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**Minnesota
House of
Representatives**
Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2008 State Fair Poll Results

Tax increase for environment, arts gets slight OK

Voters almost evenly split on seat belt stoppage

Nearly 50 percent of those participating in the 2008 House of Representatives State Fair Poll support raising the state's sales tax by three-eighths of 1 percent with the money dedicated to the environment and arts.

During the 12-day run of the Minnesota State Fair, 7,465 fairgoers took the poll conducted by nonpartisan House Public Information Services. It is an informal, unscientific survey on issues discussed in prior legislative sessions and may again be topics of discussion.

Voters will be asked the dedicated funding question at the Nov. 4 election. While 42.9 percent of fair voters oppose the measure, 8 percent were undecided or had no opinion. Not voting for the question at the General Election will count as a "no" vote.

Sportsmen and environmental advocates have pushed for dedicated funding for many years, with the original plan being to dedicate a portion of the existing sales tax. In the 2007-08 biennium, the plan evolved into one that would raise the sales tax, and include funding for clean water, parks and trails, and the arts. Opponents have wanted to keep the original proposal and are opposed to the idea of constitutionally dedicated funding.

Another environmental question found that 76 percent of voters support requiring grocers and large retailers who use plastic carryout bags to make in-store bag recycling available.

With the state looking at a potential multi-billion dollar deficit next fiscal year, voters narrowly support budget cuts as opposed to tax increases, 46.5 percent to 43 percent. However, 84.6 percent of voters do not want to have clothing subject to sales tax.

Just over 7,000 votes were cast on whether law enforcement should be able to stop a motorist solely for not wearing a seat belt. By five votes, fairgoers believe they should.

Thirty more people voted "yes" instead of "no" when asked if public school students should be required to recite the Pledge of Allegiance each day.

Two-thirds of polltakers said voters should be required to show a picture identification at the polls; 62.1 percent believe undergraduate students at a state college or university should have their tuition locked in so it cannot increase during a four-year period; 61 percent said the state's nuclear power plant construction moratorium should be lifted; and 60 percent believe lawn care companies and other commercial applicators should post 48-hour advance warnings before spraying city yards or farm fields with weed killers or other pesticides.

Nearly 51 percent of polltakers say the state should set a maximum number of patients a nurse can care for during a shift, and 40.6 percent believe the state should offer an investment tax credit for bioscience business investments. However, 30.2 percent were undecided on the issue.

And, finally, 35.2 percent of polltakers said ice hockey should be designated the state sport, 6.9 percent more than fishing. But many fairgoers commented that the Legislature should not waste time on such "trivial" matters. More than 600 people did not vote on the question.

Here's a look at the questions and results. All percentages are rounded to the nearest one-tenth. Totals are for those that actually voted on the question.

(More)

1. This November, voters will be asked to vote for a three-eighths of 1 percent sales tax increase with the money dedicated for the environment and the arts. Do you support this?

Yes.....49.0%..... (3,640)
No.....42.9%..... (3,188)
Undecided/No Opinion 8.0%..... (595)

2. Should voters be required to show a picture ID before casting their ballot?

Yes.....67.0%..... (4,986)
No.....27.1%..... (2,017)
Undecided/No Opinion 5.8%..... (432)

3. A motorist can now only be cited for failure to wear a seat belt if they are stopped for another infraction. Should law enforcement be permitted to stop someone solely for not wearing a seat belt?

Yes.....47.1%..... (3,504)
No.....47.0%..... (3,499)
Undecided/No Opinion 5.8%..... (431)

4. Should the state's 14-year moratorium on nuclear power plant construction be lifted so new facilities can be considered to help meet the state's electricity needs?

Yes.....61.0%..... (4,511)
No.....26.4%..... (1,952)
Undecided/No Opinion 12.6%..... (935)

5. Clothing sold in the state is not subject to sales tax. Should it be?

Yes.....11.6%..... (864)
No.....84.6%..... (6,285)
Undecided/No Opinion 3.7%..... (276)

6. Should public school students be required to say the Pledge of Allegiance each day?

Yes.....46.3%..... (3,436)
No.....45.9%..... (3,406)
Undecided/No Opinion 7.8%..... (578)

7. The state is expected to face a deficit in excess of \$1 billion next fiscal year. Do you generally support budget cuts as opposed to increasing certain taxes in times of economic distress?

Yes.....46.5%..... (3,444)
No.....43.0%..... (3,188)
Undecided/No Opinion 10.4%..... (773)

8. Should undergraduate students at a state college or university have their tuition locked in so that any semester during a four-year period it could not exceed the price the student was charged during their first semester?

Yes.....62.1%..... (4,604)
No.....26.7%..... (1,981)
Undecided/No Opinion 11.1%..... (826)

9. Should grocers and large retailers who use plastic carryout bags be required to make in-store bag recycling available?

Yes.....76.0%..... (5,635)
No.....19.7%..... (1,462)
Undecided/No Opinion 4.3%..... (323)

10. Hospitals are permitted to set staffing levels for registered nurses. Should the Legislature set a maximum number of patients a nurse can care for during a shift?

Yes.....50.8%..... (3,770)
No.....36.8%..... (2,725)
Undecided/No Opinion 12.4%..... (918)

11. Should a 25-percent investment tax credit be made available for investments in qualifying new bioscience business ventures?

Yes.....40.6%..... (2,999)
No.....29.0%..... (2,145)
Undecided/No Opinion 30.3%..... (2,243)

12. Should lawn care companies and other commercial applicators be required to post 48-hour advance warnings before spraying city yards or farm fields with weed killers or other pesticides?

Yes.....60.0%..... (4,445)
No.....29.3%..... (2,177)
Undecided/No Opinion 10.7%..... (797)

13. What should be the state sport?

Fishing.....28.3%..... (1,931)
Football4.6%..... (316)
Golf2.2%..... (150)
Hunting3.6%..... (245)
Ice hockey35.2%..... (2,403)
Water skiing3.2%..... (218)
Other22.9%..... (1,564)