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EXPAND SPORTS BETTING AND CASINOS? PUBLIC SAYS NOT SO FAST

Opinion is divided in the Garden State over whether the federal government should lift its ban on sports betting versus allowing it to remain in place, according to the most recent statewide survey of New Jersey adults by Fairleigh Dickinson University's survey research organization, PublicMind. These findings follow the introduction of legislation by two New Jersey representatives in the U.S. House that would allow New Jersey to legalize sports betting. If either one of the two bills passes, other states may follow suit and allow legalized sports betting. In regard to gaming more generally, it appears as if the public has cooled a bit to the idea of allowing casinos to expand beyond Atlantic City, an area that has seen its share of troubles lately in the form of casino closures and job loss, to name just a few.

Sports Betting

PublicMind finds that half of respondents say the federal ban on sports betting in all but a few states should be lifted, with 41 percent who believe the ban should remain. To some extent, these numbers suggest greater hesitancy on the part of New Jersey residents for moving ahead with legalized sports betting. In October 2013, residents were asked if they favored or opposed legalizing sports betting in the state, and 55 percent said they favored the idea with only 28 percent opposed. The addition of the federal ban to the question appears to have tempered support a bit and driven up opposition.

“Representatives Pallone and LoBiondo’s two separate pieces of legislation addressing sports betting in New Jersey are supported by many, but there remain clear pockets of opposition. Placing a bet out in the open on basketball isn’t a slam dunk in the court of public opinion,” said Donald Hoover, senior lecturer at Fairleigh Dickinson University's International School of Hospitality and Tourism Management. “If the sentiment nationally mirrors what we’re finding in New Jersey, legalization could be a tough sell in other parts of the country, too.”

Not surprisingly, those with a recent history of going to a casino or betting in an informal office pool are the most supportive of ending the federal ban. Nearly seven-in-ten office-bettors support ending the ban, and six-in-ten casino-goers say the same.

“As we approach what is arguably the second most popular office pool – the NCAA Men’s Basketball Championship, it is not surprising that many of the people participating in these pools would like the option to place wagers on individual games,” said Hoover.

Men are also considerably more likely to want sports betting in the state. Well over half (59%) of men would give the green light to legalized sports wagering, with fewer than half (42%) of women who say the same.

Among those in favor of allowing sports betting in New Jersey, the most frequent reason given is the added revenue it would mean for the state (51%). Presumably sports betting would increase visitors to the state, and help to bolster the lagging economy in Atlantic City through online sports wagering. Behind that is the belief that individuals should be able to do what they want without government intrusion (30%).

As for those opposed, fear that the practice will result in more gambling addictions and hurt an addict's loved ones is the top respondent concern (47%). A quarter (25%) is opposed because they believe legalization will corrupt professional sports.

"Looking at the numbers, it looks like finances and social deviance are driving responses. On the one hand, sports wagering is seen as at least part of the solution to the state's lagging economy. But you can't ignore the worries of those who see it as opening the door to personal heartache and financial ruin," said Hoover.

Atlantic City: Status quo or grow?

As for Atlantic City and its troubles of late, fewer today endorse the idea of allowing the expansion of gaming beyond AC as compared with July 2014. Right now, 36 percent favor casino gambling in other areas of the state, six percentage points less than last summer (42%). As with legalized sports betting, office pool participants and casino-goers offer the most enthusiasm for gaming's expansion, although even among these respondents support fails to attract a majority.

"The negative news about Atlantic City may play a role in swaying public opinion in New Jersey and elsewhere about the effects of expanded gaming on existing offerings," continued Hoover.

Finally, when it comes to Atlantic City's financial troubles, New Jersey residents are closely following the news of casino closings and other economic woes. More than three-quarters (77%) say they've heard a lot or some about the historic gaming community and its recent problems, with almost half who have heard a lot (45%).

As for what or who residents believe is responsible for AC's recent decline, opinion is divided about equally between those who believe competition from other area casinos (31%) and the overall economy (29%) are to blame. Mismanagement — either political or within the tourism industry — is seen by relatively few as a source of blame.

"It doesn't look like the public believes there's much that can be done to stem the tide on AC's troubles. Casinos in Pennsylvania and New York are beyond the control of New Jersey legislators, and belt tightening is inevitable during an economic downturn," said Hoover. "Policymakers may have a

difficult time selling taxpayers a package of reforms for the troubled community given the perception that larger forces are driving people away from Atlantic City.”

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 901 adults in New Jersey was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from February 23 through March 1. The margin of error is +/- 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 February 23 through March 1 using a randomly selected sample of 901 adults in New Jersey. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/- 3.3 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.

The sample was purchased from Marketing Systems Group and the research was funded by Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Tables

Currently the federal government allows sports betting in some states that had it before the practice was banned. Some states that don’t have it have asked the federal government to allow them to have legalized sports betting. Should the federal government allow New Jersey to have sports betting, or should the law remain the same?

		PID			Gender		Race		Age		
	All	Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-34	35-59	60+
Allow in NJ	50%	53	45	52	59	42	52	48	55	50	49
Remain the same	41%	39	47	40	36	46	39	46	39	40	42
DK (vol)	8%	8	7	7	4	12	9	6	5	9	8
Ref (vol)	1%	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1

Currently the federal government allows sports betting in some states that had it before the practice was banned. Some states that don't have it have asked the federal government to allow them to have legalized sports betting. Should the federal government allow New Jersey to have sports betting, or should the law remain the same?

	All	Been to a casino in last 12 months		Participated in an office pool in the last 12 months	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Allow in NJ	50%	59	46	69	46
Remain the same	41%	33	45	26	45
DK (vol)	8%	7	9	5	8
Ref (vol)	1%	0	1	0	1

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

	July 2012	October 2013
Favor	58%	55%
Oppose	29%	28%
Dk/Ref (vol)	13%	17%

Which of the following best explains why you FAVOR legalized sports betting in New Jersey? People should be free to do what they want without government intrusion; Other states allow it so New Jersey should be allowed as well; It would increase revenue for the state.[N = 453]

	All	PID			Gender		Been to a casino in last 12 month		Participated in an office pool in the last 12 months	
		Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	Yes	No	Yes	No
No government intrusion	30	22	24	39	29	30	31	30	29	30
Other states	12	16	10	10	13	12	10	13	5	15
More revenue for NJ	51	55	60	42	51	52	53	51	59	48
Other	6	5	6	8	6	6	6	6	7	6
DK (vol)	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
Ref (vol)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Which of the following best explains why you OPPOSE legalized sports betting in New Jersey? The federal government bans the practice in NJ; Legalized betting can result in people becoming addicted and hurting those around them; People bet on sports already without the law changing; Legalized betting will corrupt professional sports [N = 370]

	PID				Gender		Been to a casino in last 12 month		Participated in an office pool in the last 12 months	
	All	Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	Yes	No	Yes	No
Government ban	3	4	2	2	2	3	2	2	0	3
Hurts people	47	44	45	49	43	50	46	49	49	47
Already betting	14	14	15	16	13	15	19	12	22	13
Corrupt sports	25	28	27	24	31	21	27	26	23	26
Other (vol)	9	9	9	9	9	9	3	10	5	9
DK (vol)	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	2
Ref (vol)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Right now, casino gambling in New Jersey is limited to Atlantic City. Do you favor or oppose [rotate] expanding casino gambling to other areas in the state?

	PID				Gender		Race		Age		
	All	Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-34	35-59	60+
Favor	36	39	29	35	38	33	35	37	35	39	34
Oppose	57	53	66	58	55	59	58	55	55	55	61
DK (vol)	7	7	4	6	6	7	6	7	9	5	5
Ref (vol)	1	0	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1

Right now, casino gambling in New Jersey is limited to Atlantic City. Do you favor or oppose [rotate] expanding casino gambling to other areas in the state?

	All	Been to a casino in last 12 months		Participated in an office pool in the last 12 months	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Favor	36	42	32	45	33
Oppose	57	53	60	50	59
DK (vol)	7	5	8	4	7
Ref (vol)	1	0	1	1	1

<i>Right now casino gambling in New Jersey is limited to Atlantic City. Do you favor or oppose [rotate] expanding casino gambling to other areas in the state?</i>				
	February 2015	July 2014	June 2010	February 2009
Favor	36%	42	42	24
Oppose	57%	50	49	70
DK/Ref (vol)	8%	8	9	6

As you may have heard, Atlantic City has been struggling financially and many casinos have closed. How much have you heard or read about this issue?

	All	PID			Gender		Race		Age		
		Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-34	35-59	60+
A lot	45	43	42	51	49	41	48	39	33	49	49
Some	32	33	35	30	28	36	32	34	30	34	30
Just a little	15	15	16	14	15	15	16	15	22	12	15
Nothing at all	7	9	5	4	7	7	5	11	13	4	5
DK (vol)	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Ref (vol)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0

As you may have heard, Atlantic City has been struggling financially and many casinos have closed. How much have you heard or read about this issue?

	All	Been to a casino in last 12 months		Participated in an office pool in the last 12 months	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
A lot	45	64	38	52	43
Some	32	26	35	36	31
Just a little	15	7	18	9	17
Nothing at all	7	2	8	3	8
DK (vol)	1	1	1	0	1
Ref (vol)	0	0	0	0	0

	Yes	No	DK (vol)	Refused (vol)
Been to a casino in the last 12 months	29%	71%	0	0
Participated in an office pool in the last 12 months	20%	79%	1%	0

<i>In your opinion, which of the following do you think is the most to blame for the problems Atlantic City is currently facing? Competition from other area casinos; Mismanagement by politicians; Mismanagement by casino owners; Declining tourism; The overall economy</i>											
	PID				Gender		Race		Age		
	All	Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-34	35-59	60+
Competition	31	31	28	37	33	29	35	25	16	37	38
Pol. mismanagement	13	12	15	15	15	11	15	9	10	15	13
Owner mismanagement	11	12	8	10	13	8	10	12	9	11	11
Tourism	8	9	8	6	8	7	6	10	15	5	5
Economy	29	30	32	23	23	35	26	34	39	25	27
DK (vol)	7	7	10	6	7	8	6	10	11	6	6
Ref (vol)	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	1

<i>In your opinion, which of the following do you think is the most to blame for the problems Atlantic City is currently facing? Competition from other area casinos; Mismanagement by politicians; Mismanagement by casino owners; Declining tourism; The overall economy.</i>					
		Been to a casino in last 12 months		Participated in an office pool in the last 12 months	
	All	Yes	No	Yes	No
Competition	31	35	30	33	31
Pol. mismanagement	13	13	13	14	13
Owner mismanagement	11	12	10	14	10
Tourism	8	5	8	9	7
Economy	29	29	29	26	30
DK (vol)	7	5	8	4	8
Ref (vol)	1	1	1	1	1

Exact Question Wording and Order

US1 and US2 released March 3

NJ1 through NJ3 released March 3

EDUC1 through EDUC5 withheld for future release

Changing topics...

BET1 Currently, the Federal Government allows sports betting in some states that had it before the practice was banned. Some states that don't have it have asked the federal government to allow them to have legalized sports betting. Should the federal government allow New Jersey to have sports betting, or should the law remain the same?

1 Allow in NJ [ASK BET2A]

- 2 Keep law as is [ASK BET2B]
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

BET2A Which of the following best explains why you favor legalized sports betting in NJ?

- 1 People should be free to do what they want without government intrusion
- 2 Other states allow it so New Jersey should be as well
- 3 It would increase revenue for the state
- 4 Other
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

BET2B Which of the following reasons best explains why you oppose legalized sports betting in NJ?

- 1 The federal government bans the practice in NJ
- 2 Legalized betting can result in people becoming addicted and hurting those around them
- 3 People bet on sports already without the law changing
- 4 Legalized betting will corrupt professional sports
- 5 Other
- 8 DK (vol)
- 0 Refused (vol)

And turning to Atlantic City....

AC1 Right now casino gambling in New Jersey is limited to Atlantic City. Do you favor or oppose expanding casino gambling to other areas in the state?

- 1 Favor
- 2 Oppose
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

AC2 As you may have heard, Atlantic City has been struggling financially and many casinos have closed. How much have you heard or read about this issue?

- 1 A lot
- 2 Some
- 3 Just a little
- 4 Nothing at all
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

AC3 In your opinion, which of the following do you think is the most to blame for the problems Atlantic City is currently facing?

- 1 Competition from other area casinos
- 2 Mismanagement by politicians
- 3 Mismanagement by casino owners
- 4 Declining tourism
- 5 The overall economy
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

Weighted sample characteristics

		All respondents N = 901; MoE = +/- 3.3
Gender	<i>Male</i>	49%
	<i>Female</i>	51%
Age	<i>18-34</i>	26%
	<i>35-59</i>	42%
	<i>60+</i>	29%
	<i>Refused</i>	2%
Race	<i>White</i>	61%
	<i>African American</i>	13%
	<i>Hispanic</i>	16%
	<i>Asian</i>	6%
	<i>Other/Refused</i>	5%
	<i>Refused</i>	2%
Union household	<i>Self</i>	13%
	<i>Someone else</i>	10%
	<i>No/Refused/DK</i>	77%
Party (with leaners)	<i>Dem</i>	45%
	<i>Ind/DK/Refused</i>	25%
	<i>Repub</i>	30%