



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

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Most DC Residents Support Modest Sales Tax Increase To Fund Important Services, Poll Shows

By Wes Rivers

Seventy percent of District residents are in favor of Mayor Bowser's proposal to raise the sales tax from 5.75 percent to 6 percent, as part of an effort to address a \$200 million budget shortfall and pay for services like schools, housing, and homeless services. This is a key finding of a poll conducted on May 18 and 19 by Public Policy Polling for the DC Fiscal Policy Institute.

The poll also finds that most residents want the DC Council to invest more in services, rather than roll back the sales tax increase, when the Council votes on the budget on May 27.

The proposal would put DC's sales tax rate in line with Maryland and Northern Virginia, and was recommended last year by the [DC Tax Revision Commission](#). It would add 25 cents to every \$100 of purchases made by residents, commuters, and visitors.

By a 62%-to-28% margin, residents want the Council to devote any money it identifies to services such as affordable housing, rather than rolling back the modest sales tax increase. The poll reveals strong support for the sales tax increase across all wards, among both White and African-American residents and all age groups

Residents Prioritize Funding Services Ahead Of Rolling Back Proposed Sales Tax Increase			
	Prioritize Funding Services	Prioritize Sales Tax Roll-back	Unsure
Ward 1 & 2	54%	29%	17%
Ward 3 & 4	61%	33%	6%
Ward 5 & 6	70%	22%	7%
Ward 7 & 8	60%	27%	13%
Total	62%	28%	9%

Source: Public Policy Polling poll commissioned by DCFPI, conducted on May 18-19, 2015

Last week, the Council's Committee on Finance and Revenue recommended repealing the sales tax increase, and a repeal proposal may come before the full Council during the May 27 vote. Yet the poll shows that this would be contrary to the wishes of most residents.

The results are clear: DC residents understand that building a city where everyone can succeed requires new commitments to housing, schools and other needs. And they support raising revenues to meet those goals. In this case, DC residents would rather see investments in affordable housing and schools than save 25 cents on a \$100 purchase.

The poll results are [here](#). The poll of 674 registered DC voters has a 4 percent margin of error.