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BAY STATERS CONTINUE STRONG SUPPORT FOR THREE RESORT CASINOS AND ONE SLOT PARLOR

CITE JOBS, TAX REVENUE, TOURISM, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RECAPTURING BAY STATE SPENDING AS REASONS FOR SUPPORT

BELIEVE FISCAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OUTWEIGH SOCIAL IMPACTS

A proposal to authorize three destination resort casinos, and one slot parlor through competitive bidding, is supported by 56% of Massachusetts residents, according to a public opinion survey released today by the Center for Policy Analysis (CFPA) at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

The poll, which queried 552 Massachusetts residents on September 16-18, 2011, found a majority of nearly every demographic group --- gender, age, income, and education --- endorse Gov. Deval Patrick's and the Massachusetts State Legislature's expanded gaming proposal. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 4.1% at a 95% confidence interval.

Survey respondents were asked: "Do you support or oppose the plan proposed by the governor and legislative leaders to authorize destination resort casinos in southeastern Massachusetts, western Massachusetts and greater Boston, and to allow a small slot parlor at a location to be determined through competitive bidding?"

Among the 552 respondents, 56% support the proposal, 31% oppose it, and 13% are undecided.

Dr. Clyde W. Barrow, CFPA's director and poll supervisor, said that "It is clear from this survey and previous ones conducted by the CFPA, as well as polls conducted by other academic institutes and media outlets during that past several years, that the jury is in on expanded gaming: Massachusetts residents want it; they support it; and they believe it provides significant fiscal and economic benefits to the Commonwealth."

A March 2010 UMass Dartmouth-CFPA poll found that 53% supported, 25% opposed, and 22% were undecided about an earlier proposal by Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo to authorize two resort casinos and a limited number of slot machines at the state's racetracks. An April 2009 UMass Dartmouth-CFPA poll found that 57% of Massachusetts residents supported the authorization of two or more resort casinos, 30% were opposed, and 13% were undecided. A July 2009 University of New Hampshire survey conducted for the *Boston Globe* found that 57% of Bay Staters supported gaming expansion, 36% were opposed, and 7% were undecided. In November 2009, a Suffolk University survey found that 57% supported the authorization of resort casinos, 37% were opposed, and just 7% were undecided.

Barrow said, "No matter how you ask the question, the public's answer is always the same and its support for expanded gaming is unwavering." He also said the public believes the current expanded gaming proposal, crafted by the governor and the legislature, contains rigorous regulatory, law enforcement and social mitigation measures that will enhance the fiscal and economic benefits of expanded gaming, while minimizing any perceived social impacts.

Respondents to the most recent poll were also asked a series of questions about the possible fiscal, economic, and social impacts of three resort casinos and a slot parlor. They were read a list of questions, in random order, so as to elicit their strongest, unaffected response.

Specifically, respondents were asked: “On a scale of 1 to 5, with “1” meaning that you strongly disagree and “5” meaning that you strongly agree, how strongly do you agree or disagree that three resort casinos and a slot parlor in Massachusetts would”

- Generate tax revenue for the state **73%**
- Create new jobs for Massachusetts residents **72%**
- Recapture gambling revenues **63%**
- Increase tourism in the state **61%**
- Stimulate local economic development **60%**
- Increase gambling addiction in the state **51%**
- Increase political corruption in the state **39%**
- Increase crime in the state **34%**
- Degrade the quality of life in the region **32%**
- Hurt small local businesses **29%**

Nearly three quarters of respondents agree or strongly agree that the current proposal for expanded gaming will generate tax revenue for the state (73%) and create new jobs for Massachusetts residents (72%).

More than three-fifths of respondents agree or strongly agree that three casinos and a slot parlor will recapture gambling revenues from adjacent states (63%), increase tourism in the state (61%), and stimulate local economic development (60%).

Increased gambling addiction in the state was only negative social impact that a majority (51%) of respondents agree or strongly agree would occur as a result of expanded gaming in Massachusetts.

Barrow said that after sixteen years of public deliberation, Bay Staters “have developed a sophisticated understanding of the gaming issue and they have conducted their own cost-benefits analysis. They’ve paid close attention to the issue, and they have personally observed the fiscal, economic and social impacts of surrounding gaming and entertainment venues, such as Connecticut’s casinos and Rhode Island’s slot parlors.”

Massachusetts residents make over seven million visits annually to New England’s casinos and slot parlors, Barrow added, “so they possess a factual knowledge of the potential pros and cons based on personal experience and observation. That’s the ultimate cost-benefit analysis, and they’ve concluded that the fiscal and economic benefits of casinos and slot parlors outweigh any perceived social impacts.”

The poll was released as part of the New England Gaming Research Project, which is funded entirely by the School of Education, Public Policy, and Civic Engagement at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

The full poll results and the survey questionnaire are available at:
<http://www.umassd.edu/seppce/centers/cfpa/>

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Summary Data Tables

Q9. Do you support or oppose the plan proposed by the Governor and legislative leaders to authorize destination resort casinos in Southeastern Massachusetts, Western Massachusetts and Greater Boston and to allow a small slot parlor at a location to be determined through competitive bidding?

	Total		Crosstabulations												
			Sex		Education			Age				Income			
	Number	Percent	Male	Female	<=H.S.	Some/Assoc.	Bach+	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	<45K	\$45K-\$75K	75K-125K	>\$125K
Support	311	56	60	53	65	65	45	65	55	54	53	66	67	56	38
Oppose	172	31	32	30	21	25	42	23	31	38	33	28	23	33	41
Don't Know	69	13	8	17	14	10	13	12	15	7	15	6	10	11	21

Outcomes of 3 Resort Casinos and Slot Parlor

Outcome	Agree/Strongly		Neutral	Disagree/Strongly	
	Agree	Disagree		Disagree	Don't Know
Generate tax revenue for the state	73%	12%	12%	3%	
Create new jobs for Massachusetts residents	72%	14%	12%	2%	
Recapture gambling revenues	63%	21%	13%	3%	
Increase tourism in the state	61%	18%	19%	1%	
Stimulate local economic development	60%	19%	18%	3%	
Increase gambling addiction in the state	51%	19%	28%	3%	
Increase political corruption in the state	39%	27%	32%	3%	
Increase crime in the state	34%	27%	37%	2%	
Degrade the quality of life in the region	32%	24%	40%	4%	
Hurt small local businesses	29%	25%	43%	4%	