

**To:** 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment Project  
**From:** Ed Goeas  
**Re:** Key findings from a recent poll in Oklahoma

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### **Introduction and Overview**

Our recent poll had a focus on the upcoming special session to resolve Oklahoma's budget deficit, along with a secondary focus on the 2018 gubernatorial primary. These two issues are closely linked. The decisions made in this special session will have a strong impact on the state economy that these candidates will face in 2018. In addition, some of these candidates have already taken public stands on this legislative debate, and we wanted to gauge the impact of their positioning during both the Special Session coming up the end of September and next year's legislative session beginning in January with what looks to be another 500 million dollar deficit.

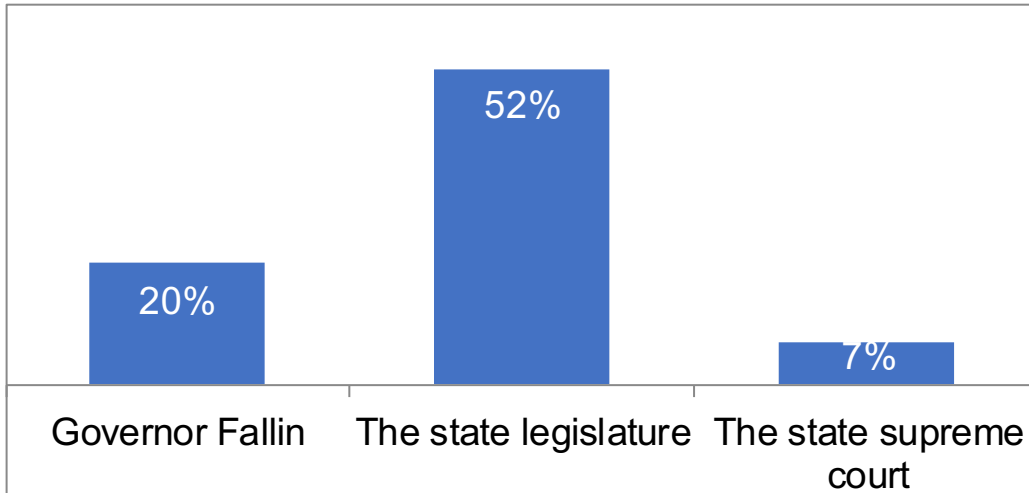
Regarding the special session, this survey finds that:

- Most of these voters blame the state legislature for this crisis;
- Governor Fallin has a high level of trust among the Republican electorate to resolve this budget deficit;
- There is overwhelming support for finding a comprehensive, long term solution to this crisis; and
- There is strong support for common sense ways to increase state revenue.

Regarding the 2018 Republican gubernatorial primary, this survey finds that it is a two-man race between Mick Cornett and Todd Lamb. They have the strongest image ratings and are in a statistical tie on the ballot.

### **Blame for the Current Budget Deficit**

These voters are given a brief explanation about the need for the special session, including the smoking cessation fee being ruled unconstitutional. After this explanation, these voters are asked who is most to blame for current state budget crisis – Governor Fallin, the state legislature, or the State Supreme Court. As on the next page, a majority of GOP primary voters blame the state legislature.



A majority of voters from a wide range of GOP voters blame the state legislature, including notable blame from men (55%), 45-64 year olds (60%), and college graduates (63%).

**Key Premises and Potential Solutions Regarding the Budget Deficit**

In addition, there is strong majority agreement among these voters about these two premises:

1. “We need to find a long-term solution to the problems that are the cause of this crisis. We need to stop using temporary measures and one-time fixes to resolve these budget deficits.” (94% agreement, including 79% strong agreement)
2. “We need to change our tax system from one that is dependent on the volatile oil and gas industries to one that relies on more stable sources like taxing goods and services, including charging sales tax for service industries that are currently not taxed at all.” (56% agreement, including 27% strong agreement)

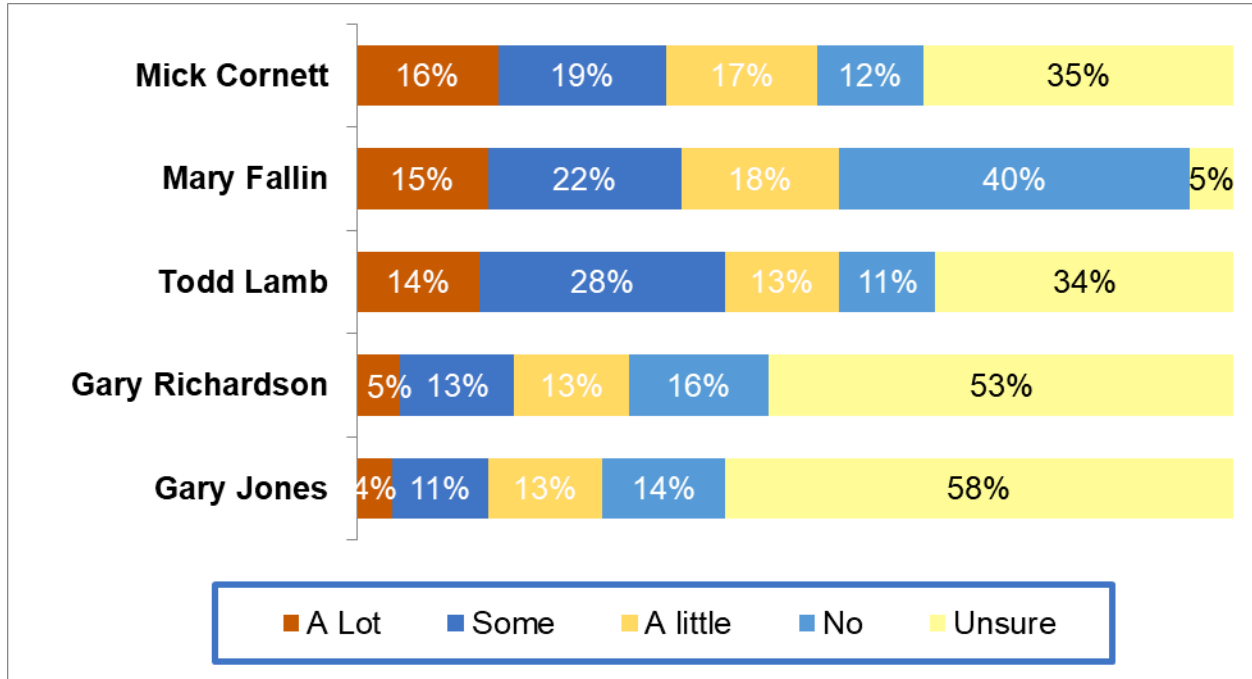
When offered potential solutions for solving the budget deficit, there is strong majority support among these voters for:

- Increasing the tax rate on cigarettes. (67% support, including 51% strong support)
- Taxing services and industries that were not in existence 80 years ago when the state sales tax was created. (66% support, including 36% strong support)

On the budget, this data shows that there is a clear consensus among these voters to use the leadership of Governor Fallin to find a long-term solution to this budget deficit by increasing the tax rate on cigarettes and by ending the accident of history that has allowed far too many services and industries to avoid paying their fair share to the state.

**Trust to Resolve the Budget Crisis**

These voters are asked about the level of trust they have in Governor Fallin and four of the major candidates for Governor to resolve the state budget deficit. As seen on the following page, Governor Fallin, Mick Cornett, and Todd Lamb all inspire similar levels of trust among this electorate.



**Name Identifications of the Gubernatorial Candidates**

As seen below, Todd Lamb and Mick Cornett have much higher levels of awareness among this electorate than Gary Richardson and Gary Jones. These strong levels of awareness will be tremendous assets for their campaigns.

Candidate	Favorable	Unfavorable	No difference	Never heard of
Todd Lamb	44%	7%	25%	24%
Mick Cornett	40%	9%	9%	42%
Gary Richardson	16%	12%	19%	53%
Gary Jones	14%	5%	17%	64%

## **Gubernatorial Primary Ballot**

As seen below, the gubernatorial primary ballot illustrates that this is quickly developing into a two-man race between Lamb and Cornett and is statistically a dead-heat. Lamb has a modest lead among the overall GOP electorate though Cornett has a higher level of definite support. However, more than one-quarter of the electorate is undecided.

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Total support</b>	<b>Definite support</b>
Todd Lamb	32%	12%
Mick Cornett	30%	13%
Gary Richardson	8%	2%
Gary Jones	3%	2%
Undecided	27%	N/A

Bottom line is with both the special session, and again as the 2018 session ramps up, both candidates are likely to be pulled into the state deficit discussion. What is obvious from the results of this survey, is Oklahoma's Republican voters have moved beyond the focus on all the bad things that will happen if the state budget deficit is not addressed, they are past the fingerpointing, and they are clearly focused on real solutions not short term fixes.