



FEDERAL SCHOLARSHIP TAX CREDIT

SURVEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

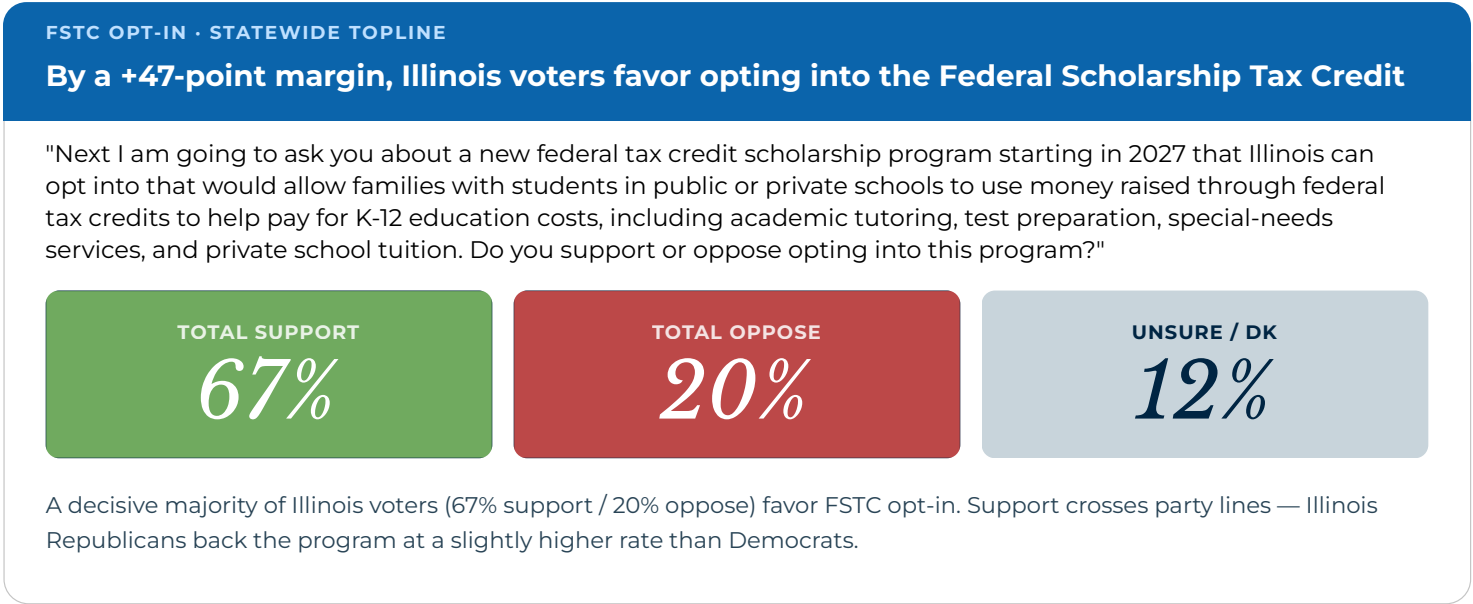
*Polling of likely 2026 Illinois voters conducted by
Emerson College Polling, April 24–26, 2026*



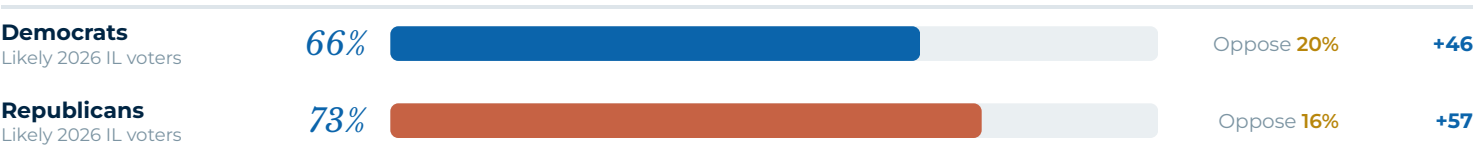
Executive Summary

New statewide polling from Emerson College finds Illinois voters ready to opt into the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit by a decisive, cross-party margin: 67% support to 20% oppose (+47), with Republicans (73%) and Democrats (66%) effectively aligned and support running strongest among the Black (74%) and Latino (92%) families the program is built to reach. The support holds up under pressure — nearly half of voters (49%) say they'd personally redirect up to \$1,700 of their own federal tax liability to an Illinois student-support organization, a +17 margin, and 60% side with a leader who champions FSTC as working- and middle-class access over one who calls it Trump-era privatization. The clear caveat is salience, not support: K-12 education ranks eighth as a top voter priority (8%), far behind inflation (44%) and taxes (35%), which means the winning message hooks FSTC to cost-of-living and tax relief rather than "education reform" in the abstract.

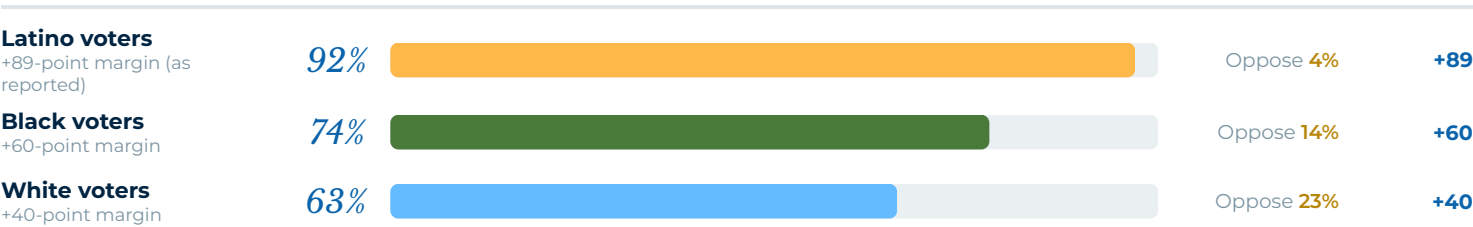
A decisive majority *support* FSTC opt-in



Support by *party*



Support by *race & ethnicity*



Keeping with observed trends in ERN's state-level polling on FSTC across more than a dozen states in the past year, Black and Latino voters favored opt-in at a meaningfully higher rate than voters statewide.

Redirecting *tax liability* to scholarship organizations

Illinois voters aren't just backing FSTC in the abstract, nearly half (49%) say they'd personally redirect up to \$1,700 of their own federal taxes to support Illinois students. Even at a conservative 30% participation rate, that translates to roughly \$986 million a year in new scholarship and tutoring dollars for Illinois kids — money that otherwise flows to the IRS or to students in other states.

TAX REDIRECT QUESTION • NEW FINDING

By a +17-point margin, Illinois voters would choose to redirect their federal tax liability to support students

"If Illinois opts into this program, taxpayers could redirect up to \$1,700 of what they owe in federal income taxes as a contribution to organizations that provide scholarships for Illinois students. Or they could choose to make payment to the IRS general fund. If you owed up to \$1,700 on your federal income taxes, would you choose to send it to an Illinois based organization that supports students?"

YES, REDIRECT
49%

NO
32%

UNSURE / OTHER
19%

Voters were asked, for the first time, whether — from the perspective of a taxpayer who could choose to redirect their federal tax liability — they would redirect what they owe to an organization that supports students. Illinois voters said yes by a +17-point margin.

Who is most likely to *redirect*

BY RACE & ETHNICITY 65% Hispanic vs. 47% White voters	BY PARTY 59% Democrats vs. 39% Republicans +20
BY GENDER 53% Women vs. 45% Men	PARENTS VS. NON-PARENTS 62% Parents vs. 43% non-parents
COLLEGE GRADS (OWN YES/NO SPLIT) 54% Yes 26% No vs. 45% non-grad yes +28 internal	\$100K+ HH INCOME (OWN YES/NO SPLIT) 50% Yes 29% No vs. 44% yes in \$50–99K HHs +21 internal

Black voters were also more supportive of redirecting than the statewide average, with 53% saying yes compared to 47% of White voters. Higher-income and college-educated voters were consistently more likely to redirect than their counterparts.

Voters back leaders who *support* FSTC

LEADER FRAMING TEST · CLOSING MESSAGE

A 60% majority side with a leader who champions FSTC for working & middle-class families

A leader who supports the federal tax credit scholarship program and says it would give working class and middle income families access to money for academic tutoring, test preparation, special-needs services and quality school options — and that if the state does not opt in, money intended for Illinois families will fund scholarships for students in other states.

60%

PRO OPT-IN CANDIDATE

A leader who opposes the federal tax credit scholarship program and says it is part of the Trump administration's plan to privatize public schools, and would primarily benefit families who can already afford to send their kids to private schools, including wealthy donors seeking tax advantages.

40%

ANTI OPT-IN CANDIDATE

A majority of Illinois voters side with the leader who frames FSTC around working- and middle-class access — even when the counter-message directly ties the program to the Trump administration and privatization concerns.

METHODOLOGY STATEMENT — This survey was conducted by Emerson College Polling and was fielded April 24–26, 2026. The sample of Illinois likely voters, n=500, margin of error (MOE) of +/- 4.3 percent. The data sets were weighted by gender, education, race, age, party, and region based on U.S. Census parameters and voter file data.