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Opinion divided, but majority give the state the green light to allow sports betting in defiance of federal law

The decision by the Christie administration to move forward with allowing sports betting in casinos and racetracks across the state, despite a federal law which prohibits all but a few states from doing so, receives majority support, according to the most recent Fairleigh Dickinson University PublicMind survey of adults aged 18 and older.

Among those who have an opinion on the issue, 45 percent believe New Jersey should allow sports betting at racetracks and casinos, even if federal law prevents it from doing so, compared to 38 percent who believe New Jersey should wait until the federal ban is repealed by Congress.

“Although support is not overwhelming, these numbers suggest the public is cautiously behind the goal of moving forward with legalized sports betting,” said Krista Jenkins, Executive Director of PublicMind and professor of political science.

An even larger percentage (58%) endorses sports betting irrespective of the federal ban. This represents a slight increase from the last time PublicMind asked a similar question. In September 2011, 53 percent said they favor allowing sports betting at Atlantic City casinos and racetracks, with 31 percent opposed.

A few groups help to distinguish among those who are more supportive relative to others. A majority of men endorse moving forward without a congressional repeal (53%) compared with only four-in-ten women (38%). And Republicans (52%) are comfortable allowing legalized sports betting in numbers that significantly exceed Democrats (42%) and independents (40%).

“The numbers suggest that men are more accustomed to placing sports bets, especially in informal settings like an office, so their green light to legalized sports betting even in defiance of federal law should come as no surprise,” said Jenkins. “As for party differences, the more robust support among Republicans could be reflective of the close proximity the issue has to the Christie administration.”

Finally, those who have been to a slots or casino parlor in the past twelve months emerge as proponents of legalized sports betting. Fifty-three percent of casino-goers endorse moving forward compared with 41 percent who haven't frequented a gaming locale recently.

“It's also interesting to see such stark differences among those who say they have bet on sports in an office pool or some other informal gaming venue,” said Jenkins. “The double digit point difference among office betters and non-betters suggests that informally betting primes the pump for legalizing the practice.” Fifty-eight percent of office gamers favor moving forward compared with only 42 percent of non-betting residents who say the same.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University statewide poll of 945 registered and unregistered voters was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from July 23 through July 29, 2012, and has a margin of error of +/-3.3 percentage points.

Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 201.692.7032

Methodology

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from July 23 through July 29, 2012, using a randomly selected sample of 945 residents statewide. Both registered and unregistered voters were interviewed for this survey. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points among registered voters, and 3.3 percentage points among the entire sample. 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 respondents interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

Tables – All respondents

Office Pool

In the past twelve months, have you bet on sports, or participated in an office pool?

	All	Party			Gender	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women
Yes	19%	20	20	17	24	14
No	80%	79	79	81	74	85
Unsure	-	-	-	1	-	-

Casino in last 12 months

In the past twelve months have you, or anyone in your household, been to a casino or slots parlor?

	All	Party			Gender	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women
Yes	36%	37	34	38	39	34
No	62%	63	66	60	59	65
Unsure	1%	1	-	2	1	1

Sports betting in NJ

Currently, betting on sports – like football games and basketball games – is legal only in a few states. New Jersey recently passed a law allowing sports betting here as well. How much have you heard or read about this?

	All	Party			Gender		Be\Bt on sports?		Been to casino?	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	Yes	No	Yes	No
A lot	10%	8	14	11	15	5	19	8	16	7
Some	22%	21	21	25	25	19	30	20	28	19
Just a little	26%	28	26	26	27	26	23	27	25	27
Nothing	40%	41	38	38	32	48	27	43	30	45
Unsure	1%	2	1	1	1	2	-	2	1	2

Sports betting in NJ, public opinion**How much interest do you have in this issue?**

	All	Party			Gender		Bet on sports?		Been to casino?	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	Yes	No	Yes	No
A lot	9%	9	8	10	12	7	21	7	15	6
Some	17%	15	20	19	18	16	24	15	18	16
Just a little	22%	23	21	21	23	21	22	22	22	22
Nothing	50%	51	50	49	46	55	32	55	44	54
Unsure	1%	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2

New Jersey law regarding sports betting

**Which of the following statements best describes how you feel, even if neither is a perfect statement?
New Jersey should allow sports betting at race tracks and casinos even if federal law prevents it from doing so...or...New Jersey should wait to allow sports betting until a time when the federal law banning it in all but a few states is replaced by Congress.**

	All	Party			Gender		Bet on sports?		Been to casino?	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	Yes	No	Yes	No
Allow	45%	42	40	52	53	38	58	42	53	41
Not allow	38%	42	42	32	35	41	36	38	34	40
Neither	7%	7	8	7	5	9	3	8	5	8
Unsure	10%	9	10	9	8	13	3	12	7	12

Favor/Oppose Sports betting in NJ

Overall, do you favor or oppose legalizing sports betting in New Jersey casinos and at racetracks around the state?

	All	Party			Gender		Bet on sports?		Been to casino?	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	Yes	No	Yes	No
Favor	58%	59	54	61	70	47	78	53	73	49
Oppose	29%	29	30	28	21	36	24	32	19	35
Unsure	13%	12	16	11	9	17	8	15	8	16

Exact Question Wording and Order

- D6 In the past 12 months have you, or anyone in your household, been to a casino or slots parlor?
- 1 Yes
2 No
9 Dk (VOL)
- NJ9 Currently, betting on sports - like football games and basketball games - is legal only in a few states. New Jersey recently passed a law allowing sports betting here as well. How much have you heard or read about this?
- 1 A great deal
2 Some
3 Just a little
4 Nothing
8 DK [vol]

NJ9a How much interest do you have in this issue?

- 1 A lot
- 2 Some
- 3 Just a little
- 4 Nothing
- 8 DK [vol]

NJ10 Which of the following statements best describes how you feel, even if neither is a perfect statement? RANDOMIZE

- 1 New Jersey should allow sports betting at race tracks and casinos even if federal law prevents it from doing so.
- 2 New Jersey should wait to allow sports betting until a time when the federal law banning it in all but a few states is repealed by Congress.
- 3 Neither [vol]
- 8 DK [vol]

NJ11 Overall, do you favor or oppose sports betting in New Jersey casinos and at racetracks around the state?

- 1 Favor
- 2 Oppose
- 8 DK [vol]

Sample Characteristics

Gender

	Registered voters	Full sample
Male	48	49
Female	52	51

Age

	Registered voters	Full sample
18-29	13	16
30-44	23	23
45-59	32	31
60+	30	28
Refused	2	2

Race/Ethnicity

	Registered voters	Full sample
White	69	67
Black/African-American	11	11
Latino or Hispanic	11	11
Asian	5	7
Other/refused	5	5

Public employee household

	Registered voters	Full sample
Yes	20	19
No	78	79
Unsure/refused	2	2

Party identification

	Registered voters	Full sample
Democrat/Lean Democrat	47	46
Independent/DK/refused	21	23
Republican/Lean Republican	33	32