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## Little Rock: One Cent Tax Passes

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The polling sites are closed and the results of the one cent sales tax increase are in. The one cent sales tax has passed.

Little Rock voters had two measures to vote on. A permanent 5/8 cent tax to fund city operations like hiring and salaries. The other expires in 10-years; it's the 3/8 cent tax to cover things like construction, emergency vehicles and new technology.



Supporters and opponents held watch parties Tuesday night, one perhaps more confident than the other. The 500-million Dollar Tax Too Much Committee met at Sims Bar-B-Que. The committee was created to stand up for the families they say would be burden who are already hurt by the economy. The committee also doubts where all the money is going and says it's too much right now. Robert Webb add, "We believe that there is another option. The better option would have been to come back with a 3/8 cents tax that would have given them 17-million, 8 million to cover the short fall and an additional 9-million to do what ever else they needed to."

Over at Cajuns Wharf Mayor Mark Stodola was surrounded by supporters. Little Rock Firefighters President Richard Morehead says city employees have been worried because there would have been job cuts if the tax didn't pass. He says, "Opponents are not necessarily looking at the information that we're looking at. We have a GIS map that looks at response time and we want to be able to hit residents in 4-minutes. We're only hitting 70-percent of Little Rock residents and that leaves 30-percent without adequate fire protection and that concerns us."

**For the complete list of city needs funded by the proposal, click on the link under the picture.**

The City of Little Rock currently has a half cent sales tax, one of the lowest in the state. It hasn't been raised in 17 years.

### Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola:

The Mayor says the city has 230 positions that have been left vacant in the recession. He says, "We'll be hiring 52 police officers. We'll be able to retain 27 grant funded positions, funded through the department of justice. We'll be able to hire 36 firefighters."

The Mayor says they'd also hire code enforcement workers, and parks maintenance workers.

Mayor Stodola says the city is desperate for the 3/8th percent tax as well, which would to capital improvements. He says the city hasn't built a fire station since 1992, and hasn't repaved streets in four years. The 3/8th percent tax would end in 10 years.

Without the new money, Mayor Stodola says the city will enter the new year with an 8 million dollar deficit.

The tax increase will start in January.

**Little Rock Citizen Reaction:**

Patricia Jordan has done her research and believes it will tax too much from groceries to utilities to entertainment. She voted no, "I decided to vote against it because I did not feel it was going to benefit my neighborhood." She continues, "I kind of feel like it is a bad time right now because I'm a senior citizen on a fixed income."

Proponents say you won't feel the tax coming out of your wallet. For example a person making \$28,000 a year will spend about \$42 a year. Opponent Robert Webb laughs, "They've been using fussy math the whole way through but it's going to be between \$140 and \$230 additional dollars a year on top of what we're currently paying."

Alicia Washington waved signs in support all week. She believes the investment will make the city safer with needed jobs for fire and police. With 6-kids she's excited some of the tax money will improve city parks and the zoo. She says, "I'm looking for a safe environment, I don't have to worry about my children when they're out playing." She continues, "I'm in favor especially because of new jobs, but if it does not pass, they're going to figure out a way to tax us. So one penny versus a large increase, it's a plus for me."



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