



To: Interested Parties
From: Margie Omero, Momentum Analysis
Re: Recent poll results from a Prince George's County, Maryland survey
Date: October 12, 2011

This memo reports on the findings of a survey of 1,000 voters in Prince George's County, Maryland. The survey was conducted by telephone, October 8-10, 2011. Respondents were identified using a voter file, and then screened for their likely participation in the 2012 general election. The margin of error for the sample overall is +/-3.1%, but may be higher for subgroups. This poll was commissioned by Penn National Gaming, and conducted by Momentum Analysis, a Democratic polling firm with experience in Maryland and around the country.

Overview

Our recent poll shows voters disagree with the County Council's Zoning Subcommittee decision to ban slots; support slots at Rosecroft Raceway; and overwhelmingly want to decide the issue on their own. Voter support for slots grows even more with knowledge of the potential jobs and increased revenue slots could bring. While the full County Council now debates a slots ban, nearly 90 percent of county voters – regardless of their own view – want this decision to be made at the ballot.

Voters are Initially Divided on a County-wide Slots Ban, While a Majority Support Slots Specifically at Rosecroft

Voters are divided on a proposal to ban slots in Prince George's County (39% favor, 42% oppose). Voters residing in the same legislative district as Rosecroft, the site of the proposed slot machines, are particularly opposed to the ban (Senate District 26: 58% oppose, Council District 8: 57% oppose). When specifically asked about bringing slots to Rosecroft Raceway, half show support (48% favor, 39% oppose). Democrats are even more supportive (51% favor, 37% oppose) as are those in the district of the slots ban sponsor (Council District 2/Olson: 48% favor, 31% oppose).

After Learning About Revenue and Jobs, Support Jumps

Support for slots at Rosecroft increases considerably with more information about the jobs and tax revenue slots could bring, jumping to nearly two-to-one in favor of slots at Rosecroft (58% favor, 33% oppose). Countywide, every demographic subgroup we examined favor slots after hearing the additional information – almost all by a double digit margin. And if slot machines do come to Rosecroft, a clear plurality believes the revenue should be used to fund the county's public schools (47%).

Voters Want to Decide on Slots for Themselves

Voters almost unanimously want to decide for themselves on slots, rather than leave the decision to the County Council (92% want voters to decide, 5% want the Council to decide). They also overwhelmingly support putting a referendum on the ballot to allow Prince George's voters to decide on slots (87%

support a referendum). Even those opposed to slots at Rosecroft want voters to decide the issue (91% voters vs. 6% Council to decide on slots; 85% support a referendum).

Few Leaders are Trustworthy on Slots

There is no particular source voters trust on slots but across demographic groups they are most trusting of their family, friends, and neighbors, followed by their religious leaders, and then public figures and news sources. We measured trustworthiness on slots on a scale of 0 to 10 on which 0 means “don’t trust at all” and 10 means “trust completely.” Friends, family and neighbors clearly had the highest mean score (6.91), with voters’ religious leader (mean: 5.73) or County Councilperson (mean: 5.07) trailing behind.

And Few Say Their Religious Leader Would Affect Their Own Views

Ultimately, though, religious leaders will have little impact on voters’ views of slots. Few say their religious leader's opposition to slots would affect their own views (9% would be made less supportive, 84% report it would make no difference to their views). And despite the most religious voters trusting their religious leader on slots almost as much as family and friends (family/friends: 7.00 mean, religious leader: 6.78 mean), even these voters are unlikely to support slots less because of a religious leader’s opposition (15% less supportive, 81% no difference).

Not only do voters disagree with the Council on slots, they particularly do not want their Councilmember making that decision for them – they want the issue decided by voters. There is clearly no mandate from the voters for the Council to take action opposing slots at Rosecroft.