

Bexar Facts poll finds majority support for all 3 propositions on November ballot in San Antonio

Voters will decide Pre-K 4 SA, workforce program, public transportation improvements



SAN ANTONIO – In a lengthy November ballot, San Antonio voters will be tasked to decide the outcomes of two 1/8 cent sales tax propositions.

Those include the **fate of Pre-K 4 SA**, an early childhood program that launched eight years ago, and the introduction of a **workforce initiative** to help impoverished residents amid an economic crisis exacerbated by the **coronavirus** pandemic.

In a special election (which, in this case, falls on the same date as the presidential election), city residents will also vote on the relocation of the 1/8 cent sales tax that would go toward

transportation improvements in 2026.

These issues will hit the ballot box for the General Election on Nov. 3. The deadline to **register to vote** is right around the corner, on Oct. 5, and early voting begins Oct. 13.

Each of the three propositions has support from a majority of registered voters in San Antonio, according to a **Bexar Facts-KSAT-San Antonio Report Poll** released Tuesday. For Proposition A, the funding of Pre-K 4 SA, 66% of voters polled said they support the measure while 25% said they oppose. On Proposition B, the workforce development initiative, 64% said they would support the ballot measure while 25% said they oppose. And 59% said they'd support the special election measure to increase future transportation funding, while 30% said they would oppose.

While the Bexar Facts poll generally surveys registered Bexar Facts voters, the questions for the city propositions were limited to registered voters who live in San Antonio. Overall, that was 70% of the 619 respondents of the survey, which was conducted from Sept. 17-21 by phone and online

Proposition A — The funding of Pre-K 4 SA

The continuation of Pre-K 4 SA, an early childhood program that serves 2,000 students, will be voted upon in the General Election.

San Antonio residents will decide if the city will move forward with the renewal of a 1/8 cent sales tax to fund eight more years of the program.

The issue was moved to the Nov. 3 ballot from its original **May 2** election — approved by **City Council** in April due to the **coronavirus** pandemic. Pre-K 4 SA **initially wanted the matter**

to head to the polls in May along with other education-related items, plus activists worried it would become disregarded in November's hefty ballot.

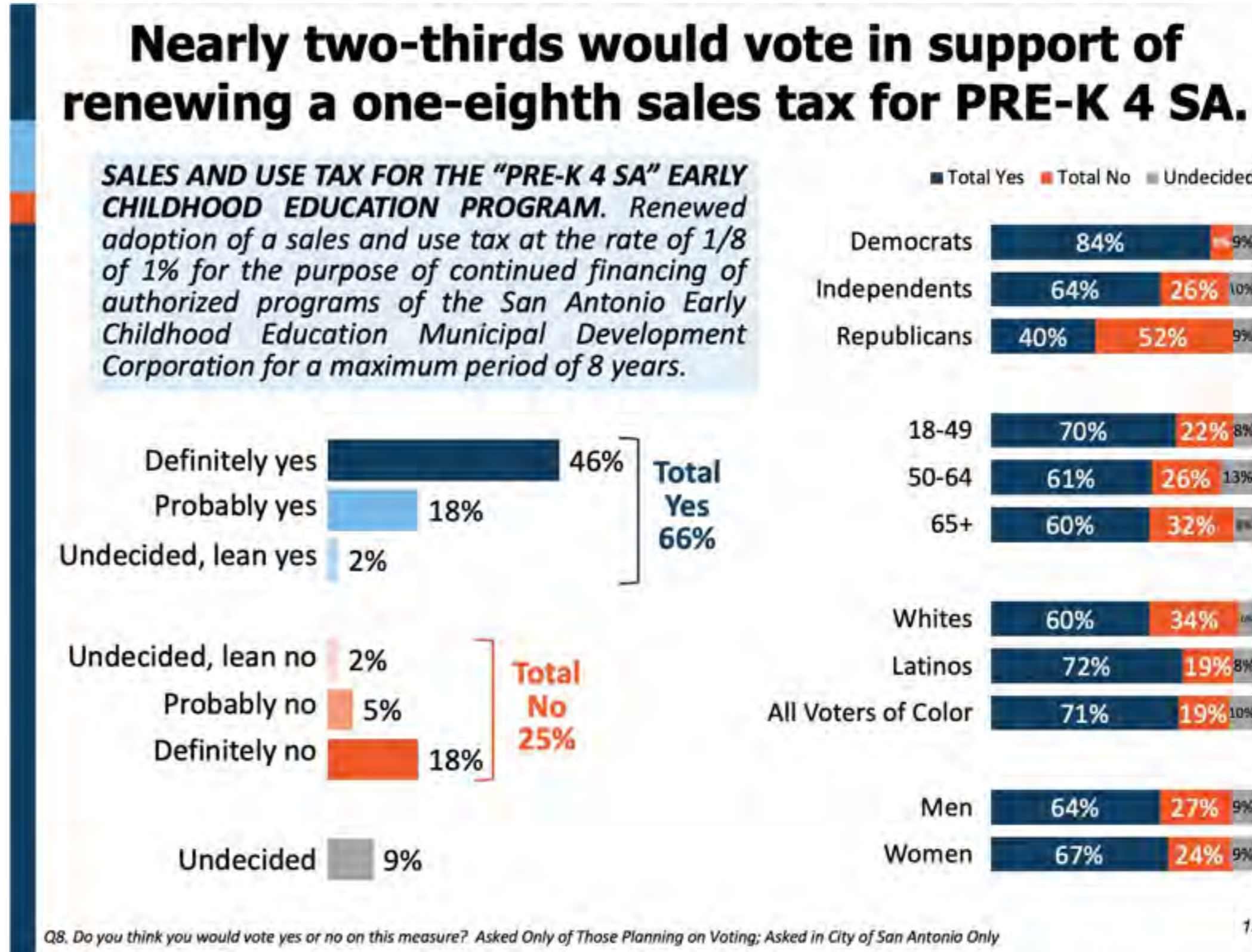
Pre-K 4 SA provides free or reduced-priced, full-day prekindergarten education and professional development for educators at its four centers, as well as distributes grants that support students in other programs.

Voters would essentially renew the sales tax for the same purpose, as the sales tax that voters approved in November 2012 will expire in 2021.

More than three-quarters of Pre-K 4 SA's budget comes from the sales tax.

"Without that funding, we could not continue on," said Pre-K 4 SA CEO Sarah Baray told KSAT 12 News in February, a month before the **Keep Pre-K 4 SA campaign launched**.

Results of a Bexar Facts-KSAT-San Antonio Report Poll show San Antonio voters are in favor of renewing the initiative, which is on the ballot as Proposition A.



For Proposition A, the funding of Pre-K 4 SA, 66% of voters polled said they support the measure while 25% said they oppose, according to Bexar Facts-KSAT-San Antonio Report poll released Sept. 2020. (Bexar Facts)

About 66% of the poll respondents said they support extending the tax — 46% of those saying definitely yes. About 25% of those surveyed said they oppose the proposition.

Those results changed slightly since voters were asked the same question earlier this year. In **poll results released in February**, 68% of voters said they supported it, while 29% elected against.

Pre-K 4 SA launched in August 2013 under then-Mayor Julian Castro. At the time, the program had just two centers.

Proposition B - 1/8 cent tax for workforce development

As the 1/8 cent sales tax for aquifer protection is expected to meet its maximum next year, voters will decide if that money will be diverted to fund a workforce training and education program.

The tax currently funds the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program and the development of Linear Creekway Parks, but it is expected to expire in the spring or summer when it reaches the \$180 million limit voters approved.

The tax, soon to be freed up for other uses, would bring in about \$36-\$40 million a year.

The city wants to use the tax through Dec. 31, 2025, to help about 40,000 people obtain scholarships and better-paying jobs through the Ready to Work SA program. It's an effort to help locals break out of poverty — an issue punctuated by the economic crisis brought on by the pandemic.

On Jan. 1, 2026, the **funds would then be used for transportation**, but both initiatives need separate voter approval.

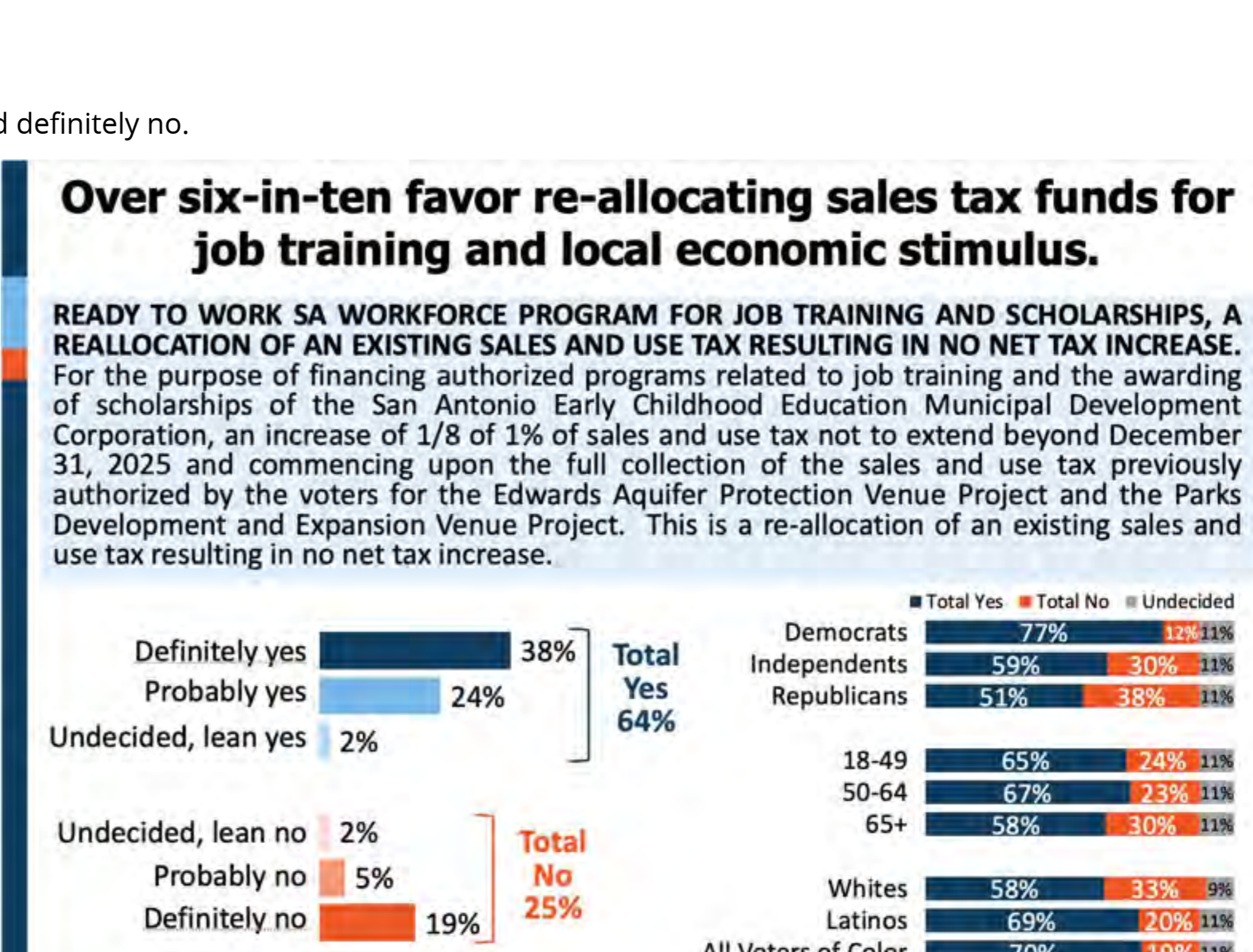
Ready to Work SA would distribute two- to four-year scholarships for up to 10,000 people a year and help place residents into careers, but it would not include stipends.

Citing high unemployment rates brought on by the pandemic, Mayor Ron Nirenberg said "we need action now" with helping residents in poverty.

It's considered an extension of the \$75 million for workforce development approved by City Council in June in an overall **\$191 million "Recovery and Resiliency" plan**.

The Bexar Facts-KSAT-San Antonio Report Poll revealed 64% of voters surveyed said they would vote yes for the initiative, and 25% would vote no.

About 38% stated definitely yes, while 19% said definitely no.



For Proposition B, the workforce development initiative, 64% said they would support the ballot measure while 25% said they oppose, according to Bexar Facts-KSAT-San Antonio Report poll released Sept. 2020. (Bexar Facts)

The results skewed when canvassers asked participants how their views would change if the City Council was working to ensure that the city's general budget funded aquifer protection.

About 47% of voters said they would vote yes for Proposition B, and 35% said they would vote against it.

On Sept. 17, the city **passed a \$100 million plan** to fund the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program after the sales tax funding caps out next year.

Advanced Transportation District - Special Election

In a separate, but related, proposal to Proposition B, residents will be asked if the 1/8 cent tax for Ready to Work SA can be diverted to starting Jan. 1, 2026, its funding expires at the end of 2025.

Starting Jan. 1, 2026, the money would be used for the Advanced Transportation District, in which **VIA Metropolitan would receive half the money** and fund improvements in its systems. It would increase ATD's share of sales tax to 3/8 cents.

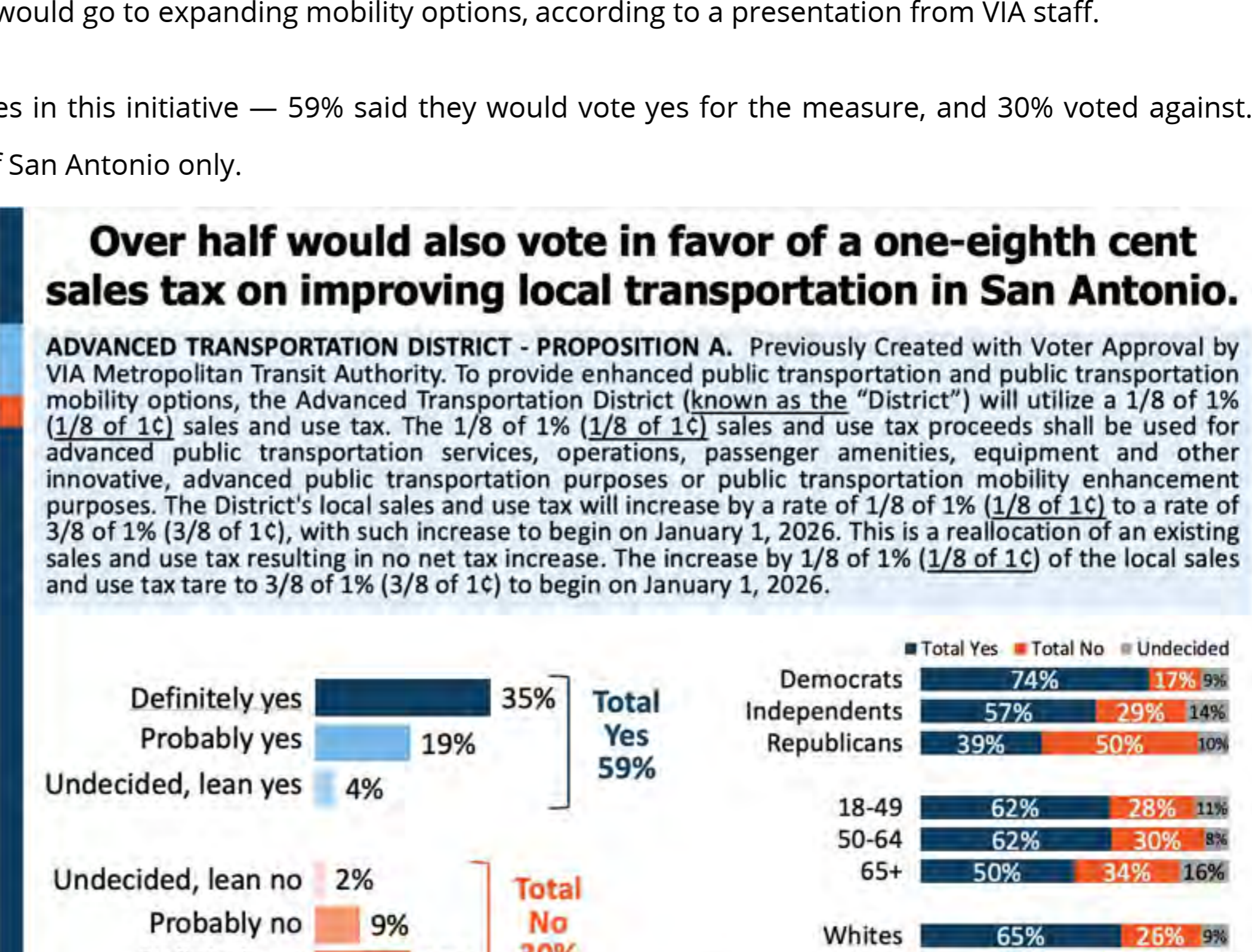
Because funding from the tax would be handed off from the city to VIA, there would not be an increase in taxes.

The item on the ballot states the proceeds would be used for "advanced public transportation services, operations, passenger amenities, equipment and other innovative, advanced public transportation purposes or public transportation mobility enhancement purposes."

VIA President and CEO Jeffrey Arndt **previously told KSAT 12 News** that it would increase bus service and options, as well as kick-off plans for an "Advanced Rapid Transit" system.

The majority of the funding, 45%, if approved, would go to expanding mobility options, according to a presentation from VIA staff.

Voters polled by Bexar Facts leaned toward yes in this initiative — 59% said they would vote yes for the measure, and 30% voted against. This question was asked to voters in the City of San Antonio only.



For the special election measure to increase future transportation funding, 59% said they'd support, while 30% said they would oppose, according to Bexar Facts-KSAT-San Antonio Report poll released Sept. 2020. (Bexar Facts)

KSAT will publish more results from the poll — from approval ratings to the biggest issues facing San Antonio and evolving public opinion on the coronavirus pandemic and policing — in

the coming days in our **Bexar Facts section**.

See the full poll and find more information about it on the **Bexar Facts website**. There, you can also take the survey for yourself (those results will be recorded but not reflected in the scientific results.)

Stay up to date with the latest election news and resources on our **Vote 2020 page**.