



To: CT Nonprofit Alliance

From: Betsy App & Matt Booker, Change Research

Date: July 29th, 2024

Re: Voters support adjusting fiscal guardrails to increase funding for CT's community nonprofits

A recent poll from Change Research surveyed 756 likely 2024 voters in Connecticut with the goal of perceptions of the state's budget surplus and budget controls ("fiscal guardrails"), specifically in the context of funding for Connecticut's community nonprofits. The poll was conducted July 15-19, 2024 and has a modeled margin of error of 3.7%.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Many voters are aware of Connecticut's budget surpluses, and a majority (63%) would like to see a portion go toward funding health and human services, education, and other priorities. Just 8% want all surplus dollars put toward paying down pension debt for state employees
- Many voters believe that Connecticut's community nonprofits are underfunded, and a large majority (68%) supports increasing nonprofit funding even if it requires adjustments to the state's fiscal guardrails.
- Voters don't want to repeal the state's budget controls entirely. Nearly half (46%) of likely voters would like to see "reasonable adjustments" to the state's budget controls to ensure proper funding for Connecticut's community nonprofits.
- Half (51%) of all voters likely to participate in the 2024 general election say they are more likely to support a candidate who wants to increase nonprofit funding. Just one-quarter (27%) say they would be less likely to support such a candidate

Many voters are aware of CT's budget surpluses, and a majority would like to see a portion go toward health and human services and other priorities.

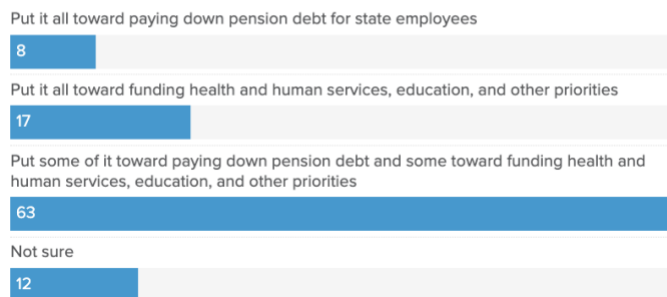
A plurality (42%) of likely voters understands that the state has had budget surpluses for several years in a row, while just one in four (25%) likely voters believe that Connecticut is facing budget shortfalls. One-third (33%) aren't sure what the state's budget situation is.

When asked how the budget surpluses should be used, a majority (63%) says that the state should spend its surplus on a mix of destinations. Only a small fraction (8%) want all of the surplus dollars put

toward paying down pension debt, and just 17% would want it to all go to these other destinations; a majority (63%) want surplus dollars to be split among these areas.

Most voters prefer a mix of destinations for surplus dollars CHANGE RESEARCH™

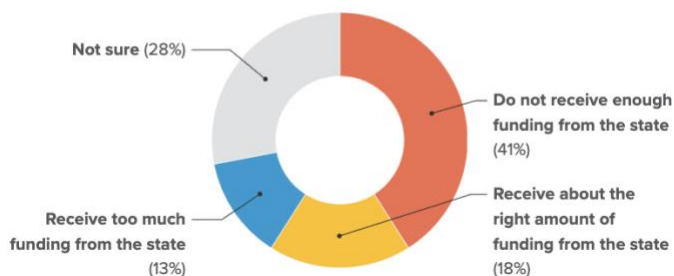
Q: Of the following options, how should Connecticut's state government spend its consistent and large budget surpluses?



Many voters believe that Connecticut's community nonprofits are underfunded.

Community nonprofits contract with Connecticut's state government to deliver a wide range of services, including mental health and addiction treatment, services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, housing and shelter, and more. A plurality of likely voters (41%) believe that these nonprofits do not receive enough state funding.

Which of the following comes closest to your view of Nonprofits in Connecticut? CHANGE RESEARCH™



A large majority supports an increase in funding for nonprofits, even if it means adjusting the state's budget controls.

Now that the state is in a position of consistent, large budget surpluses, nearly three-quarters (73%) of likely voters in Connecticut support an increase in funding for community nonprofits, including 30% who *strongly* support this. Even if state lawmakers have to adjust the state's budget controls, voters are still supportive of increased funding.

Connecticut voters support increased funding for nonprofits CHANGE RESEARCH™

Q. Now that the state is in a position of consistent and large annual budget surpluses, these nonprofits are asking for an increase in the funding they get from the state.

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose

Do you support or oppose an increase in funding for nonprofits? 30 43 16 11

Do you support or oppose an increase in funding for nonprofits, even if it requires the legislature & Governor Lamont to adjust the state's budget controls? 29 40 17 14
50

Support for increased nonprofit funding comes from across the partisan spectrum. Nearly all Democrats (92%) are supportive, as are 71% of independent voters and even half (52%) of Republican voters.

Voters want to see state lawmakers make modest adjustments to the state's fiscal guardrails in order to fund nonprofits.

Nearly half (46%) of likely voters would like to see reasonable adjustments to the state's budget controls to ensure proper funding for Connecticut's community nonprofits. Less than one-third (30%) prefer the status quo; that is, they don't want any adjustments to be made.

Almost no one wants dramatic changes to the budget controls. Just 8% of likely voters want to completely get rid of the them, and this is true for Democratic voters, too—just 10% of Democrats want to *remove* the budget controls entirely in order to fund nonprofits.

Voters prefer "reasonable" adjustments to budget controls CHANGE RESEARCH™

Q: An increase in funding for Connecticut nonprofits would require adjusting the state's current budget controls. Which of the following comes closest to your view?

Connecticut's budget controls are important guardrails that state lawmakers should leave alone. We have a surplus now, but that might not always be the case. 30

Connecticut's budget controls help keep the state financially healthy, but saving accounts are overfilled, while nonprofits are struggling. We should make reasonable adjustments to ensure nonprofits get the funding they need. 46

Now that we have a healthy budget and consistent surpluses, the budget controls are basically a fiscal straitjacket blocking funding for critical services. We need to remove these limits and use the budget surplus to fund these nonprofits now. 8

Not sure 16

Voters believe that increased funding for nonprofits is not only the right thing to do, it's the fair path forward.

The most convincing reason why Connecticut voters support using a portion of the state's budget surplus to fund nonprofits is to help those in need. Nearly three-quarters (73%) say this is convincing, including two in five (39%) who say it's *very* convincing.

Voters are also sensitive to fairness, with 72% convinced by the argument that if nonprofits are providing critical services just like other providers, the state should compensate them fairly.