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BAY STATERS OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVE OF A CASINO

**By Gender, Age, Income, Education and Region,
Residents Express Strong Support**

Recognizing Bay Staters' longstanding patronage of Connecticut casinos and Rhode Island slot parlors, a majority of Massachusetts residents favor the authorization of casino gambling in the commonwealth, according to a poll and behavioral survey released today by the Center for Policy Analysis (CFPA) at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

Approximately 57% of those surveyed support the authorization of a resort casino, while 30% are opposed, and 14% are undecided. The poll and behavioral survey of 1,041 Massachusetts residents (Margin of error= +/- 3.1%) was conducted between September 29 to November 2, 2006 is the most extensive survey yet undertaken to determine Bay Staters' attitudes toward casino gambling and its impacts.

Men favor authorization of a Massachusetts casino by a 63%-26% margin, while women favor authorization of a casino by a 51%-34% margin.

Tomorrow the CFPA will release a poll and behavioral survey detailing residents' attitudes toward the introduction of slot machines at the state's four racetracks, along with related demographic data.

A clear majority of residents in every region except the Cape & Islands support a casino, --- 61%-28% in northeastern Massachusetts; 58%-32% in Worcester County; 58%-30% in Greater Boston and its suburbs; 57%-31% in southeastern Massachusetts; and 53%-25% in western Massachusetts. Cape Cod residents are statistically tied with 43% in favor of a casino and 41% opposed to a casino.

When asked to rate a location for a casino, residents statewide favored western Massachusetts, Boston and the New Bedford/Fall River region, in that order, as preferred sites. They ranked Cape Cod and the Plymouth area as the least desirable locations for a casino.

"Support for casino gambling in Massachusetts runs deep through virtually every region, group and socio-economic strata," said Dr. Clyde W. Barrow, the CFPA's director. "Massachusetts residents strongly believe it is time the commonwealth authorize a casino to compete with Connecticut for the gambling, entertainment and tourism dollars associated with Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun."

Residents also rated the potential fiscal and economic benefits of a casino above their concern over any potential social costs, with 76% agreeing that a casino will generate

new tax revenues for the state, 69% believing it will spawn new job creation for Massachusetts residents, 67% citing its benefits to increased tourism, 62% believing a casino will recapture gambling monies being lost to other states, such as Connecticut and Rhode Island, and 56% saying it will stimulate economic development.

Conversely, only 27% believe a casino will hurt local restaurants, retail shops and hotels; just 33% believe a casino will degrade the quality of life in the host community; and only 35% believe a casino will increase crime in the state.

Residents did, however, express concerns that a casino could increase political corruption (44%) and gambling addiction in the state (48%), but none of these concerns ranked as high as their perception of the economic and fiscal benefits of a casino.

In early March, the CFPA will release its fourth annual New England Gaming Update, which tracks spending by residents of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and New York at the Connecticut casinos, Rhode Island VLT parlors, and Bangor, Maine's recently opened slot parlor. Last year's study estimated that in 2005 Massachusetts residents spent approximately \$1.1 billion ---\$890.3 million and \$190.4 million, respectively --- at the Connecticut casinos and Rhode Island VLT parlors.

Every age group tallied majority support for a casino. Those aged 18-29 favor a casino by a 58%-26% margin; ages 30-39 by 59%-27%; ages 40-49 by 55%-34%; ages 50-69 by 56%-33%; ages 60-69 by 62%-31%; and those over 70 by 51%-33%.

Those who earn less than \$25K a year favor a casino by 65%-25%; \$25K-\$45K, 67%-20%; \$45K-\$75K, 57%-28%; and \$75K-\$150K, 59%-29%. Only those who earn more than \$150K oppose a casino, by 45%-52%.

Like gender, region, age, and all but one income group, residents of every educational level also express majority support for a Massachusetts casino.

Residents with less than a high school education support a casino by a 69%-25% margin; high school graduates by a 61%-19% margin; among those who attended college, 56%-34%, and for those holding a B.A. or higher, 53%-36%.

"Massachusetts residents are well-educated on the subject of casino gambling," Barrow added. "They understand the amount of money that Bay Staters are gambling out-of-state; they grasp the potential fiscal and economic benefits; and they understand that there are potential social costs involved."

Like a jury, Barrow added, "Massachusetts residents have weighed the evidence, sifted through the pros and cons, and rendered a clear verdict: they believe it is time their elected officials authorize a casino in the commonwealth."

For a summary of today's poll results, go to "What's New!" at <http://www.umassd.edu/cfpa>. The summary will be posted at 6pm on January 28th.