

South Carolina Voters Place High Priority on Homeownership, Survey Finds

WASHINGTON, Jan. 11 – With the South Carolina GOP presidential primary just six days away, presidential contenders should heed a new statewide poll showing that voters in the Palmetto State believe that owning a home remains an integral part of the American Dream and that policymakers need to take active steps to protect homeownership.

“The survey underscores that South Carolina voters believe homeownership is a core value that anchors the middle class and they oppose efforts to eliminate or reduce the mortgage interest deduction and to make it more difficult for creditworthy home buyers to obtain affordable financing,” said Bob Nielsen, president of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and a home builder from Reno, Nev.

“South Carolina’s voters are sending a clear message that the opportunity to own a home remains a cherished ideal and the government has an important role to play to keep homeownership affordable for hard-working American families,” added Nielsen. “That’s a message we hope candidates running at all levels of government this November will heed.”

The polling found that 98 percent of South Carolina home owners are happy with their decision to purchase a home and 79 percent of all voters believe that despite the risk of ups and downs in the housing market, owning a home is one of the best long-term investments they can make.

Moreover, 65 percent of the respondents said they would be less likely to vote for a candidate for Congress who proposed eliminating the mortgage interest deduction and 73 percent believe it is appropriate and reasonable for the federal government to provide tax incentives to promote homeownership.

These are among the key findings of a survey of likely South Carolina voters that was conducted on behalf of NAHB by Public Opinion Strategies of Alexandria, Va., and Lake Research Partners of Washington, D.C.

Among the other survey results:

- 99 percent of home owners said that it is important that they own their own home.
- Homeownership and a retirement savings program are considered by voters to be their best investments.
- Nearly three out of four voters who are not currently home owners (73 percent) said it was a goal of theirs to buy a home.
- 64 percent believe it is appropriate and reasonable for the federal government to help home buyers afford a long-term or 30-year fixed-rate mortgage.
- 68 percent of voters would oppose eliminating or reducing tax deductions such as the mortgage interest deduction in exchange for a lower federal income tax rate if it meant that their final tax bill would be higher.

“South Carolina’s home builders, Realtors, business leaders and elected officials held a rally on the steps of the statehouse in Columbia on Jan. 12 to show their support for homeownership. “This rally provided an opportunity for elected officials and presidential hopeful Newt Gingrich to voice their support for a continued federal role for housing and to offer their views on how to help prospective home buyers and boost the housing market and overall economy.”

This statewide survey of 500 likely 2012 voters was conducted Jan. 2-5 by Public Opinion Strategies of Alexandria, Va., and Lake Research Partners of Washington, D.C. It has a margin of error of ± 4.4 percent.