



OCTOBER 21, 2013

I-522: Support for Food Labeling Initiative Swings Negative 41 Points Since September

What a difference a month and a few million dollars makes. Initiative 522, which would mandate labeling of genetically modified food, was leading by just 4 points last week after posting a 45-point lead five weeks ago—before the advertising campaigns had begun.

Support dropped 20 points while opposition increased by 21 points, including an increase from 11% to 33% who said they would “definitely” vote against it.

Both sides are advertising heavily in what may be the most expensive initiative campaign in state history. Eight in 10 (81%) of the 413 voters interviewed last week had seen advertising on this initiative, including:

56% who had seen ads on both sides;
14% who had seen only ads in favor; and
11% who had seen only ads against the measure.
19% had seen no ads (their TVs must be in the shop).

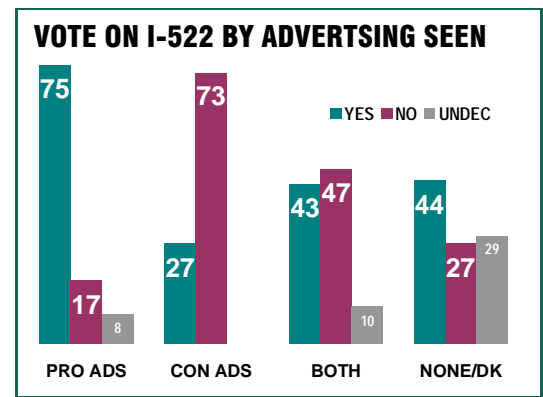
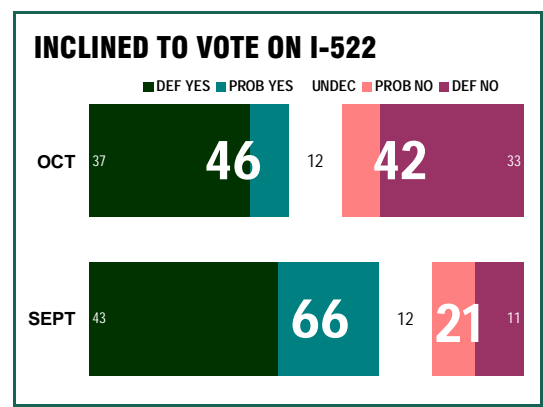
Opponents have a slight advertising advantage. Among voters who had seen both “pro” and “con” ads, 47% planned to vote against I-522, versus 43% who planned to vote for it.

Meanwhile, 3 in 4 voters who had seen only advertising for one side or the other were planning to vote in the direction of the ads they have seen. Those who have seen no advertising planned to vote “yes” by a 17-point margin—about the same margin the “yes” side had before the advertising blitz began.

The reasons voters for their positions also indicated the impact of the opponents’ advertising. The top 3 reasons volunteered by those voting “no” were themes stressed in opponents’ ads: the measure is unnecessary (17%); would cause food costs to rise (16%); or is poorly written, with too many confusing exceptions (14%).

Supporters focused on consumers’ right to know what they are eating. 69% gave a variation of that reason: 41% said they wanted to know what was in their food; 17% said consumers have a right to know; and another 11% just said that food should be labeled.

Voter turnout could be decisive, as usual in off-year elections. The measure was trailing 46-44% among “perfect voters” (voted in all 4 of the last 4 elections) but was leading 49-37% among voters who have voted less than half the time. ▶



REASONS TO VOTE FOR AND AGAINST I-522

FOR	AGAINST
41% I Want to Know What I'm Eating	17% Not Needed
17% Consumers Have Right to Know	16% Food Costs Will Rise
11% Food Should Be Labeled	14% Poor Written/ Many Exemptions
4% GM Food Bad for Health	12% Oppose Gov't Regulations
4% I Don't Want to Eat GM Food	7% GM Food is Safe

Sample Profile

413 registered voters, selected at random from registered voter lists in Washington state, were interviewed Oct. 15-17, 2013 by live, professional interviewers. 18% of the interviews were conducted on cell phones. The margin of sampling error is ±5% at the 95% level of confidence. This means, in theory, had this same survey been conducted 100 times, the results would be within ±5% of the results reported here at least 95 times.

REGION	
King County	30%
Pierce + Kitsap	15%
North Sound (Snohomish to Whatcom)	17%
Western Washington (Clallam to Clark).....	17%
Eastern Washington	21%
GENDER	
Male	50%
Female.....	50%
AGE	
18-35.....	13%
36-50.....	15%
51-64.....	40%
65+.....	29%
PARTY IDENTIFICATION	
Democrat	31%
Republican	23%
Independent.....	46%
VOTE HISTORY (LAST 4 ELECTIONS)	
0-2 VOTES CAST.....	40%
3 VOTES CAST	21%
4 VOTES CAST	40%
HOUSEHOLD INCOME	
<\$50,000.....	29%
\$50-75,000	22%
\$75-100,000	17%
\$100,000+.....	13%
No Answer	18%

The Elway Poll

The Elway Poll is an independent, non-partisan analysis of public opinion in Washington and the Northwest available exclusively to subscribers.

SUBSCRIPTION: An annual subscription is \$250.

PROPRIETARY QUESTIONS: Each month, space is reserved in the questionnaire to allow subscribers to ask proprietary questions. The fee for proprietary questions is \$600 per question. You will receive the results of your question(s) with full crosstabulations within three days after the interviews are completed.

CROSTABS: A full set of cross-tabulation tables for any month's survey is available for \$100.

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Other findings of note:

- Support for the measure was related to age:
 It led 65-25% among voters age 35 and under;
 Led 48-39% among those 36-64; but
 Trailed 53-35% among those over 65.
- It led among women (50-38%) but
 Trailed among men (46-42%).
- It led among Democrats (58-34%);
 Trailed among Republicans (48-37%); and
 Independents were split (44-44%).
- It led in Seattle (69-21%);
 King County outside Seattle (47-41%); and
 North Puget Sound (52-34).
- It trailed in the rest of Western WA (46-37%)
 and Eastern WA (51-41%).

Momentum is on the side of I-522 opponents, but history is on the side of proponents. Of 22 initiatives since 1992 which had support north of 60% in the September *The Elway Poll*, 17 have won.

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QUESTION WORDING:
 *Another measure on the ballot is Initiative 522, which concerns the labeling of genetically-engineered foods. Have you seen or heard an advertising either for or against this initiative? [Have you seen ads in favor or opposed or both?]
 YES – seen ads in favor
 YES – seen ads opposed
 YES – seen ads both favor and opposed
 NO – have not seen any ads
 *Initiative 522 would require most raw agricultural commodities, processed foods, and seeds and seed stocks, if produced using genetic engineering, as defined, to be labeled as genetically engineered when offered for retail sale. As things stand today, how are you inclined to vote on Initiative 522? Would you say...Definitely in Favor...Probably in Favor...Probably Opposed...Definitely Opposed
 *What is the main reason you intend to vote For / Against Initiative 522? [OPEN ENDED]