



NEWS

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New Survey Says Illinoisans reject casino gambling legislation *Voters would “veto” legislation*

For Immediate Release

Chicago, IL –Thursday, June 16, 2011 - Voters in Chicago and throughout Illinois strongly oppose the gambling expansion bill recently passed by the Illinois legislature, according to a new survey commissioned by the Chicago Crime Commission. The survey also reveals that Illinoisans would veto the gambling legislation and ask for greater review of future proposals.

“Governor Quinn has said repeatedly that he wants to hear from anyone with an opinion on the gambling expansion issue and today voters from throughout Illinois responded to his request,” according to J.R. Davis, Chairman and President of the Chicago Crime Commission. “If the average voter could sit down with the Governor, they would tell him this legislation is bad for Illinois and that they had little input into the decision making process,” he added.

“When asked, Illinois voters also said they feel the gambling expansion will have a negative impact on the quality of life in the State and, that it will add to human misery, without offsetting financial benefits,” Davis said. “Survey results also indicate voters are deeply troubled that the legislation does not provide for enough investigators to deal with the issues created by a massive expansion of gaming in the State,” he continued.

(more)

“This survey provides a clear and complete reaction to this legislation from the voters of Illinois. We implore Governor Quinn to do the right thing and veto this legislation if it comes to his desk,” Davis concluded.

Highlights of the survey are as follows:

Direction State headed

- ◆ Only 28% of registered voters feel Illinois is headed in the right direction while 61% feel things are off on the wrong track. This reflects a highly negative attitude with over twice as many voters feeling things are off on the wrong track. Whether you live in Chicago or downstate, there is a highly negative view of the direction the State is headed.

State Legislature

- ◆ Only 3% have a very favorable view of the State Legislature and 22% a somewhat favorable view for a total favorable opinion of 25%. Another 25% have a somewhat unfavorable opinion and 30% a very unfavorable opinion for a total unfavorable rating of 55% or better than 2-1 unfavorable to favorable. Suburban Cook County geographically is most unfavorable at 16%.

Support for legislation - ballot 1

- ◆ When we initially asked if voters supported or opposed the gaming legislation that has been passed by the State Legislature that will greatly expand gambling and claims to be the answer to the financial problems facing Illinois, 35% said they were supportive while 54% were opposed. Opposition was strongest downstate (60%) with voters in suburban Cook County given marginal support (2%) to the legislation. Even in Chicago, 55% were opposed while 34% were supportive.

Impact on quality of life

- ◆ 55% agree with the statement that the gaming legislation that provides for massive expansion of gambling, such as new casinos in Chicago and the suburbs as well as slot machines at the airports and racetracks, will be harmful to the quality of life for Illinois residents. Another 41% disagree with the statement. While voters under 45 years old disagree, those 55 years and older strongly agree. Downstate voters strongly agree (63%) while those in suburban Cook County marginally disagree by 6%. Once again we see a gender gap with 59% of women agreeing and 49% of men agreeing.

Number of investigators

- ◆ 65% agree and 23% disagree that by not expanding the number of investigators to monitor this new gaming expansion, the Legislature is failing to protect the public safety of residents and the honesty of the proposed gambling stations or operations. Every major demographic group in the survey agrees with this statement and peaks at 69% in Chicago. (more)

Taxes and human problems

- ♦ 55% agree and 32% disagree that the money from taxes on casino gambling that end up in the State's treasury will not offset the human problems and negative impact on society that are associated with casino gambling in places like Las Vegas and Atlantic City. While supporters of the legislation disagree with this statement by margins ranging from 8% to 18%, opponents of the measure agree with this statement by margins of 37% to 52%. While agreement with this statement is +5% in suburban Cook County, it is +27% in Chicago and +32% in the collar counties.

Support for legislation – ballot 2

- ♦ After reading the series of statements above, 33% were now supportive of the legislation and 59% were opposed that represent a shift of 7% toward opposition. Only very liberal voters (+3%) were still supportive as were moderates (+7%). All age groups except 18-34 year olds were opposed and suburban Cook County voters were now opposed as well.

Public Input

- ♦ Only 21% felt there was enough public input or the opportunity for the public to voice their opinion of the new gaming legislation. Another 70% said no and every demographic group in the survey agreed with this opinion.

Good or bad for Illinois

- ♦ Based on everything they knew about the newly passed gambling bill, the largest in the history of the State, 32% said it will be good for Illinois while 56% said it would be bad. Only among 18-34 year olds do we find support for the view it is good for Illinois. By a 5% margin behavioral Democrats thought it was bad and 63% of behavioral Republican thought it was bad. The key group of Independents thought it was bad at 61%.

The survey was conducted by Tel Opinion Research of Alexandria, Virginia. The study of 600 registered voters was conducted June 7-9, 2011. All respondents were part of a fully representative sample of registered voters in Illinois. The survey's margin of error is within +/- 4 percent.

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