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Contact: Dr. Clyde W. Barrow  
(508) 999-9265

**MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS BY 57%-30% BELIEVE LEGISLATURE  
SHOULD APPROVE TWO OR MORE RESORT CASINOS**

**Residents slightly favor casino revenues being apportioned for increased  
local aid to cities and towns over individual property tax relief**

As the Massachusetts House of Representatives debates closing a \$1.3 billion state budget deficit, a majority of Bay Staters, 57%-30%, believe the Legislature should approve two or more destination resort casinos, according to a public opinion survey released today by the Center for Policy Analysis (CFPA) at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Support for destination casinos is strong among virtually all demographics --- gender, age, income, education and region --- an indication Bay Staters may believe the House's recent vote killing Gov. Deval Patrick's casino proposal squandered a unique opportunity to address critical fiscal and economic needs as the state teeters on recession.

"Massachusetts residents know they and fellow Bay Staters spend more than \$1 billion every year at Connecticut casinos and Rhode Island slot parlors," CFPA director Dr. Clyde W. Barrow said. "The survey reflects a Massachusetts populace strongly supportive of destination casinos, who believe Massachusetts spending at out-of-state gaming venues should be recaptured, and who want casino revenues to be used to help fund overburdened city and town budgets and to provide individual property tax relief."

Dr. Barrow said the survey revealed that among those who had visited a casino in the past year, 84% wanted the Legislature to approve two or more destination resort casinos, an even more critical indicator was that among those who had not visited a casino within the past 12 months, 40% believed the Legislature should approve two or more destination resort casinos compared to 44% among this group who did not.

"Support for destination casinos in the commonwealth continues to grow among those who have not visited a casino," Dr. Barrow said, "and that likely reflects growing disillusionment among all residents toward state and local fiscal policies that address budget deficits by seeking Proposition 2 ½ overrides, raising state and local fees, floating hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer-financed bonds, and relying on one-time fixes."

Clearly, Dr. Barrow added, "Massachusetts residents believe their local legislators should address state and municipal fiscal burdens by first recapturing the tax revenues, jobs, and tourism that Bay Staters are exporting to Connecticut's and Rhode Island's economies."

Previous surveys by the Center for Policy Analysis showed stronger majorities among urban residents than town residents in favor of destination casinos but that's no longer the case, as suburban residents now support the Legislature approving two or more destination resort casinos by 59%-29%. Urban residents' support is 54%-32%.

"It's another piece of evidence," Dr. Barrow said, "that as state and municipal fiscal problems mount and the economy sputters amidst the worst mortgage crisis in nearly 20 years, suburbanites now view destination resort casinos as a critical component of the state's fiscal and economic development strategies."

Bay Staters, by 61%-25%, support a destination resort casino in the western Massachusetts town of Palmer, and by 58%-31%, support a destination resort casino in the southeastern Massachusetts city of New Bedford. Last year the CFPA recommended that if the governor and Legislature were to approve

destination resort casinos to compete with Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun, it do so by approving world-class facilities at Suffolk Downs in East Boston, in New Bedford, and in western Massachusetts.

When asked whether potential gaming tax revenues should be allocated for increased local aid to cities and towns, as the governor proposed, for individual property tax relief, 46% want gaming tax revenues distributed as local aid to cities and towns, while 38% support individual property tax relief.

Dr. Barrow indicated that the poll's results may provide an answer to addressing both issues. Residents were asked "if the state legislature was to authorize two or more resort casinos in Massachusetts, do you think the legislature should also authorize slot machines at the state's racetracks?" The survey found that a majority (50.3%) of Massachusetts residents support the authorization of slot machines at the state's racetracks, along with two or more resort casinos, while 37% oppose such a measure.

Dr. Barrow observed that with a slots-at-the-track bill pending in the House of Representatives little thought has been given to how such legislation might complement destination resort casinos, while also helping ease the municipal fiscal crisis. Dr. Barrow suggested that if the state authorizes video lottery terminals (VLTs) at the tracks, rather than slot machines, VLTs would automatically fall within the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Lottery Commission, since VLTs are considered lottery products rather than casino games. Thus, the state's share of VLT revenues would fall under the lottery's local aid distribution formula, while tax revenues derived from the destination casinos could be allocated toward individual property tax relief and critical infrastructure repairs and improvements, which are vital and necessary components of a healthy and competitive economy.

Dr. Barrow also suggested that VLTs at the tracks would compete effectively with Rhode Island's VLT parlors, where Massachusetts residents spend nearly \$200 million annually. Barrow said, "That's important, because the demographics of destination resort casino patrons and VLT parlor patrons are nearly distinct an separate."

That point is underscored by the CFPA's 2004 and 2006, the CFPA's biennial gaming behavior surveys of New England residents, which found more than three-quarters of the Bay State and Ocean State residents who visit Connecticut's resort casinos never patronize Rhode Island's VLT facilities. Thus, there would be minimal competition between Massachusetts destination resort casinos and VLT parlors, especially if the state limited the non-gaming amenities offered by the VLT parlors.

Also, Dr. Barrow said that if the state set a 27% gaming tax on the destination casinos, and a competitive gaming tax that undercuts Rhode Island's 61% gaming tax, "Massachusetts destination resort casinos and racetrack VLT parlors would command and dictate the future of gaming, entertainment, and tourism within New England."

The survey of 420 Massachusetts residents has a margin-of-error of 4.7% at a 95% confidence interval and was commissioned by Northeast Resorts Group, a real estate development firm. Northeast Resorts holds options on land in both Palmer and New Bedford, both of which have been identified as potential sites for a destination resort casino.

The results of the CFPA's most recent poll are consistent with polls released shortly after Governor Deval Patrick announced his proposal to license three resort casinos in September 2007. A Boston Globe/University of New Hampshire poll released on September 30, 2007 found that Massachusetts residents supported legalized casino gambling in Massachusetts by a margin of 53% in favor to 34% opposed. A Center for Policy Analysis poll released by the Boston Herald on October 5, 2007 found that Massachusetts residents supported Governor Deval Patrick's proposal to license three resort casinos by a margin of 55% in favor to 27% opposed.

Barrow observed that "Despite the rejection of Governor Deval Patrick's casino proposal by the House of Representatives on March 20<sup>th</sup>, it's clear that the public just isn't buying the skeptics' casino culture rhetoric. Public support for legalized casino gambling in Massachusetts is as strong or stronger than when Governor Patrick submitted his casino proposal last year."

A report of the poll results can be accessed at [www.umassd.edu/cfpa](http://www.umassd.edu/cfpa) click on "What's New!"

**SUMMARY OF POLL RESULTS**

"In your opinion, should the state legislature authorize two or more resort casinos in Massachusetts?"

**GENDER**

<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
SUP-OPP-UND	SUP-OPP-UND
57-28-15	57-33-10

**AGE**

<b>18-29</b>	<b>30-39</b>	<b>40-49</b>	<b>50-59</b>	<b>60+</b>
51-32-17	67-21-12	60-29-12	59-33-8	52-37-12

**EDUCATION**

<b>Less than H.S.</b>	<b>H.S. grad</b>	<b>AA/Technical</b>	<b>BA</b>	<b>MA</b>
29-57-14	59-28-14	69-22-9	66-28-6	43-38-20

**INCOME**

<b>Less than \$25K</b>	<b>\$25K-\$50K</b>	<b>\$50K-\$75K</b>	<b>\$75K-\$100K</b>	<b>\$100K-\$150K</b>	<b>\$150K+</b>
49-43-8	67-11-22	65-21-15	68-30-3	62-19-19	64-29-7

**REGION**

<b>Greater Boston</b>	<b>Southeastern Massachusetts</b>	<b>Central Massachusetts</b>	<b>Western Massachusetts</b>
56-32-12	61-28-11	50-37-13	56-29-15
	<b>Cities</b>		<b>Towns</b>
	54-32-13		59-29-12