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Minnesota House of Representatives

Kurt Daudt, Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2017 State Fair Poll Results

Recreational marijuana favored by slim majority of fair polltakers

Strong support still shown for 10-cent gas tax increase

Just over half of all state fairgoers who cast votes in an annual poll support legalizing recreational marijuana for persons age 21 and older.

Of the 7,122 votes cast in the 2017 House of Representatives State Fair Poll, 50.6 percent back the idea, with 39.7 percent opposed and 9.7 percent voting no opinion/undecided.

Conducted by the nonpartisan House Public Information Services Office, the poll is an informal, unscientific survey on issues discussed in prior legislative sessions or that may be topics of discussion in 2018.

Lawmakers in nearly two-dozen states considered legalizing and regulating recreational marijuana this year. Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon and Washington have legalized recreational marijuana use.

Two-thirds of polltakers believe raising the minimum age to purchase tobacco products from 18 to 21 should be made statewide. Edina and St. Louis Park have already made that change.

Legislators from both parties say more money is needed to maintain the state's approximately 20,000 bridges and 12,000 miles of state highways; however, the disagreement lies in where to find those dollars. DFLers generally support a state gas tax bump; Republicans generally support using existing General Fund dollars for transportation purposes.

For the second straight year, fairgoers sided with the minority caucus: 60.6 percent of polltakers support raising the state's gas tax, with 32.2 percent voting "no" and 7.2 percent undecided. This exact question was asked last year and all three percentages were the same.

In the area of public safety, polltakers strongly believe a so-called "concealed carry permit" should be required for someone who wants to carry an uncased firearm. Final numbers show 86.2 percent support for keeping the permit requirement and 11.3 percent against.

Under current law, it is a misdemeanor to intentionally obstruct traffic on a highway. A bill that advanced during the 2017 session, HF390, would increase that to a gross misdemeanor.

Minnesotans appear almost evenly divided on the issue, with 46.3 percent of polltakers against the change and 44.4 percent in support of a tougher penalty for intentionally obstructing traffic "that is entering, exiting, or on a trunk highway or that is entering or exiting an airport."

Polltakers also believe:

- telecommunications companies should obtain customer consent before selling or sharing web browsing data with advertisers and other companies (95.8 percent);
- handheld cell phone use when driving should be illegal (74.8 percent);
- a grant program should be established to help teacher candidates of color or who are American Indian complete licensure programs (59.8 percent);
- local governments should be allowed adopt ordinances that regulate work benefits, such as wage and sick leave, for private employers (57.6 percent);
- Minnesota should not allow legalized sports gambling (55 percent);
- taxes attributed to Sunday off-sale liquor sales should be dedicated to chemical dependency treatment programs (45.9 percent); and
- the state primary should remain in August (33.2 percent). However, 42.6 percent of polltakers were undecided or had no opinion on the potential change.

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.

1. Should handheld cell phone use be illegal when operating a motor vehicle, except in emergency situations?

Yes..... 74.8%..... (5,235)
No..... 20.0%..... (1,400)
Undecided/No Opinion 5.2%..... (361)

2. Under current law, anyone can be charged with a misdemeanor for intentionally obstructing traffic on a highway or at an airport. Should the penalty be increased to a gross misdemeanor?

Yes..... 44.4%..... (3,107)
No..... 46.3%..... (3,238)
Undecided/No Opinion 9.3%..... (648)

3. Should local governments be prohibited from adopting ordinances that regulate a minimum wage, paid or unpaid leave, or other work benefits?

Yes..... 34.4%..... (2,386)
No..... 57.6%..... (3,997)
Undecided/No Opinion 8.0%..... (558)

4. Should Minnesota allow the recreational use of marijuana for those age 21 and over?

Yes..... 50.6%..... (3,552)
No..... 39.7%..... (2,788)
Undecided/No Opinion 9.7%..... (679)

5. In Minnesota, a person (law enforcement is exempted) cannot carry an uncased firearm in a public place unless they are in possession of a valid permit to carry. Should this prohibition requirement be abolished?

Yes..... 11.3%..... (788)
No..... 86.2%..... (6,000)
Undecided/No Opinion 2.5%..... (174)

6. Would you support increasing the state's 28.5 cents-per-gallon gas tax by at least 10 cents to help fund highway and bridge needs across the state?

Yes..... 60.6%..... (4,237)
No..... 32.2%..... (2,254)
Undecided/No Opinion 7.2%..... (500)

7. Should Minnesota legalize sports gambling?

Yes..... 30.6%..... (2,094)
No..... 55.0%..... (3,762)
Undecided/No Opinion 14.3%..... (977)

8. Some metro-area cities have raised or are considering raising the minimum age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21. Should this change be made statewide?

Yes..... 66.0%..... (4,500)
No..... 26.8%..... (1,828)
Undecided/No Opinion 7.1%..... (486)

9. Should the state primary election be moved up from the second Tuesday in August to the first Tuesday after the third Monday in June?

Yes..... 24.2%..... (1,640)
No..... 33.2%..... (2,252)
Undecided/No Opinion 42.6%..... (2,897)

10. Should telecommunications companies be required to obtain a consumer's consent before selling or sharing web browsing data and other private information with advertisers and other companies?

Yes..... 95.8%..... (6,564)
No..... 2.1%..... (145)
Undecided/No Opinion 2.1%..... (142)

11. Should a grant program be established to help teacher candidates of color or who are American Indian complete licensure programs?

Yes..... 59.8%..... (4,082)
No..... 27.7%..... (1,893)
Undecided/No Opinion 12.4%..... (849)

12. Sunday off-sale liquor sales began in July. Shall taxes attributed to Sunday sales be dedicated to fund chemical dependency treatment programs?

Yes..... 45.9%..... (3,137)
No..... 36.8%..... (2,516)
Undecided/No Opinion 17.2%..... (1,176)