

Executive Summary of Santa Fe Anti Transfer Tax Campaign

The Santa Fe Association of REALTORS®, working with the National Association of REALTORS® Electoral Services Program, defeated a city proposal to assess a transfer tax on properties that sold for more than \$750,000. Revenue raised by the tax was designated strictly for affordable housing. The victory was a huge upset, given the progressive political orientation of the area and an early poll that showed voters supporting the tax by a 16 point margin (56% in favor to 40% opposed).

Based on an internal poll of likely Santa Fe voters, the SFAR campaign focused on two objectives. First, the campaign knew that they had to convince voters that the tax was poorly planned, and would not adequately address the problem it was supposed to solve (provide more affordable housing). Second, the campaign knew that opponents of the proposal had more intense feelings about the proposition than supporters. Considerable resources, therefore, were directed towards ensuring that opponents actually voted on Election Day.

The campaign conducted an aggressive persuasion mail program and an equally thorough “get-out-the-vote” communications campaign to base voters. Many of the materials used are available on this website. Persuasion targets (as identified by the poll) received six pieces of mail. Base targets received four pieces of mail. In addition, the campaign volunteer phone bank identified voters who strongly opposed the initiative as well as voters who were likely to vote against it. These voters were the focus of the GOTV efforts.

On Election Day, the campaign managed to reverse the early public opinion poll and defy local expectations. Santa Fe voters rejected the tax by 54% to 46%.