



MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties
From: Kiley & Company
Re: A Survey of Voter Attitudes
Toward the Ban on Dog Racing
Date: May 21, 2009

This memorandum summarizes key findings from a recent survey of a representative sample of 400 Massachusetts voters. Interviews were conducted by telephone during the evening hours of April 22 and 23, 2009.

In the current economic climate, preserving jobs is the public's number-one priority.

The public is in a somber frame of mind: 56% of Massachusetts voters say that the Commonwealth is off on the wrong track, while just 31% think the state is moving in the right direction.

This pessimistic mood is driven by deep concern about the length and breadth of the ongoing recession. Most Bay State voters expect the current downturn to last for at least another year: fully 57% think the economy won't turn around *at least* until the end of 2010.

In a striking indication of how widespread job losses have become, fully half (49%) of all voters say that they have a close friend or relative who has lost a job because of the recession. Among those *under the age of 40*, a startling 61% know someone who has been thrown out of work recently.

Given these high levels of economic anxiety, *jobs* have emerged as the number-one priority for Massachusetts voters. When asked to choose among three possible priorities for state leaders, a clear majority (54%) say the state needs to focus on *protecting jobs and avoiding job losses* – more than twice the number of voters who say the state's top priority should be *avoiding tax increases* (24%), and three times the number who say the state should concentrate on *preserving public services* (17%).

Voters support a proposal to delay the ban on dog racing as a way to preserve jobs.

We asked voters the following question about the idea of delaying the implementation of the ban for three years:

Some people say the ban on dog racing comes at a bad time for Massachusetts. They say that forcing the state's two dog tracks to shut down will mean the loss of 650 jobs, just when we should be doing everything we can to preserve jobs. It will also cost the state millions a year in tax revenue. They say we should delay the ban and allow the dog tracks to remain open for another three years – until January 1, 2013 – to preserve jobs until the recession is over, and give those workers a better chance of finding new jobs when the economy is stronger.

In response, fully three-of-five (61%) voters say they would favor such a delay in implementing the ban, while 34% say they are opposed.

Support for a delay is widespread: majorities among *Republicans* (66%), *Independents* (62%), and *Democrats* (57%) all support this idea. Clear majorities in every region of the state, and every age bracket, also favor a delay.

On this issue we find majority-level support for a delay among both *men* (66%) and *women* (56%), as well as *non-college voters* (66%) and *college graduates* (55%).

Voters would not hold it against legislators who vote for a delay.

About one-of-five (18%) voters say they would be *less inclined* to support the reelection of a legislator who votes in favor of delaying the ban on dog racing. Just as many voters (17%) say they would be *more inclined* to support such a legislator, while the large majority – fully 63% – say that this issue would have *no impact* on their voting decisions.

Conclusion

Our results clearly indicate that – in the current economic climate – Massachusetts voters support a delay in implementing the voter-approved ban on live dog racing. With the public so deeply concerned about the need to preserve existing jobs, such a delay makes sense to a substantial majority of Bay State voters.

Nor are voters inclined to punish state legislators who might vote in favor of such a delay. The large majority say that a pro-delay vote would have no impact on whether they would support their legislator for reelection.