New England College

Media Release

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NEC POLL: NEW HAMPSHIRE IS WILLING TO GAMBLE

Voters Open-Minded to Tax and Spend Ideas Being Debated in Concord

Henniker, NH - In her inaugural address, Governor Maggie Hassan promised to reinstate funding that was cut from higher education in New Hampshire. Meantime, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are debating whether to raise the gas tax to pay for roads. And the issue of casino gambling has been a constant since the race for Governor heated up last fall. But what do voters generally think about these ideas? The details of these proposals are coming soon, but the latest New England College Poll offers a glimpse at public opinion.

First, on spending: Governor Hassan has strong support behind her idea to put funds back into higher education that was cut from former Speaker Bill O'Brien's budget plan. **New England College polled 656 randomly selected registered voters and found a majority of voters support an increase in spending on public higher education in New Hampshire (65% to 23%).**

The poll conducted between January 21 and 22, 2013 by telephone showed some difference in opinion among men and women but both genders support the idea with men at 59% support and women at 69%.

"In today's political environment, it seems that voters have an interest in some increased investments," says Director of the NEC Poll, Dr. Ben Tafoya. "Support for increased spending on public higher education is broad, with higher numbers among Democrats (88%) and Un-enrolled voters (58%), but significant support among Republican (49%) voters as well.

NEC then asked voters to give feedback to two of the highest profile revenue ideas being debated in Concord.

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NH voters strongly endorsed casino gambling by a 54% to 35% margin; 10% said they were unsure. "Governor Hassan has endorsed gambling as a revenue source, and she has warned voters about the impact of casinos opening in Massachusetts," explains Dr. Wayne Lesperance. "Her arguments about our state losing tourism revenues and the increase of social costs with no way to pay for them are apparently resonating with people. The details are important in this debate, but voters in New Hampshire clearly support this non-tax concept." By party breakdown, a majority of Democrats, Republicans and Independents support casino gambling.

In addition, **when asked if they would support "an increased gas tax to repair and expand the state's roads and bridges" a plurality of voters approved the idea by 49% to 37%, with 13% saying they were not sure**. In a party breakdown, 71% of Democrats support the idea, but 54% of Republicans oppose the gas tax hike. Independents are evenly split; 45% support the increase, 44% oppose it.

"Whatever direction they choose, the margins on these issues indicate that elected officials still need to justify their decisions and educate the voters on the benefits on the specific approach," says Tafoya.

The NEC Poll of NH voters conducted a survey over two nights of interviews. The random sample was pulled from a list of registered voters in NH with phones. The poll was conducted using Interactive Voice Response technology, an automated polling system.

For more information on the poll please contact the NEC Poll Director, Ben Tafoya at 781-315-5920 or via email at btafoya@nec.edu .

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While there are several proposals under discussion, in general, do you support the idea of legalizing casino gambling in New Hampshire?

Margin of error = 3.82%

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Support	227	35%
Somewhat Support	123	19%
Not Sure	67	10%
Somewhat Oppose	83	13%
Strongly Oppose	143	22%
Total	643	100%

	Man	Woman
Strongly Support	40%	32%
Somewhat Support	18%	19%
Not Sure	9%	12%
Somewhat Oppose	10%	15%
Strongly Oppose	23%	22%
Total	100%	100%

Casino Gambling	Democrat	Republican	Unenrolled
Strongly Support	29%	40%	37%
Somewhat Support	20%	17%	19%
Not Sure	12%	8%	11%
Somewhat Oppose	17%	11%	11%
Strongly Oppose	22%	24%	22%
Total	100%	100%	100%

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Do you support raising the state's gas tax to repair and expand our state's roads and bridges?

Margin of error = 3.82%

	Frequency	Percent		Men	Women
Strongly Support	153	23%	Strongly Support	24%	22%
Somewhat Support	172	26%	Somewhat Support	25%	27%
Not Sure	87	13%	Not Sure	9%	16%
Somewhat Oppose	75	11%	Somewhat Oppose	10%	13%
Strongly Oppose	169	26%	Strongly Oppose	32%	23%
Total	656	100%	Total	100%	100%

Gas Tax Hike?	Democrat	Republican	Unenrolled
Strongly Support	41%	10%	18%
Somewhat Support	30%	21%	27%
Not Sure	14%	15%	11%
Somewhat Oppose	8%	14%	13%
Strongly Oppose	7%	40%	31%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Do you support increased levels of state funding for public higher education in New Hampshire?

Margin of error 3.82%

	Frequency	Percent		Man	Woman
Strongly Support	282	43%	Strongly Support	39%	46%
Somewhat Support	144	22%	Somewhat Support	20%	23%
Not Sure	77	12%	Not Sure	12%	12%
Somewhat Oppose	57	9%	Somewhat Oppose	10%	8%
Strongly Oppose	89	14%	Strongly Oppose	19%	11%
Total	649	100%	Total	100%	100%

	Democrat	Republican	Unenrolled
Strongly Support	69%	23%	38%
Somewhat Support	19%	26%	20%
Not Sure	7%	13%	15%
Somewhat Oppose	3%	14%	10%
Strongly Oppose	2%	24%	17%
Total	100%	100%	100%