![Goodwin Simon Strategic Research]

MEMORANDUM

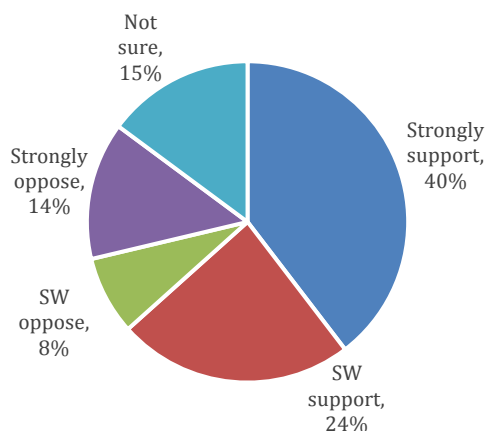**March 16, 2017**

TO: **INTERESTED PARTIES**

FROM: **PAUL GOODWIN**
                Goodwin Simon Strategic Research

RE: **Survey Findings on the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act**

Bottom Line: A telephone survey we recently completed shows overwhelming voter support for the proposed Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2017.

Sixty-four percent would support and just 21% would oppose this Act, which would create a state tax credit to help new teachers pay the cost of earning their credentials, and eliminate state income tax on income earned by teachers with more than five years in the classroom.

The Act earns at least 60% support across racial/ethnic groups: 76% of Latino voters, 75% of Asian-American voters, 69% of African-American voters, and 61% of white voters.

The Act earns significant support across partisan lines: 72% of Democrats, 64% of Independents, and 50% of Republicans.
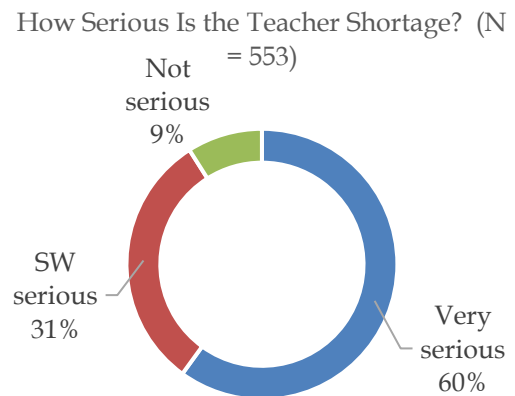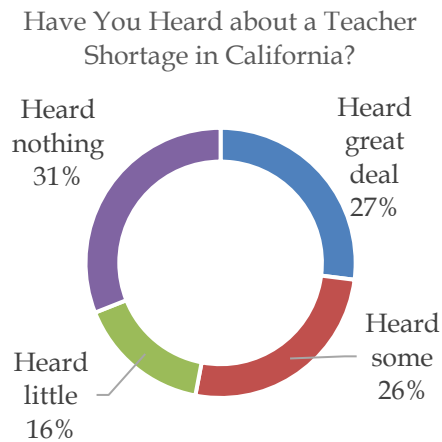
The Act earns more than 60% of voter support regardless of parental status: 69% of voters with children under age 18, and 62% of nonparents.

The Act earns a strong majority support across every age range: 76% of voters under age 35, 62% of voters age 35 to 64, and 56% of seniors (still more than two to one support among seniors).

The Act earns at least 60% support across every major media market in California: 67% in the Bay Area, 65% in the L.A. media market, 62% in the Sacramento market, and 61% across the other media markets.
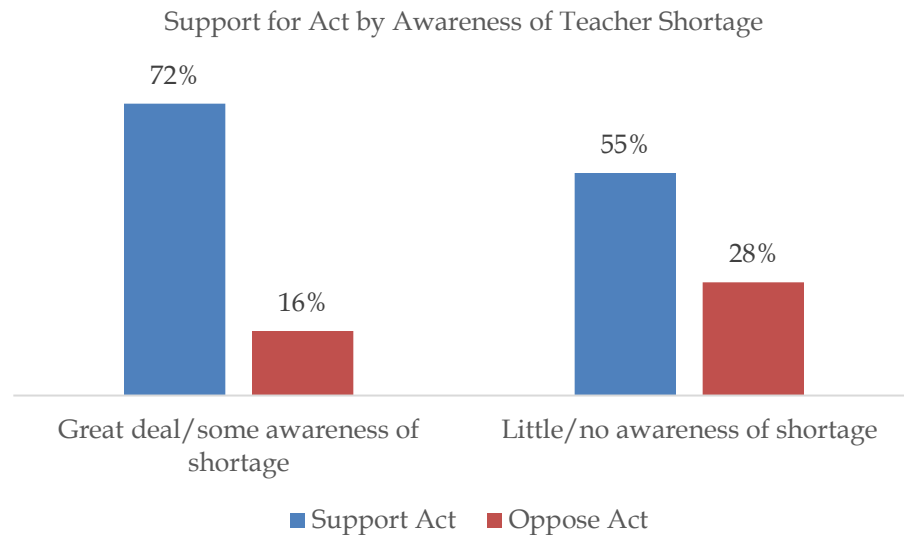
Voters Are Aware of the Teacher Shortage and Most See It As a Serious Problem

More than two in three voters have heard at least a little about "a growing shortage of teachers in California," and of those familiar with the shortage, 91% see it as a serious problem, with 60% who say it is a "very" serious problem.
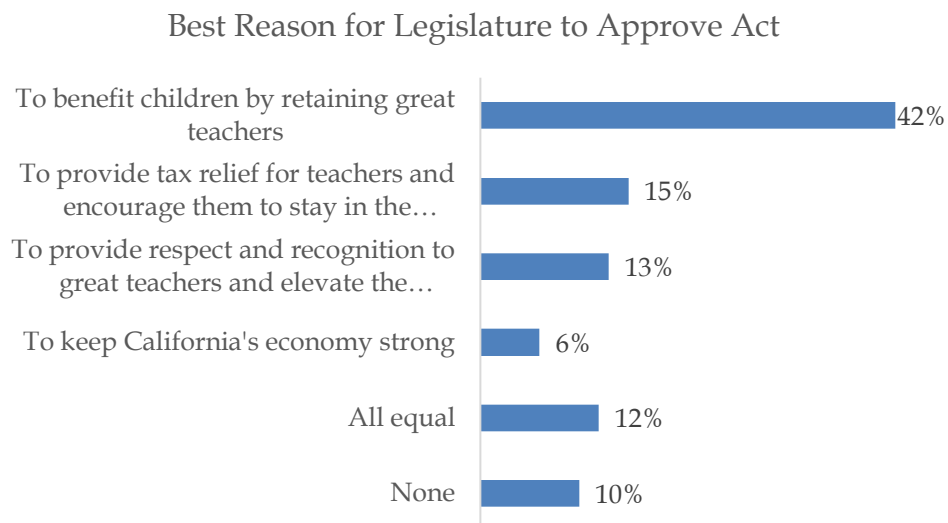

Have You Heard about a Teacher Shortage in California?

Heard nothing 31%
Heard great deal 27%
Heard some 26%
Heard little 16%

How Serious Is the Teacher Shortage? (N = 553)

Not serious 9%
SW serious 31%
Very serious 60%

Democrats tend to be slightly more aware of the teacher shortage (56% have heard "a great deal" or "some" compared to 48% of GOP voters and 51% of Independent voters).

However, while awareness of the shortage is significantly correlated with support for the Act, even among those previously unaware of the teacher shortage, we find majority support for it, as shown below.

Support for Act by Awareness of Teacher Shortage

72%

55%

28%

16%

Great deal/some awareness of shortage

Little/no awareness of shortage

■ Support Act   ■ Oppose Act

Voters Support the Act "To Benefit Children by Retaining Great Teachers"

We asked voters to choose one of four listed reasons to support the Act was "the best reason for the Legislature to approve" it. As shown below, by far the reason that was most evident to voters was to "benefit children" and to "retain great teachers."

Best Reason for Legislature to Approve Act

To benefit children by retaining great teachers — 42%

To provide tax relief for teachers and encourage them to stay in the… — 15%

To provide respect and recognition to great teachers and elevate the… — 13%

To keep California's economy strong — 6%

All equal — 12%

None — 10%

Support for the Act is Sustained Even After Voters Hear Potential Costs

In the survey, voters heard that the Act could cost "a billion dollars a year." We wondered if voter support would be sustained given that figure. In fact, support not only continued but actually rose after voters heard the price tag, probably because of the positive statements mentioned in an earlier question.

That is, after voters heard the positive statements and then a price tag, support for the Act rose to 72% in support and just 21% opposed. This includes 48% who "strongly" support the Act.

Conclusions

Providing tax relief to classroom teachers is an idea that has strong appeal to voters, with no additional explanation needed to reach majority-plus support. Most voters already know that the state has a teacher shortage, most want to support teachers, and clearly few if any voters are disturbed by the cost of the Act.

Moreover, the Act has broad appeal across all the usual political and demographic divides that so typically prevent real action to address our state's problems.

In short, voters believe that passage of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act can have a real, immediate, and lasting impact on our state's growing teacher shortage. It can do this with widespread popular support, and earn the legislature the reputation of a body willing to take bold steps to solve a problem that affects our children and our future.

Methodology

We completed 801 telephone surveys with California voters between February 16 and 22, 2017. A sample was drawn from a list of all voters who had participated in the November 2016 election, plus the small number of additional voters who have registered to vote as Permanent Absentee voters since the last election. In total, about 73% of all registered voters in the state were eligible for the sample. Of those voters eligible to be sampled, about 70% had telephone numbers included in the voter file. Forty-eight percent of the interviews we completed were done using wireless telephone numbers. Four percent were completed in Spanish. The margin of error for the sample as a whole is about plus or minus three percent at a 95% confidence level.