	18.1%	1.2%
Lean red	81.8%	17.8%	0.4%
Lean blue	79.8%	19.2%	1.0%
Somewhat blue	77.4%	21.6%	1.0%
Very blue	80.4%	18.1%	1.5%

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