



The Elway Poll

An independent nonpartisan analysis of public opinion trends in Washington and the Northwest

13 OCTOBER 2014

Both Gun Measures Lose Ground, but I-594 Maintains Majority and Wide Lead

Support for Washington’s competing gun initiatives appears to be settling as voters continue to learn more about them. Both measures have lost ground since the ad wars started in earnest. But only one—the more restrictive I-594 —still has a lead.

- I-594, which would apply background checks to “all firearm sales and transfers, including gun shows and online sales” had 60% support from the 500 Washington voters interviewed last week for *The Elway Poll*. That is down from 70% in July and 72% in April. Opposition rose to 32% from 22% in July.
- I-591 would prohibit background checks on firearm sales “unless a national standard is required.” Support for this measure has continued to erode all year, from 55% in April to 46% in July to 39% last week. Opposition has risen from 33% to 44%.

Voters have taken a while to work through these measures. Although they have opposite intentions, both initiatives had majority support in April. By July, support had dropped for I-591, the status quo measure, while support remained high for I-594, the more restrictive measure. Support dropped for both measures by last week, but while I-594 maintained a 28-point lead, I-591 opponents outnumbered supporters for the first time.

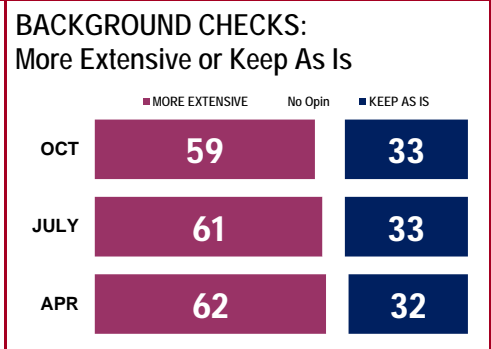
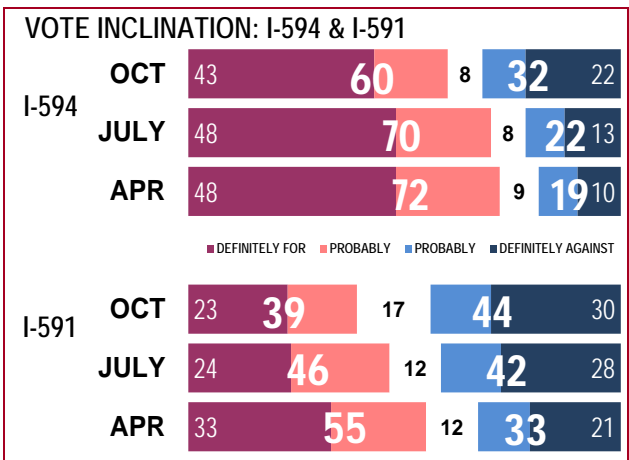
One indication that opinion is settling is the fact that the support for I-594 now aligns with voter opinion about background checks. Since April, we have asked survey respondents whether they favor more restrictive background checks or “keeping the background check system as it is.” Support for more restrictions has been steady at around 60%, which now matches support for I-594.

Another indication that voters are figuring out these measures is that just 22% of voters said they were inclined to vote for both initiatives, down from 32% in July and 40% in April.

Three pieces of electoral folk wisdom will be tested in this election. One is that confused voters vote “no.” With opposing measures on the same ballot, this school of thought predicts that voters will vote against both. That happened in 2005 when the Medical Association and the Trial Lawyers sponsored opposing initiatives on medial malpractice. Each polled over 60% in September. Both lost.

The second is that initiatives lose support over time. Initiatives poll well early on, the folklore goes, then lose support as opposition forms and voters work through the issues. True enough: of 78 ballot measures *The Elway Poll* has polled on since 1992, 52 (67%) have lost ground from the initial poll to the final vote. On the other hand, in that same time, 24 of 29 measures that polled over 60% in September have won. Under this theory, I-591 looks like a goner and the question is whether I-594 will hold on to enough of its 10-point cushion over the next 3 weeks to prevail.

The third is that this will be a low-turnout election and the electorate will be more conservative. Here too, the evidence is somewhat mixed. Likely voters and infrequent voters, as measured by their vote history, do not differ in their levels of support or opposition to either of these initiatives.



Sample Profile

500 registered voters, selected at random from registered voter lists in Washington state, were interviewed October 6-9 2014 by live, professional interviewers. 26% of the interviews were conducted on cell phones. The margin of sampling error is ±4.5% at the 95% level of confidence. This means, in theory, had this same survey been conducted 100 times, the results would be within ±4.5% of the results reported here at least 95 times.

REGION	
Seattle.....	11%
King County.....	19%
Pierce/Kitsap.....	15%
No. Puget Sound.....	17%
Western WA.....	17%
Eastern WA.....	21%
GENDER	
Male.....	47%
Female.....	53%
PARTY ID	
Democrat.....	32%
Republican.....	25%
Independent.....	43%
VOTE HISTORY	
0-2 votes in last 4 elections.....	45%
"Likely Voters" (3 of 4).....	19%
"Perfect Voters" (4 of 4).....	36%
FIREARMS IN HOME	
Yes.....	35%
No.....	50%
No Answer.....	15%
AGE	
18-35.....	6%
36-50.....	23%
51-64.....	38%
65+.....	30%
EMPLOYMENT	
Self / Business Owner.....	15%
Private Sector.....	21%
Public Sector.....	11%
Education.....	6%
Not employed.....	9%
Retired.....	35%
INCOME	
\$50,000 or less.....	24%
\$50 to 99,000.....	35%
Over \$100,000.....	22%
No Answer.....	19%

The Elway Poll

The Elway Poll is an independent, non-partisan analysis of public opinion in Washington and the Northwest, published since 1992.

PROPRIETARY QUESTIONS: Each quarter, space is reserved in the questionnaire for organizations to insert their own, proprietary questions. Sponsors are thus able to ask their own questions for a fraction of the cost of a full survey. Results, with demographic crosstabulations, are provided within three days after the interviews are completed.

CROSSTABS: A full set of cross-tabulation tables is available for \$100.

The Elway Poll
 7035 Palatine N.
 Seattle, WA 98103
 206/264-1500 FAX: 264-0301
 epoll@elwayresearch.com

However, those paying “close attention” to the election were less likely to support I-594 (46%) than those paying only “some attention” (63%) or those paying “little or no” attention (66%).

Some 35% of these respondents said they currently have a firearm in their home. Another 15% would not say.

54% of gun owners planned to vote for I-594; 73% of non-owners planned to vote for it, but 60% of those who would not say planned to vote *against* I-594.

I-594 had majority support in every demographic category measured except Republicans, who were opposed by a 48-43% margin.

On I-591:

- Gun-owners were split (45% No; 38% Yes);
- Non-owners leaned against (49% to 34%);
- Those who would not say were in favor by a margin of 60-27%.

I-591 did not have majority support in any demographic category in this survey. Its strongest support came from among:

- Those with incomes under \$50,000 (47%);
- Republicans (45%).

QUESTION WORDING (Ballot Titles)

The questions were rotated so that I-591 was asked first for half the sample and I-594 asked first for half the sample. Answer categories in each question were also rotated so that “for” and “against” were read first to half the sample each.

Initiative Measure No. 591 concerns firearms. This measure would prohibit government agencies from confiscating guns or other firearms from citizens without due process, or from requiring background checks on firearm recipients unless a uniform national standard is required. As things stand today, how are you inclined to vote? Would you say...

- Definitely for Initiative 591
- Probably for it
- Probably against it
- Definitely against initiative 591

Initiative Measure No. 594 concerns background checks for firearm sales and transfers. This measure would apply currently used criminal and public safety background checks by licensed dealers to all firearm sales and transfers, including gun show and online sales, with specific exceptions. As things stand today, how are you inclined to vote? Would you say...

- Definitely for Initiative 594
- Probably for it
- Probably against it
- Definitely against initiative 594

Just to be clear, do you favor of more extensive background checks for gun sales? Or do you favor keeping the background check system as it is.