

A Nation of Bettors? They May Follow New Jersey's Lead into Sports Betting

Even if New Jersey voters rushed to embrace sports betting in their recent referendum, voters across the country are not quite ready to join them - though new data suggest that the country may be moving in that direction. According to a national poll of registered voters by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™, voters nationwide split (42%-42%) on the question of whether to follow New Jersey's lead and change federal law to allow sports betting in their own states.

"Gambling has become, for good or ill, a national industry, and you can bet that politicians and casinos all over the country are closely following New Jersey's plans," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll. "The public will get interested too, if it is held up as a great new source of revenue."

The split of 42%-42% is a change from [the poll's last study of the question](#) in March 2010 when 53% of voters nationwide opposed sports betting compared to 39% who favored it. While support increased only by 3 percentage points, the opposition melted by 11 points, and the percentage of those unsure, or with a mixed opinion doubled (16%). "One reason for the change in public opinion might be that New Jersey is pushing the issue," said Woolley. "More people will wonder whether it's an opportunity for their state too."

Men and women have opposite views on the question. Men favor the idea by margin of 49-37, while women oppose the notion by a similar margin, 47-35. There are significant age differences too. Voters under 45 favor the idea. Voters 45 and older oppose it.

But the group most strongly in favor of it are those whose households already do it. Voters in households where people already bet on sports, or participate in an office pool, approve overwhelmingly of the idea (71-23). Voters in households where no one bets on sports oppose the notion (46-36).

Then there's the question of internet betting, which has been proposed in New Jersey, but which national voters see as a distinctly different proposition. By a robust two-to-one margin (60%-28%) voters nationwide oppose the idea of allowing casinos in their state to run betting games online for folks in their state. That opposition is little changed from the previous measure in 2010.

Further, both men and women oppose internet betting: men by 55%-35% and women by 65%-22%. But again those who are already sports bettors, or enjoy the office pool, favor internet betting too (50-44), while voters who aren't already busy placing bets are opposed to internet betting by a wide margin (64-20). "Sports betting is a big enough change for people to get behind and get used to," said Woolley. "Internet betting may just be the final frontier."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 855 registered voters nationwide was conducted by both landlines and cell phones from Nov. 29 through Dec. 5, 2011, and has a margin of error of +/-3.5 percentage points.

Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from Nov. 29 through Dec. 5, 2011, using a randomly selected national sample of 855 registered voters contacted on both landlines and cell phones. The margin of error for a sample of 855 randomly selected respondents is +/- 3.5 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers. PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a land-line phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected. Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone-only-households, interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender among the voting population.

Currently, betting on sports—like football games and basketball games—is legal only in a few states. But now New Jersey is fighting to allow sports betting in its state as well. How much have you heard or read about this...READ?

	All	men	wom	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
A great deal	5%	8	2	13	3	4	2
Some	11%	15	7	14	8	13	9
Just a little	19%	19	19	23	19	19	16
Nothing	65%	58	72	51	71	64	73

Note: The development isn't on the top of everyone's mind. More than 4 of 5 voters (84%) say they've heard little or nothing of New Jersey's sports betting quest, though it should also be said that more than twice as many men (23%) than women (9%) say they've heard about Jersey's plans.

How about you and your state? Do you support or oppose changing the federal law to allow sports-betting in your state?

	All	gender		ideology			age				Bet?*		2010
		Men	Wom	Lib	Mod	Con	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	yes	no	
Support	42%	49	35	41	44	39	43	55	39	34	71	36	39%
Oppose	42%	37	47	41	38	48	33	34	45	50	23	46	53%
unsure	16%	14	18	18	17	14	24	12	16	16	6	18	8%

Now thinking about the internet... What about on-line gaming do you favor or oppose allowing casinos in your state to run betting games online--over the internet--for people in your state?

	All	gender		ideology			age				Bet?*		2010
		Men	Wom	Lib	Mod	Con	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	yes	no	
Support	28%	35	22	28	30	27	28	47	26	16	50	24	21%
Oppose	60%	55	65	54	58	66	52	43	65	73	44	64	67%
Unsure	11%	10	13	17	12	8	19	10	9	10	6	12	11%

* Question was "In the past year, has anyone in your household bet on sports, or participated in an office pool?"

Question Wording and Order

US1-4, D1, USP1a-b, USP3 released 12.7.11.

USP2 released 12.14.11.

SC1-5b withheld for later release.

...Let me change the topic for a moment and ask you something about casinos and gambling.

AC1. Currently, betting on sports—like football games and basketball games—is legal only in a few states. But now New Jersey is fighting to allow sports betting in its state as well. How much have you heard or read about this...READ?

A great deal
Some
Just a little or
Nothing

AC2. How about you and your state? Do you support or oppose changing the federal law to allow sports-betting in your state?

Support
Oppose
DK/don't care/mixed (vol)

AC3. Now thinking about the internet...

What about on-line [SELECT ONE AT RANDOM: gaming/gambling]... do you support or oppose allowing casinos in your state to run betting games online--over the internet--for people in your state?

Sample Characteristics %

Gender	
Male	48
Female	52

Age	
18-29	12
30-44	26
45-59	32
60+	28
ref.	2

In addition to being American, would you say you are...?	
White	67
Black	13
Hispanic or Latino	11
Asian	5
Other/ref.	4

Census regions	
Northeast	18
North central	26
South	35
West	21