YOUR TAX DOLLARS INTO NFL OWNERS' POCKETS?

Americans may love football, but few support the use of public funds and tax breaks for the National Football League and a vast majority were unaware the NFL is a not-for-profit entity, according to a recent national survey from Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind.

More than half of respondents (56%) identify themselves as fans of the NFL, but when it comes to tax dollars being used to help the NFL, an overwhelming majority of Americans say it should be 'under further review.' Seven-in-ten (69%) oppose the use of public funds to build and support stadiums for NFL teams, and virtually the same number (71%) say no to tax breaks to attract or keep a team in town.

"The public's love for the game clearly doesn't trump their fiscal restraint when it comes to big time sporting events," said Krista Jenkins, director of PublicMind and professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University. "Even teams who don't make it to the Super Bowl generate millions from licensing and ticket sales. The public says taxpayers shouldn't be hit up for support when there's enough in the NFL coffers to pay their own way."

Digging deeper, there's little evidence to suggest that some are more persuaded by NFL appeals for public funding than others. Across gender, race, and age, opinion remains consistent -- a resounding "no" to tax breaks and public funds. Even self-described football fans are largely opposed to corporate welfare for the NFL, although it's notable that fans are twice as likely as non-fans to favor tax breaks for NFL teams (27 versus 14 percent, respectively).

The same survey also finds that most are unaware that the NFL is a not-for-profit organization. As a recent report in *The Atlantic* outlined, the NFL and its teams are the recipients of a good many direct and indirect subsidies. However, more than two-thirds (69%) say the NFL is NOT a nonprofit, with only 13 percent correctly identifying it as not-for-profit.

"Since the NFL is generally associated with wealthy owners and players, not to mention the tremendous revenue that each team generates year-round, the public would not be expected to know the League is a non-profit organization," said Jenkins. "With billions likely to flow from the Super Bowl, it would seem a contradiction that the organization behind it all would be technically a not-for-profit, but that is indeed true about the NFL."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 1002 aged 18 and older who reside in the United States was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from December 9 through December 15, 2013, and has a margin of error of +/3.1 percentage points.

Methodology

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from December 9 through December 15, 2013 using a randomly selected sample of 1002 individuals aged 18 and older who reside in the United States. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/- 3.1 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 landline 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

Are you a professional football fan, or not?		Gender		Race		Age			
	All	Male	Female	White	Nonwhite	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Yes	**56%**	65	48	56	58	63	55	59	50
No	**43%**	34	52	43	41	37	44	40	49
DK/Refused	**2%**	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1

As far as you are aware, is the NFL a non-profit organization?		Football Fan		Gender		Race		Age			
	All	Yes	No	Male	Female	White	Nonwhite	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Yes	**13%**	15	10	13	13	14	11	15	14	12	12
No	**69%**	76	60	75	64	71	65	73	69	72	64
DK/Refused	**17%**	8	30	11	23	15	24	11	18	16	24

Do you favor or oppose [randomize] the use of public funds to build and support stadiums for NFL teams		Football Fan		Gender		Race		Age			
	All	Yes	No	Male	Female	White	Nonwhite	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Favor	**24%**	31`	15	27	21	25	23	26	25	26	20
Oppose	**69%**	64	74	67	70	68	68	72	61	68	73
DK/Refused (vol)	**8%**	5	11	6	9	6	9	2	14	6	7

	All	Football Fan		Gender		Race		Age			
Do you favor or oppose [randomize] tax breaks for NFL teams in order to attract and keep them in a city or state?		**Yes**	**No**	**Male**	**Female**	**White**	**Nonwhite**	**18-29**	**30-44**	**45-59**	**60+**
Favor	**22%**	27	14	25	18	20	25	21	18	29	17
Opposed	**71%**	67	75	68	73	72	65	73	72	68	72
DK/Refused (vol)	**8%**	6	11	7	10	8	10	6	10	3	11

Exact Question Wording and Order

US1 through US5 released December 18, 2013
M1 released December 23, 2013
USS1 through USS4 held for future release

Now turning to sports…

NFL1 Are you a fan of professional football, or not?
1   Yes
2   No
8   DK/Refused (vol)

NFL2 As far as you are aware, is the NFL a non-profit organization? [Note to interviewer: Please make sure you emphasize NON-PROFIT]
1   Yes
2   No
8   DK/Refused (vol)

NFL3 Do you favor or oppose [randomize] the use of public funds to build and support stadiums for NFL teams?
1   Favor
2   Oppose
8   DK/Refused (vol)

NFL4 Do you favor or oppose [randomize] tax breaks for NFL teams in order to attract and keep them in a city or state?
1   Favor
2   Oppose
8   DK/Refused (vol)

Sample characteristics

Gender

Male	49
Female	51

Age

18-29	22
30-44	26
45-59	28
60+	24
Refused	1

Race/Ethnicity

White	70
Black/African-American	12
Latino or Hispanic	12
Asian	2
Other/refused	4

Party identification

Democrat/Lean Democrat	41
Independent/DK/refused	25
Republican/Lean Republican	34