



**University of North Florida**  
Public Opinion Research Lab  
[www.unf.edu/coas/porl/](http://www.unf.edu/coas/porl/)

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Media Contact: Joanna Norris, Director  
Department of Public Relations  
(904) 620-2102

Methodology Results Contact: Dr. Michael Binder  
Public Opinion Research Lab Director  
(904) 620-2784

**Overwhelming Support for Half-Cent Sales Tax Increase for Schools**  
*Crime Considered Most Important Issue in Jacksonville for Fifth Year in a Row*

A new poll of registered voters in Duval County by the Public Opinion Research Lab (PORL) at the University of North Florida finds that approximately 75 percent of Duval County registered voters support increasing sales tax by a half-cent to upgrade or replace aging schools. Support is strongest among registered Democrats at 86 percent, although registered Republicans still have a majority support for the sales tax increase at 60 percent.

Last month the Duval County School Board approved a resolution seeking a special election in November of 2019 to ask voters to support a half-cent sales tax. When asked when the election should be held, 34 percent of the sample preferred the November 5 special election of 2019, while 49 percent indicated the general election on November 3 of 2020, while 17 percent did not desire a referendum at all.

“No matter how you slice it, Duval voters are very supportive of the half-cent sales tax increase,” Dr. Binder, faculty director of the PORL, commented. “Registered voters, general election voters, off cycle election voters, Democrats and Republicans, all are in favor of getting the schools the revenue they need to upgrade their facilities.”

A large majority of registered Duval County voters, 72 percent, opposes selling all or parts of JEA. “While JEA leadership and city hall have been noncommittal about selling, voters are very clear about their preference to keep the largest community owned utility in Florida,” said Binder.

Voters were also asked whether they support or oppose a person 18 years of age or older, charged with possession of marijuana (20 grams or less), be declared a civil infraction and eligible to receive a civil citation as opposed to a misdemeanor with potential jail time. An overwhelming majority, 84 percent, supports such a change.

“Aside from the use of body cameras by police, marijuana decriminalization has had the most support of any issue that we have polled on since I have been in Jacksonville,” Binder noted. “There has been a bill introduced in City Council addressing this issue, and city leadership might want to take note of the voice of the voters.”

For the fifth year in a row, registered voters in Jacksonville view crime as the most important issue, with 45 percent of registered voters. Education follows at 16 percent and downtown redevelopment is third at 13 percent. “Crime is and continues to be the number one issue in Jacksonville, and while steps have been taken, clearly the community is still concerned,” added Binder.

Mayor Lenny Curry’s job approval number is at 46 percent, with 37 percent disapproving. Though still positive, his approval has dipped since our last poll. Jacksonville City Council has only 34 percent approval and 46 percent disapproval, also dropping since we last polled on these questions.

When asked about Mike William’s job approval rate, 45 percent of Duval County registered voters strongly or somewhat approve of how he is handling his job as Jacksonville’s Sheriff. Like the mayor, the sheriff’s numbers are down slightly, but still positive. Duval County Superintendent of Schools, Diana Greene, has 40 percent approval and 31 percent disapproval, with 29 percent not knowing.

For detailed methodology and crosstabs by party registration, sex, age, and race go to: [https://www.unf.edu/coas/porl/JaxSpeaks6\\_21\\_19.aspx](https://www.unf.edu/coas/porl/JaxSpeaks6_21_19.aspx)

Survey Results

Do you support or oppose a half-cent sales tax increase, if those funds specifically go to upgrade or replace aging schools?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,221</b>	<b>General Election Voters n=812</b>	<b>Off Cycle Election Voters n=597</b>
Strongly support	49%	47%	52%
Somewhat support	26%	27%	25%
Somewhat oppose	9%	10%	9%
Strongly oppose	17%	17%	14%

Do you support or oppose a half-cent sales tax increase, if those funds specifically go to upgrade or replace aging schools?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Registered Democrats</b>	<b>Registered Republicans</b>	<b>Registered NPA/Others</b>
Support	86%	61%	76%
Oppose	14%	29%	24%

Recently, the Duval County School Board voted to approve a resolution seeking a special election to ask voters to support a half-cent sales tax to upgrade or replace aging schools. The Jacksonville City Council will vote June 25 on the timing of the election. Should city council vote for this proposed referendum to be voted on in a special election on November 5, 2019, in the general election on November 3, 2020, or should there be no referendum at all.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,221</b>	<b>General Election Voters n=813</b>	<b>Off Cycle Election Voters n=599</b>
Special election on November 5, 2019	34%	33%	36%
General election on November 3, 2020	49%	49%	49%
No referendum at all	17%	17%	15%

This past year, officials discussed the possibility of selling JEA (the city's community owned utility company). In general, do you support or oppose the city selling all or parts of JEA?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,204</b>	<b>General Election Voters n=800</b>	<b>Off Cycle Election Voters n=593</b>
Strongly support	12%	10%	9%
Somewhat support	16%	14%	14%
Somewhat oppose	23%	23%	21%
Strongly oppose	49%	53%	56%

Do you support or oppose a person 18 years of age or older, charged with possession of marijuana (20 grams or less), be declared a civil infraction and eligible to receive a civil citation as opposed to a misdemeanor with potential jail time?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,218</b>	<b>General Election Voters n=808</b>	<b>Off Cycle Election Voters n=596</b>
Strongly support	66%	65%	64%
Somewhat support	18%	20%	20%
Somewhat oppose	5%	6%	6%
Strongly oppose	11%	9%	11%

What do you think is the most important issue facing Jacksonville today?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,225</b>
Education	16%
The Economy	5%
Access to Healthcare	5%
Crime	45%
Downtown Redevelopment	13%
Tax Burden	2%
Access to Public Transportation	3%
Improving the Environment	5%
Infrastructure/Traffic/Growth	1%
Something Else	5%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Lenny Curry is handling his job as Mayor of Jacksonville?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,222</b>
Strongly approve	15%
Somewhat approve	31%
Somewhat disapprove	19%
Strongly disapprove	18%
Don't Know	18%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Jacksonville City Council is handling its job?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,213</b>
Strongly approve	2%
Somewhat approve	32%
Somewhat disapprove	29%
Strongly disapprove	17%
Don't Know	20%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mike Williams is handling his job as Jacksonville's Sheriff?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,222</b>
Strongly approve	15%
Somewhat approve	30%
Somewhat disapprove	21%
Strongly disapprove	19%
Don't Know	16%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Diana Greene is handling her job as the Duval County Superintendent of Schools?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,220</b>
Strongly approve	10%
Somewhat approve	30%
Somewhat disapprove	18%
Strongly disapprove	13%
Don't Know	29%

<b>Race</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,226</b>	<b>General Election Voters n=816</b>	<b>Off Cycle Elections Voters n=600</b>
White (not Hispanic)	59%	65%	61%
Black (not Hispanic)	28%	25%	29%
Hispanic	5%	4%	4%
Other	8%	7%	7%

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,226</b>	<b>General Election Voters n=816</b>	<b>Off Cycle Election Voters n=600</b>
Male	45%	45%	47%
Female	55%	55%	53%

<b>Party Registration</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,226</b>	<b>General Election Voters n=816</b>	<b>Off Cycle Election Voters n=600</b>
Democrat	41%	40%	42%
Republican	36%	42%	39%
NPA and other	23%	18%	19%

<b>Age</b>	<b>Duval County Registered Voters n=1,226</b>	<b>General Election Voters n=816</b>	<b>Off Cycle Election Voters n=600</b>
18 to 24	10%	5%	7%
25 to 34	20%	18%	16%
35 to 44	17%	18%	16%
45 to 55	17%	16%	14%
56 to 64	17%	19%	19%
65 and older	20%	24%	30%

## Methodology

The UNF Jax Speaks Poll was conducted and sponsored by the Public Opinion Research Lab at the University of North Florida from Monday, June 17, through Wednesday, June 19. The survey was administered through email via Qualtrics, an online survey platform. The sampling frame was comprised of registered voters who live in Jacksonville, Florida. The email addresses used for this survey were sourced from the Florida's Division of Elections June 4, 2019 update and selected through the use of probability sampling among Duval County, FL registered voters in the Florida voter file. Overall, there were 1,226 completed surveys of Duval County registered voters, 18 years of age or older.

The margin of sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2.8 percentage points. The total sample was weighted by partisan registration, sex, age, and race. Weights were created from the June 6, 2019 update of the Florida voter file to match the active registered voters in Duval County. These demographic characteristics were pulled from the voter file list. All weighted demographic variables were applied using the SPSS version 23 rake weighting function, which won't assign a weight if one of the demographics being weighted is missing. Individuals without a weight were manually given a weight of 1. There were no statistical adjustments made due to design effects. This survey was sponsored by the UNF PORL and directed by Dr. Michael Binder, UNF associate professor of political science.

The PORL is a full-service survey research facility that provides tailored research to fulfill each client's individual needs from political, economic, social and cultural projects. The PORL opened in 2001 and is an independent, non-partisan center, a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative and a member of the Association of Academic Survey Research Organization. As members of AAPOR, the PORL's goal is to support sound and ethical practices in the conduct of survey and public opinion research. Moreover, the PORL is a charter member of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative and a member of the Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations. For more information about methodology, contact Binder at [porl@unf.edu](mailto:porl@unf.edu) or at (904) 620-2784.

UNF, a [nationally ranked](#) university located on an environmentally beautiful campus, offers students who are dedicated to enriching the lives of others the opportunity to build their own futures through a well-rounded education.

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## Public Opinion Research Lab at the University of North Florida - UNF Jax Speaks Poll June 21, 2019

For more information visit: [https://www.unf.edu/coas/porl/JaxSpeaks6\\_21\\_19.aspx](https://www.unf.edu/coas/porl/JaxSpeaks6_21_19.aspx)

Do you support or oppose a half cent sales tax increase, if those funds specifically go to upgrade or replace aging schools?

N=1,221	Party				Sex		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispani c	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<b>Strongly support</b>	49%	66%	33%	42%	46%	51%	45%	55%	52%	51%	51%	47%	53%	50%	42%	50%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	26%	20%	27%	34%	24%	27%	26%	30%	23%	13%	34%	29%	21%	22%	25%	26%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	9%	6%	13%	7%	9%	8%	10%	4%	11%	14%	10%	9%	8%	8%	12%	7%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	17%	8%	26%	17%	21%	14%	19%	11%	14%	23%	5%	15%	18%	21%	21%	16%

What do you think is the most important issue facing Jacksonville today?

N=1,225	Party				Sex		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispani c	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<b>Education</b>	16%	19%	12%	17%	15%	16%	17%	14%	11%	20%	24%	16%	18%	15%	11%	15%
<b>The Economy</b>	5%	4%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	2%	8%	7%	5%	9%	4%	3%	5%
<b>Access to Healthcare</b>	5%	6%	2%	8%	5%	4%	4%	6%	6%	4%	3%	7%	4%	6%	4%	3%
<b>Crime</b>	45%	41%	54%	39%	41%	49%	45%	49%	52%	34%	44%	31%	40%	50%	53%	54%
<b>Downtown Redevelopment</b>	13%	14%	14%	11%	17%	11%	14%	13%	12%	9%	11%	22%	13%	12%	13%	7%
<b>Tax Burden</b>	2%	<1%	5%	1%	3%	2%	3%	-	5%	3%	-	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%
<b>Access to Public Transportation</b>	3%	4%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	-	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
<b>Improving the Environment</b>	5%	7%	2%	6%	4%	5%	5%	3%	5%	10%	6%	6%	6%	5%	2%	5%
<b>Infrastructure/Traffic/Growth</b>	1%	<1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	-	-	-	-	<1%	1%	2%	2%	1%
<b>Something Else</b>	5%	6%	4%	7%	6%	5%	3%	8%	8%	10%	3%	8%	5%	2%	6%	6%

Recently, the Duval County School Board voted to approve a resolution seeking a special election to ask voters to support a half-cent sales tax to upgrade or replace aging schools. The Jacksonville City Council will vote June 25 on the timing of the election. Should city council vote for this proposed referendum to be voted on in a special election on November 5, 2019, in the general election on November 3, 2020, or should there be no referendum at all.

N=1,221	Party				Sex		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispani c	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<b>Special election on November 5, 2019</b>	34%	42%	27%	34%	34%	34%	31%	39%	46%	35%	34%	34%	35%	34%	32%	37%
<b>General election on November 3, 2020</b>	49%	47%	50%	50%	49%	49%	51%	43%	40%	56%	56%	54%	43%	43%	51%	48%
<b>No referendum at all</b>	17%	12%	23%	16%	17%	17%	18%	18%	14%	9%	10%	13%	21%	24%	16%	15%



This past year, officials discussed the possibility of selling JEA (the city's community owned utility company). In general, do you support or oppose the city selling all or parts of JEA?

N=1,204	Party				Sex		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<b>Strongly support</b>	12%	10%	13%	13%	11%	13%	10%	16%	19%	9%	8%	13%	12%	19%	12%	8%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	16%	14%	16%	21%	14%	18%	15%	20%	6%	15%	10%	18%	17%	20%	17%	13%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	23%	20%	26%	23%	19%	26%	26%	17%	27%	17%	28%	23%	23%	18%	26%	23%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	49%	56%	46%	43%	56%	43%	49%	47%	48%	59%	54%	47%	48%	43%	46%	56%

Do you support or oppose a person 18 years of age or older, charged with possession of marijuana (20 grams or less), be declared a civil infraction and eligible to receive a civil citation as opposed to a misdemeanor with potential jail time?

N=1,218	Party				Sex		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<b>Strongly support</b>	66%	77%	49%	73%	65%	67%	64%	69%	73%	68%	77%	76%	68%	62%	61%	56%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	18%	13%	27%	14%	19%	18%	21%	15%	11%	16%	13%	15%	17%	18%	19%	25%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	5%	3%	9%	3%	5%	6%	7%	4%	5%	4%	3%	3%	5%	8%	6%	7%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	11%	8%	15%	9%	12%	9%	9%	12%	11%	12%	8%	6%	10%	12%	14%	12%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Lenny Curry is handling his job as Mayor of Jacksonville?

N=1,222	Party				Sex		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<b>Strongly approve</b>	15%	4%	32%	7%	18%	12%	19%	5%	17%	14%	6%	12%	11%	17%	16%	21%
<b>Somewhat approve</b>	31%	24%	42%	27%	35%	29%	35%	26%	30%	24%	20%	30%	22%	35%	41%	35%
<b>Somewhat disapprove</b>	19%	26%	9%	21%	17%	20%	17%	21%	23%	21%	20%	19%	19%	19%	20%	15%
<b>Strongly disapprove</b>	18%	27%	8%	16%	18%	17%	17%	22%	6%	16%	9%	18%	27%	14%	13%	19%
<b>Don't Know</b>	18%	19%	9%	30%	12%	23%	12%	26%	25%	24%	44%	21%	21%	14%	10%	10%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Jacksonville City Council is handling its job?

N=1,213	Party				Sex		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<b>Strongly approve</b>	2%	1%	5%	1%	3%	2%	3%	1%	6%	3%	1%	2%	1%	5%	1%	3%
<b>Somewhat approve</b>	32%	25%	46%	25%	37%	29%	35%	28%	32%	28%	33%	31%	21%	26%	40%	42%
<b>Somewhat disapprove</b>	29%	34%	24%	28%	27%	31%	30%	25%	30%	33%	25%	20%	33%	33%	34%	30%
<b>Strongly disapprove</b>	17%	19%	10%	23%	18%	15%	14%	23%	12%	14%	8%	19%	25%	19%	14%	11%
<b>Don't Know</b>	20%	20%	16%	25%	15%	23%	18%	23%	20%	22%	34%	29%	19%	17%	11%	13%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mike Williams is handling his job as Jacksonville's Sheriff?

N=1,222	Party				Sex		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispani c	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Strongly approve	15%	4%	31%	10%	18%	13%	21%	6%	8%	10%	5%	12%	9%	15%	19%	25%
Somewhat approve	30%	22%	40%	26%	32%	28%	33%	24%	42%	18%	19%	24%	23%	35%	34%	38%
Somewhat disapprove	21%	25%	15%	23%	23%	19%	20%	21%	22%	23%	24%	20%	21%	19%	25%	18%
Strongly disapprove	19%	29%	5%	23%	17%	20%	12%	34%	14%	18%	21%	23%	30%	17%	11%	12%
Don't Know	16%	20%	9%	18%	10%	20%	14%	14%	15%	32%	32%	22%	17%	13%	10%	7%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Diana Greene is handling her job as the Duval County Superintendent of Schools?

N=1,220	Party				Sex		Race/Ethnicity				Age					
	Total	Dem	Rep	NPA/Other	M	F	White	Afr Amer /Black	Hispani c	Other	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Strongly approve	10%	16%	7%	3%	8%	11%	7%	17%	11%	5%	1%	5%	8%	15%	11%	14%
Somewhat approve	30%	35%	28%	25%	28%	32%	27%	38%	22%	26%	40%	21%	31%	25%	30%	36%
Somewhat disapprove	18%	17%	22%	16%	20%	17%	20%	14%	22%	23%	13%	22%	18%	18%	20%	16%
Strongly disapprove	13%	8%	12%	23%	14%	12%	15%	9%	19%	14%	16%	17%	12%	15%	10%	8%
Don't Know	29%	24%	32%	33%	31%	28%	32%	22%	28%	33%	31%	34%	31%	27%	28%	25%

Nature of the Sample	
Jacksonville Registered Voters	n=1,226
Party Registration	
Democrat	41%
Republican	36%
NPA/Other	23%
Sex	
Male	45%
Female	55%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	59%
African American/Black	28%
Hispanic	5%
Other	8%
Age	
18-24	10%
25-34	20%
35-44	17%
45-54	17%
55-64	17%
65+	20%