

**TO:** INTERESTED PARTIES  
**FROM:** JARRETT LEWIS, PATRICK LANNE AND CHRIS ANDREWS, PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES  
**SUBJECT:** TENNESSEE SURVEY RESULTS  
**DATE:** JANUARY 22, 2024

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*Public Opinion Strategies recently completed a statewide survey of 600 likely Republican primary voters in Tennessee. The survey was completed November 12-15, 2023, and has a margin of error of +/- 4.0% in 95 out of 100 cases.*

### **KEY FINDINGS**

- ✓ ***A majority of Tennessee Republicans believe access to medical care where they live is a problem.*** Fully 56% of Tennessee Republicans say that access to medical care where they live is a major problem or minor problem.
- ✓ ***Tennessee Republicans overwhelmingly want less government in health care.*** Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Tennessee Republicans believe we need “less government regulation” of health care today, compared to 8% who believe we need “more government regulation” and 15% who believe we have “the right amount of government regulation.” A majority of every demographic and geographic subgroup in the poll calls for less government in health care, including 87% of those who are very conservative, 82% of those who identify a Trump Republican and 80% of strong Republicans.
- ✓ ***A plurality of Tennessee Republicans oppose the Certificate of Need law.*** Respondents were read the following description of the state’s Certificate of Need law:

*“Tennessee requires a hospital to receive a Certificate of Need, or permission, from the state government before it can offer nearly 20 different services ranging from creating a new open heart surgery or neonatal intensive care unit to building a new medical site of care like a hospital or free-standing emergency room for patients.”*

After the description, they were asked whether they supported or opposed the law. Fully 49% oppose the law, while 41% support the law. Very conservative Republicans (53% oppose, 37% support) and Trump Republicans (53% oppose, 38% support) have even more opposition to the law.

- ✓ **Tennessee Republicans are decidedly against the CON law the more they learn about it.** After the initial neutral description of the law, respondents were read the following pair of statements about the CON law and asked which viewpoint was closer to their opinion:

*“(SOME/OTHER) people want to KEEP Tennessee’s Certificate of Need law because they believe it is needed to reduce waste in the health care marketplace. They say that excess capacity, such as hospitals with too many empty beds, results in high fixed costs being passed along to patients.”*  
...while...

*“(OTHER/SOME) people want to REPEAL Tennessee’s Certificate of Need law because they do not believe unelected bureaucrats influenced by political pressures and well-funded lobbying efforts should be able to block the building of new medical sites of care that local communities and patients need. They believe the law prevents competition which limits access to quality health care services and contributes to higher health care costs.”*

After hearing both statements, nearly two-thirds (65%) of Tennessee Republicans side with the repeal statement over the keep statement. Large majorities of every key subgroup, including very conservatives (69%-23%), strong Republicans (65%-27%) and voters who identify as Trump Republicans (69%-24%), opted for the repeal argument.

- ✓ **A repeal vote presents little political risk for Republican lawmakers.** Eight-in-ten Republicans would be more likely to vote for a repeal legislator or say the issue would not matter for them in deciding who to vote for, while fewer than one-in-five (16%) say a repeal vote would make them less likely to vote for a repeal legislator. Moreover, Trump Republicans (36% more likely to support a repeal legislator) and rural Republicans (37% more likely to support a repeal legislator), groups that make up a large portion of the GOP primary electorate, are more likely to support a repeal lawmaker.

#### **BOTTOM LINE**

Republicans have concerns about access to care, overwhelmingly believe there should be less government in healthcare and are primed to want CON repealed once they learn more about it. Nearly one-half oppose the CON law after hearing a neutral description with that number soaring to 65% once voters hear an “elevator pitch” from both sides. Additionally, opposition to CON is only likely to grow over time since stronger ideological conservatives, which represent the base of the GOP primary electorate, are more opposed to it.