



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** INTERESTED PARTIES  
**FROM:** ROBERT BLIZZARD – PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES  
**DATE:** FEBRUARY 23, 2015  
**RE:** RECENT NORTHERN KENTUCKY POLLING ON THE BRENT SPENCE BRIDGE

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*Public Opinion Strategies recently completed a survey among 500 registered voters who live in Boone, Campbell and Kenton counties. The survey was conducted February 19-22, 2015, and has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.4\%$ . We completed a similar survey in October 2012, and the purpose of this memo is to review the key findings from this most recent poll.*

## KEY FINDINGS

- ***The Brent Spence Bridge is viewed as in poor condition and getting worse.***

There's little doubt Northern Kentucky voters view the current situation regarding the Brent Spence Bridge as being in dire shape, as a significant majority of voters (53%) say the condition of the Brent Spence Bridge is "poor." (This is an eight-point increase since our last survey in October 2012.)

Further, there's little optimism that the situation with the Brent Spence Bridge will improve, as a majority (57%) say the quality of the bridge has "gotten worse" over the past few years – with 41% indicating it's "stayed about the same."

- ***Northern Kentucky voters continue to strongly support the plan to build a new bridge, even with the inclusion of tolls.***

When voters are provided with the details of the plan:

*"Now, as you may know, there is a plan for building a new bridge for I-75 traffic next to the current Brent Spence Bridge. As part of this plan, eight miles of the highway would be widened, and the current bridge would be improved for safety purposes and then remain for I-71 travel, costing \$2.7 billion which could be paid for through a combination of federal and local revenues, including tolls."*

Fully 59% would support it, with just 40% saying they would oppose the plan.

Importantly, support for this plan cuts across party lines, with Republicans (54%-44%), Independents (55%-45%) and Democrats (66%-33%) all in favor. Further, among more conservative groups who are typically more likely to oppose tolling – support for the plan is high. In fact, both strong Republicans (53%-46%), conservative Republicans (50%-48%), and Tea Partiers (51%-48%) support the plan.

Moreover, there is no significant difference in support by geography, as voters in Boone (59%-39%), Campbell (64%-36%) and Kenton (56%-43%) counties overwhelmingly support the new bridge plan.

- ***Supporting this new bridge plan is unlikely to do much harm for elected officials in Frankfort.***

Our polling in Northern Kentucky continues to demonstrate that a State Legislator's support of this plan will not hurt their chances for re-election (either in a primary or general) among voters.

When asked if they learned that their legislator voted to build a new bridge next to the current Brent Spence Bridge, with the funding coming from a combination of federal and local revenues including tolls, an overwhelming majority of voters (70%) said a vote in support of the bridge plan would make either no difference in their vote or make them more likely to vote for that legislator.

Just 11% say it would make them "much" more likely to vote for their Legislator and just 17% say it would make them "much" less likely. These are hardly data points that indicate this will be a "voting issue" that would energize opposition to a legislator.

Again, even with the inclusion of tolling as part of this plan, pluralities of strong Republicans (43%), conservative Republicans (42%), and Tea Partiers (43%) all say it would make no difference to them if their State Legislator voted for this plan.

- ***Finally, using tolls to help pay for this new bridge plan is strongly preferred to any tax increase.*** When asked about raising different taxes (gas tax/sales tax/property tax) to pay for this new bridge plan rather than having tolls, Northern Kentucky voters immediately slam on the brakes.

When positioned as an option between tolls or an increase in taxes, voters overwhelmingly oppose raising taxes in Boone, Campbell and Kenton counties:

By a 14%-85% margin, voters would oppose a gas tax increase.

By a 23%-76% margin, voters would oppose a local sales tax increase.

By a 12%-87% margin, voters would oppose a property tax increase.