

New poll finds that Kansans want legislators to focus on efficiency in spending

And want the federal windfall returned to Kansas taxpayers.

Feb. 5 - Legislators in Topeka are forced to find a way to address a massive budget deficit. State spending exceeds revenue estimates by \$600 million over the next two years and leaves the state with no money the following year, according to the research department for the Kansas state legislature.

According to a newly released poll, conducted on behalf of Kansas Policy Institute by SurveyUSA, 45% of Kansans want their representatives to focus on reducing spending while 18% want to address the deficit by raising taxes.

James Franko, vice president and policy director of Kansas Policy Institute, says, "Currently, Governor Kelly is proposing to take money from the Highway Fund to address the budget shortfall, but according to this newly released poll, only 9% of Kansas voters think that's a good idea."

"This is not a partisan issue and was something KPI advocated against when previous administrations have done the same thing. We can work together to focus on how we are allocating resources while taking a hard look at inefficiencies, instead of allowing the burden on Kansas families to stay higher because of a backdoor tax hike." Franko concluded.

The Kansas Senate is looking at tax 'windfall' legislation this week. Under current Kansas law, taxpayers can't decouple their federal and state returns. The Kansas Department of Revenue says that Kansans could be subjected to as much as \$100 million more per year in state income tax due to current state laws on how Kansas interacts with federal tax cuts. But 71% of Kansans want the Kansas legislature to prevent this unintended tax hike from taking place, while 12% don't think the legislature should take preventative measures.

[See full poll results and methodology here.](#)

"Kansas citizens, regardless of political ideology, don't want this unintended tax hike. Legislators need to make this sentiment a priority when determining what direction we want to take on the federal windfall bill." Remarks Franko.

Even though the legislature is grappling with the large budget deficit, due to massive school funding increases brought about by the Kansas Supreme Court, they are also currently debating proposals like Medicaid expansion which would increase spending by billions of dollars. In the newly released poll, when Kansas voters were asked how Medicaid Expansion should be paid for, 54% of voters said they do not want Medicaid expansion or would like to see other options to make it more affordable. And 22% of voters expressed the desire to reduce spending to pay for Medicaid expansion.

Michael Austin, Director of the Center for Entrepreneurial Government of KPI, says, "Whether it's Medicaid expansion, school funding, or addressing tax hikes associated with the federal tax cuts, the new data from SurveyUSA suggests that there is no appetite for tax increases in Kansas. Voters want to see a balanced budget with an effective and efficient government. That makes sense, and we know it's possible."

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