



**For Immediate Release**  
**Tuesday, January 27, 2010**

## **Poll shows 79% support the Citizens' Election Program in Connecticut**

*A Strong Majority of Voters Want Governor and General Assembly to Amend Citizens' Election Program Due to Court Ruling*

**Hartford, Conn.** —A Zogby International poll released today found that Connecticut voters overwhelmingly support the Citizens' Election Program—79 percent of respondents supported the program as described. When asked if the Governor and state legislature should act now to amend Connecticut's landmark Citizens' Election program to comply with a district court ruling, 58 percent support the Governor and Legislature acting so that the program can be available to candidates in the 2010 elections.

“Nearly 8 in 10 respondents indicated their support for public financing of elections—this is a message that the Governor and legislators can't ignore,” said Cheri Quickmire, executive director of Common Cause Connecticut. “Voters want elections to be about them and not big money donors. Our state leaders must act now to amend the Citizens' Election program so it is available to candidates for the 2010 election cycle and beyond.”

As the state grapples with a continuing state budget deficit, the Governor and the General Assembly have cut more than \$38 million from the Citizens' Election Program in the last 14 months. But when presented with a statement that the state can't afford the Citizens' Election program because of the state deficit, only 21% respondents agreed while 68% wants the Clean Elections' Program to blunt the special deals that lobbyists and state contractors used to receive in exchange for political contributions.

“This poll sends a strong message to lawmakers in Hartford – stop cutting the funds to the Citizens' Election Program!” said Karen Hobert Flynn, Vice President for State Operations of Common Cause. “This poll shows, without a doubt, that support for the popular program cuts across political affiliation, ideology, income level and age.

The poll found that support for the Citizens' Election program crosses all traditional demographic groups. The specific question about support for the

Citizens' Election Program garnered strong support among Republicans (84.4%), Independents (80.9%), and Democrats (74.2%).

When asked "If you knew your State legislator voted against fixing the Citizens Election Program, would it make you more or less likely to vote for him or her for re-election this year, or does it make no difference to your vote?," 41 percent indicated they would be less likely to vote for a politician who voted against updating the popular program.

"The Supreme Court ruling in *Citizens United* could unleash a flood of corporate money into state elections, but a strong Citizen' Election Program that allows candidates to magnify the impact of small donations will help candidates to compete and get their message out," said Hobert Flynn.

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**Date:** January, 14, 2010

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**RE: Results from poll**

### **Methodology**

Zogby International was commissioned by Common Cause in Connecticut to conduct a telephone survey of likely voters in CT from 1/11/10 to 1/13/10.

The sample is 503 interviews with approximately 15 questions asked. Samples are randomly drawn from telephone CDs of national listed sample. Zogby International surveys employ sampling strategies in which selection probabilities are proportional to population size within area codes and exchanges. Up to six calls are made to reach a sampled phone number. Cooperation rates are calculated using one of AAPOR's approved methodologies<sup>1</sup> and are comparable to other professional public-opinion surveys conducted using similar sampling strategies.<sup>2</sup> Weighting by party, age, race and gender are used to adjust for non-response. The margin of error is +/-4.5 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

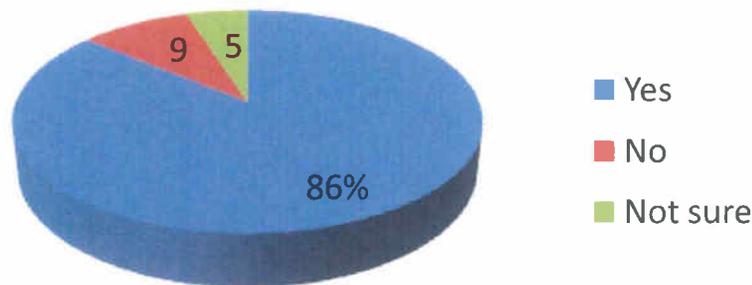
Please note, for reporting purposes, some figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

<sup>1</sup> See COOP4 (p.38) in *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates of Surveys*. The American Association for Public Opinion Research, (2000).

<sup>2</sup> *Cooperation Tracking Study: April 2003 Update*, Jane M. Sheppard and Shelly Haas. The Council for Marketing & Opinion Research (CMOR), Cincinnati, Ohio (2003).

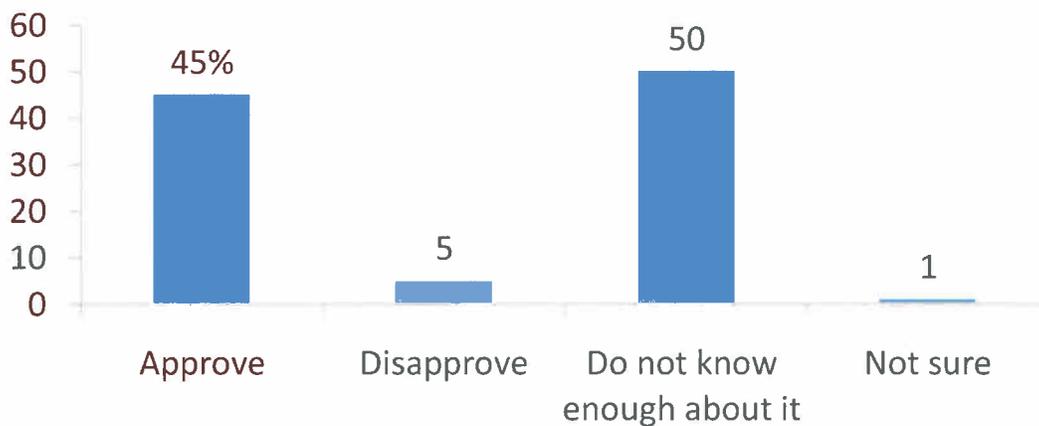
Narrative Summary

4. *When it comes to the way election campaigns are financed, do you think lobbyists and political insiders have more influence than average voters, or not?*



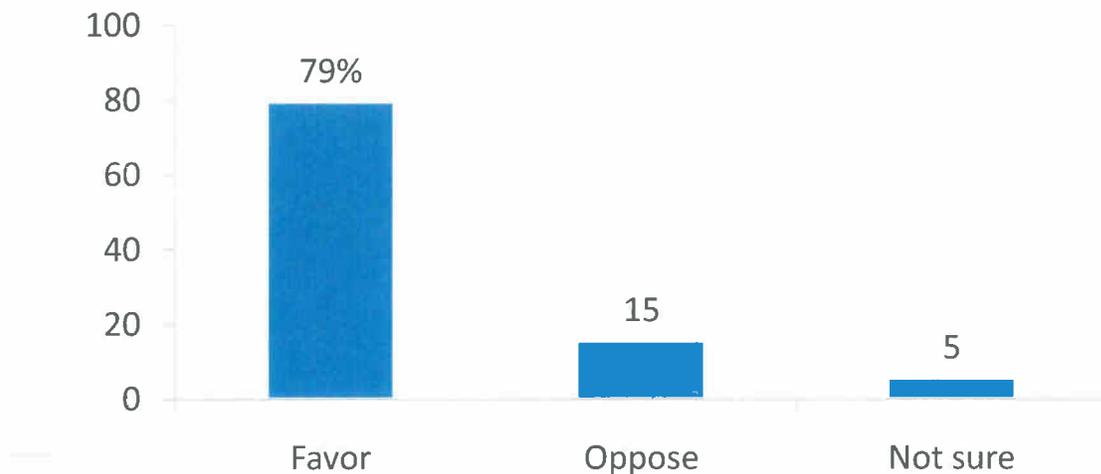
The vast majority of respondents (86%) say they think that when it comes to the way election campaigns are financed, lobbyists and political insiders have more influence than average voters.

5. *The Citizens' Election Program was approved by Gov Rell and a bipartisan vote of the state legislature in an effort to allow candidates to run for office without having to rely on political contributions from lobbyists, state contractors and other special interests. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove or strongly disapprove of the creation of a Citizens' Election Program, or do you not know enough about it to have an opinion?*



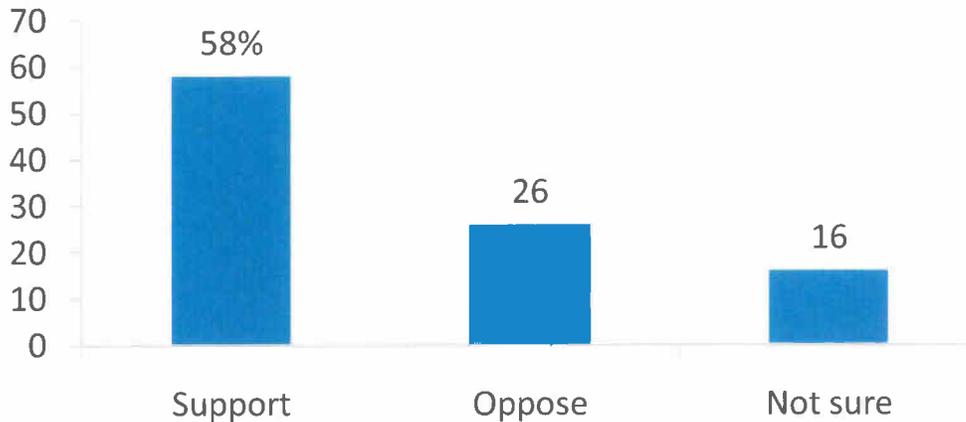
Half of likely voters say they do not know enough about the Citizens' Election Program to have an opinion, yet nearly everyone else (45%) say they either strongly approve (29%) or somewhat approve (16%).

6. Under the Citizens' Election program, candidates collect a set amount of small contributions of \$100 or less to qualify for a limited amount of public funds. Once qualified, they must adhere to strict campaign spending limits and can no longer accept campaign contributions. Knowing this, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the Citizens' Election Program?



A very strong majority (79%) favor the Citizens' Election Program after hearing a short description of how it works. Respondents are split over whether they strongly favor (40%) or somewhat favor the program (40%). Just 9% say they somewhat oppose the program and 6% say they strongly oppose it.

7. A recent court ruling would end the Citizens' Election Program for the 2010 elections if the Governor and legislature do not pass a set of changes to make it compliant with the ruling. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the governor and legislature making changes to the Citizens' Election Program so it can be used in the upcoming elections?

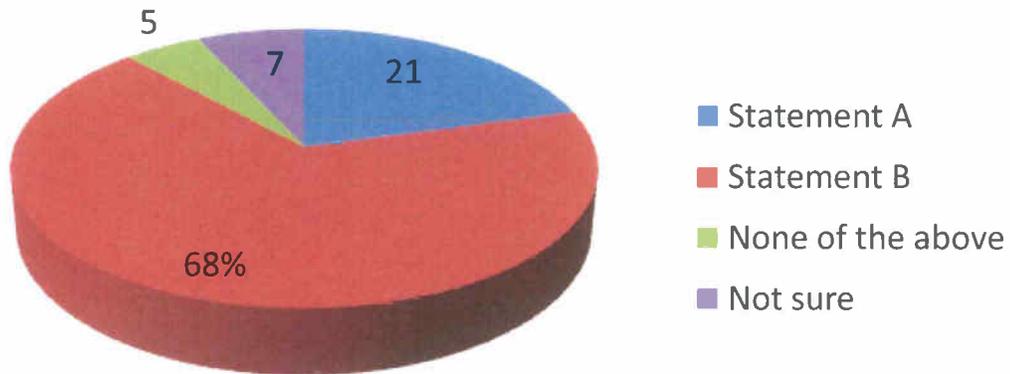


More than half of all respondents (58%) say they support the governor and legislature making changes to the citizens' Election Program so it can be used in the upcoming elections, and a quarter (26%) are opposed. Twenty-nine percent of respondents strongly support making changes, and 29% say they somewhat support them. Eight percent overall say they strongly oppose making changes so the program can be used in the upcoming elections, and 18% are somewhat opposed.

8. Which of the following statements do you most agree with?

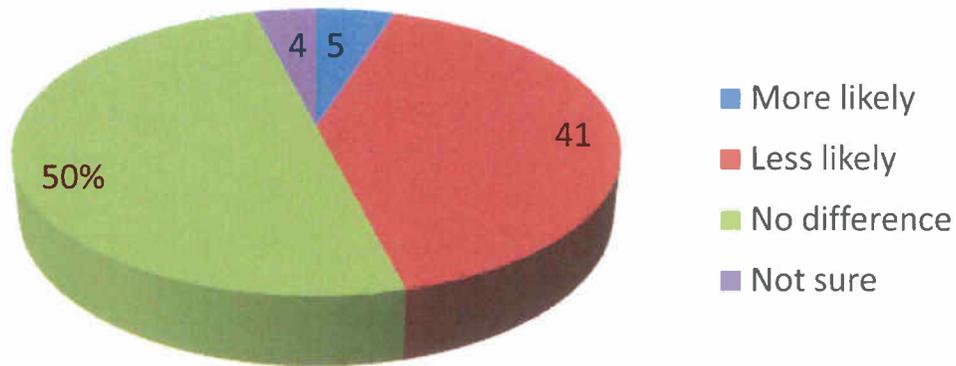
**Statement A:** The state can't afford the Citizens' Election Program because of the state deficit.

**Statement B:** The state needs the Citizens' Election Program because, in the past, lobbyists and state contractors received special deals in exchange for political contributions which has even landed some politicians in jail.



A strong majority of respondents (68%) prefer Statement B, while just 5% say they do not agree with either statement provided.

9. *If you knew your State legislator voted against fixing the Citizens' Election Program, would it make you more or less likely to vote for him or her for re-election this year, or does it make no difference to your vote?*



Respondents say that if they knew their state legislator voted against the Citizens Election Program, it would either make no difference to their vote (50%), or it would make them less likely to vote for him or her for re-election this year (41%), while just 5% say it would make them more likely to vote for him or her for re-election.