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NEW POLL: Voters View Casino Gaming More Favorably Than Ever Before

Voters give policymakers permission to embrace casinos as a mainstream business

INFOGRAPHIC: *Who is the typical casino visitor? You might be surprised*

Washington – Voters across the political spectrum view casino gaming more favorably than ever before, according to a new nationwide poll conducted by respected political pollsters Mark Mellman and Glen Bolger, and the vast majority recognizes that casino gaming creates jobs, strengthens local businesses and benefits communities. The new survey also squashes stereotypes of the typical casino visitor.

The timely findings come as many state policymakers begin to re-examine punitive gaming taxes, inefficient regulations and other threats to casinos in an increasingly competitive environment. The results also come at the same time the American Gaming Association is releasing the latest gross gaming revenue numbers in Indiana, which decreased from \$2.61 billion in 2012 to \$2.33 billion last year. That figure places Indiana fifth among the 23 states with commercial casinos.

“Voters recognize that casinos are a mainstream form of entertainment and an economic driver that supports jobs and boosts growth in communities across the nation,” **said Geoff Freeman, president and CEO of the American Gaming Association.** “Casino visitors are a portrait of the American electorate, and voters are giving policymakers permission to treat casinos like any other business. The AGA will aggressively pave the way for policies that reflect voters’ favorable view of gaming, protects jobs and promotes innovation.”

The national telephone survey was conducted by Democratic pollster Mark Mellman, CEO of the Mellman Group, and Republican pollster Glen Bolger, founder and partner of Public Opinion Strategies. Key findings include:

- By a 2-1 margin, voters view casino gaming **favorably**;
- More than 70 percent of voters recognize that casinos **create jobs**;

- Nearly 60 percent of voters know that casinos **boost local economies**;
- A majority says **casinos shouldn't pay more taxes** than other businesses.

“Across partisan, ideological and geographic divisions, the vast majority agree that gaming is acceptable,” said Mellman. “Voters overwhelmingly believe casinos have a positive effect on local communities. Nearly two-thirds of casino visitors leave the property to patronize neighboring local small businesses and other attractions.”

Who is the typical casino visitor?

You might be surprised. Here's snapshot:

- **Homeowners:** Nearly two-in-three casino visitors own a home;
- **Younger:** Most are 21-59—target audiences businesses are trying to reach;
- **Middle class:** A plurality earns \$60-\$99k/year and 70% say they're middle class;
- **College graduates:** Nearly half – 16% more than national rate—holds a bachelor's degree;
- **Religious:** Two-thirds of casino visitors attend church; 25% are evangelical or born again Christians.

“Casino visitors aren't who some think they are,” said Bolger. “Most casino visitors are between the ages of 21 and 59, and a plurality earns \$60-99k a year. They're also well educated, churchgoing voters who volunteer and contribute to their communities. And when they gamble, nearly three-quarters of visitors set a budget before they walk in the door.”

“Casinos have helped our state by offering another mainstream form of entertainment that includes not just gambling, but first-rate restaurants, shows and a menu of other options that are novel to our community,” said Mike Smith, president and CEO, Casino Association of Indiana. “It's clear that the people who go to casinos are no different than most people in Indiana—responsible, hardworking model citizens who set budgets, actively engage in their communities, and just want to have a good time.”

The [executive summary](#), [national survey](#) and the survey [methodology](#) are available online at www.gettoknowgaming.org. The national survey kicks off the AGA's “Get to Know Gaming” campaign – an [aggressive effort](#) to promote the value of the gaming industry, combat outdated stereotypes and pave the way for gaming's next generation.

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