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Contacts: Peter Woolley 973.670.3239; Donald Hoover 732-946-9170

Public Reaction Mixed to Proposals for A.C., Meadowlands, Racetracks

New Jersey voters are of two minds in reacting to a series of proposals by the governor's special commission on gaming, sports and entertainment. According to the most recent poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™, a majority (56%) say it's a good idea to privatize the operations of the horse racetracks at the Meadowlands and Monmouth Park. A similar majority (55%) say it's a good idea to privatize the Izod Arena in the Meadowlands. Democrats and Republicans agree on this, as do voters in both north and south Jersey.

But the reaction is negative when it comes to the commission's proposal to have the state run a special casino and tourism district in Atlantic City: 48% of voters say it's a bad idea, while 38% say it's a good idea. Republicans and Democrats agree that it is a bad idea, but voters in north and south Jersey differ. Northerners by a 5-to-3 margin say it's a bad idea, but voters in south Jersey split evenly on the question (43%-42%). Moreover, voters who have been to a casino in the past 12 months are more likely to say it's a good idea (42%) than voters who have not recently been to a casino (36%).

"The interests groups are all over it," said Donald Hoover, a professor in FDU's International School of Hospitality and Tourism Management and a former casino executive. "But for the public, the proposals are a surprise, complicated and haven't sunk in yet." A majority (56%) say they've heard just a little or nothing about them.

Voters also react negatively to the suggestion of giving state aid to complete the massive Xanadu project in the Meadowlands: 55% say it's a bad idea against 20% who say it's a good idea. Democrats and Republicans agree that it's a bad idea, as do folks from north and south Jersey. "At least the public is consistent," added Hoover. "They like private investors bearing costs, and in this economy the public is not in a mood to support state aid to privately owned projects." An FDU poll released March 31, 2010, showed voters also panned state subsidies to a casino project in Atlantic City.

Consistent with other statewide polls conducted by Fairleigh Dickinson University, a majority say that gambling should be kept in Atlantic City, rather than licensing it elsewhere in the state: 56% prefer to confine gaming to A.C., while 34% say the state should develop other places. Majorities of Democrats and Republicans agree it is best left in Atlantic City, as do voters in north and south, as well as those who've been to a casino recently and those who have not. "Atlantic City is still a sentimental favorite," said Hoover, "but in the long run the logic of revenue will decide the question."

For now, 63% say their preferred destination, in spite of opportunities in neighboring states, is Atlantic City; just 11% say they'd prefer to go to Pennsylvania, and 6% say they would rather go to Connecticut. About a third say they've been to a casino in the past 12 months: 4 of 5 of this group say that most recently they went to Atlantic City.

"That looks like good news," added Hoover, "but the competition is just beginning to advertise. They're already drawing players out of the state, and will be attracting more."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 801 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone from July 27, 2010, through August 2, 2010, and has a margin of error of +/- 3.5 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 973.443.8661

Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from July 27, 2010, through August 2, 2010, using a randomly selected sample of 801 registered voters statewide. The margin of error for a sample of 801 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. Results are mathematically weighted to match known demographics of gender, age, and race.

Question: Now, thinking about the financial problems of Atlantic City, the Meadowlands, the Xanadu project, and New Jersey racetracks, a number of proposals recently have been put on the table to deal with them.	
How much have you heard or read about these proposals...READ?	
	All
A great deal	14%
Some	30%
Just a little	32%
Nothing	24%

Question: For each of these proposals, tell me whether you think it's a good idea or a bad idea.								
[Rotate list]	All				region		Go to casinos	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	north	south	yes	no
Privatize the operations of the racetracks at the Meadowlands and Monmouth Park.								
Good idea	56%	53	53	66	58	55	57	56
Bad idea	26%	30	25	18	26	25	29	24
Unsure/mixed	18%	16	22	16	16	20	13	20
Privatize the operations of the Izod sports arena at the Meadowlands								
Good idea	55%	52	50	67	57	54	54	56
Bad idea	23%	28	22	14	23	23	28	21
Unsure/mixed	22%	20	28	19	20	24	18	23
Have the state run a special casino and tourism district in Atlantic City.								
Good idea	38%	39	37	40	33	43	42	36
Bad idea	48%	48	50	46	53	42	47	48
Unsure/mixed	14%	13	14	13	14	14	11	16
Give state aid to complete the Xanadu Project in the Meadowlands.								
Good idea	20%	24	10	16	20	20	23	18
Bad idea	55%	50	55	62	58	51	58	53
Unsure/mixed	26%	26	35	22	22	29	19	29

Question: As you may know Atlantic City now has a lot of competition in surrounding states. If you were going to gamble, or just going with some friends, where do you think you would most likely go...READ?

<i>rotate</i>	All	region		Go to casinos	
		North Jersey	South Jersey	Yes	No
Atlantic City	63%	55	71	80	54
Pennsylvania (Mt Airy or Bethlehem)	11%	13	8	11	10
Connecticut (Foxwoods or Mohegan)	6%	9	4	3	8
Yonkers	1%	2	1	1	1
Delaware	1%	1	2	1	2
Las Vegas (vol)	2%	4	1	2	3
Other (vol)	1%	1	--	--	1
Wouldn't go (vol)	12%	12	12	2	18
Don't know (vol)	2%	3	2	--	3

Question: Now when it comes to developing gambling in New Jersey, some people say... Others say....? Which comes closer to your position?

<i>[Rotate statements]</i>	All	party			region		Go to casinos		June 2010*	March 2009†
		Dem	Ind	Rep	North	South	Yes	No		
...it's best to keep all New Jersey gambling in Atlantic City	56%	56	43	61	55	57	57	55	49%	70%
...New Jersey should license other places in the state for gambling.	34%	36	41	31	35	34	39	32	42%	24%
Unsure/mixed	11%	8	16	7	11	9	5	13	9%	6%

*Question in June 2010 was "Now thinking about casinos and Atlantic City, right now casino gambling in New Jersey is limited to Atlantic City. Would you favor or oppose permitting casino gambling, including table games at the Meadowlands, where betting is already permitted?" Results were 49% opposed, 42% favor, 9% mixed or unsure.

†Question in March 2009 was "Now thinking about casinos and Atlantic City, 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?" Results were 70% oppose, 24% favor, 9% mixed or unsure.

Question: In the last 12 months have you been to a casino? [IF "yes" ASK "Where did you go most recently?"]

	All	North Jersey	South Jersey
Yes	34%	29%	39%
Atlantic City	80	69	89
Pennsylvania (including Mt Airy or Bethlehem)	8	13	5
Connecticut (including Foxwoods or Mohegan Sun)	2	3	1
Yonkers	1	2	--
Delaware	--	--	1
Las Vegas	4	7	2
Other	4	6	1
No	65%	70%	60%

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Question Wording and Order

Preceding questions released Aug. 4, 2010.

Now, thinking about the financial problems of Atlantic City, the Meadowlands, the Xanadu project, and New Jersey racetracks, a number of proposals recently have been put on the table to deal with them.

How much have you heard or read about these proposals...READ

A great deal
Some
Just a little
Nothing at all

For each of these proposals, tell me whether you think it's a good idea or a bad idea.

Good idea
Bad idea
Unsure/DK

ROTATE

- A. Privatize the operations of the racetracks at the Meadowlands and Monmouth Park.
- B. Privatize the operations of the Izod sports arena at the Meadowlands
- C. Have the state run a special casino and tourism district in Atlantic City.
- D. Give state aid to complete the Xanadu Project in the Meadowlands.

As you may know Atlantic City now has a lot of competition in surrounding states. If you were going to gamble, or just going with some friends, where do you think you would most likely go...?

ROTATE

Atlantic City
Pennsylvania (Mt Airy or Bethlehem)
Connecticut (Foxwoods or Mohegan Sun)
Yonkers
Delaware
Las Vegas (vol)
Other (vol)
Wouldn't go (vol)
Don't know (vol)

Now when it comes to developing gambling in New Jersey, some people say... Others say....

ROTATE

...it's best to keep all New Jersey gambling in Atlantic City
...New Jersey should license other places in the state for gambling.

Which comes closer to your position?

In the last 12 months have you been to a casino? [IF "yes" ASK "Where did you go most recently?"]

DO NOT READ

Atlantic City
Pennsylvania (Mt Airy or Bethlehem)
Connecticut (Foxwoods or Mohegan Sun)
Yonkers
Delaware (Wilmington or Dover)
Las Vegas
Other

No