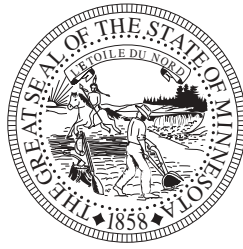


PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES
 175 State Office Building
 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
 (651) 296-2146
 Fax: (651) 297-8135



Minnesota House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 Date: September 2, 2003
 Contact: Michelle Kibiger
 (651) 296-2146

2003 State Fair Poll Results

[St. Paul] — Fairgoers support basing child support payments on both parents' income, extending the statute of limitations for victims of childhood sexual abuse to file civil suits, and increasing cigarette taxes. They also think education funding should not be subject to budget cuts, the state should not have a mourning dove hunting season, license tab registration fees should not be increased, and children between ages 12 and 16 should not be allowed to operate all-terrain vehicles on public lands. Those were among the findings of an unofficial opinion poll conducted by the Minnesota House of Representatives during the 2003 Minnesota State Fair.

In addition, fairgoers were split on issues that also divided lawmakers during the 2003 legislative session. About 53 percent of fairgoers indicated support for a state-operated casino. And when given the choice between budget cuts or tax increases in times of economic distress, fairgoers gave a slight edge to increasing certain taxes. However, the poll did not give polltakers a choice regarding which taxes would be considered in such a scenario.

Fairgoers also support Minnesota's current form of government and system of electing legislators. Polltakers favor electing legislators according to party designation and they do not support making Minnesota's Legislature unicameral.

Polltakers also indicated support for raising the speed limit on Greater Minnesota highways.

An overwhelming majority (78.7 percent) of poll takers indicated they live in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Another 14.8 percent said they live in Greater Minnesota and the remaining 4.3 percent live in other metropolitan areas, such as St. Cloud, Duluth, or Rochester. About 1 percent of polltakers did not live in Minnesota.

A total of 7,329 fairgoers participated in the unscientific 2003 State Fair poll, up slightly from 2002. The House booth is located in the fair's Education Building. The results were electronically calculated after the fair concluded Sept. 1. Here's a look at the poll questions with fairgoers' responses:

1. Under current law, child support payments are based on a noncustodial parent's income. Should both custodial and noncustodial parents' income be taken into account in calculating child support payments?

Yes	77.1%	(5,654)
No	13.4%	(982)
Undecided/No Opinion	8.3%	(609)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.1%	(84)

2. Education (not including higher education) funding makes up about 40 percent of the state's overall general fund budget. Should education funding — including funding for public schools, after-school programs, early childhood, and adult basic education — be subject to budget cuts during times of economic distress?

Yes	34.3%	(2,517)
No	60.848/%	(4,457)
Undecided/ No Opinion	3.8%	(276)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.1%	(79)

(more)

3. From 1913 until 1973, legislators were elected in Minnesota on nonpartisan ballots, meaning there was no political party designation for individual members. Nebraska is the only state currently with a nonpartisan legislature. In addition, candidates for most local government offices (i.e. city councils and school boards) are not elected according to party designation. Do you support the practice of electing legislators according to political party designation?

Yes	48.9%	(3,581)
No	38.5%	(2,820)
Undecided/No Opinion	11.4%	(835)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.3%	(93)

4. Mourning dove hunting has been banned in Minnesota since 1947. Should state law be changed to allow a mourning dove hunting season?

Yes	18.8%	(1,380)
No	56.5%	(4,139)
Undecided/No opinion	23.2%	(1,697)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.5%	(113)

5. Should employers be allowed to pass along certain employment information, such as job references, wages, job description, or written disclosures of any instances of theft, harassment or other illegal conduct in a current and previous employee's record without the employee's consent?

Yes	34.7%	(2,541)
No	58.9%	(4,319)
Undecided/No Opinion	5.1%	(372)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.3%	(97)

6. A bill that would have changed the statute of limitations for civil suits related to childhood sexual abuse stalled in the Legislature in 2003. According to a Minnesota Supreme Court ruling, individuals have six years to file suit, beginning when a person turns 18. Should the statute of limitations be extended?

Yes	58.5%	(4,288)
No	32.7%	(2,397)
Undecided/No Opinion	7.7%	(562)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.1%	(82)

7. The speed limit on rural, two-lane state highways is now 55 miles per hour. A bill to raise the limit to 65 mph and keep the nighttime limit at 55 mph was introduced in 2003. Should the daytime speed limits on Greater Minnesota highways be raised?

Yes	53.4%	(3,911)
No	42.9%	(3,145)
Undecided/ No Opinion	2.9%	(210)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.0%	(63)

8. In Minnesota, children between the ages of 12 and 16 may operate all-terrain vehicles, including four-wheelers and off-road motorcycles, on public lands if they possess a vehicle safety certificate and are accompanied by someone 18 or older operating another vehicle. Should young people under the age of 16 be allowed to drive all-terrain vehicles, including four-wheelers and off-road motorcycles, on public lands?

Yes	22.6%	(1,608)
No	73.4%	(5,219)
Undecided/ No Opinion	4.0%	(288)

(more)

9. During the 2003 Legislature, a plan to allow state-owned gaming machines at Canterbury Park was considered. Portions of the additional revenue created would have been dedicated to the state’s general fund. Do you support a state-operated casino?

Yes	52.8%	(3,764)
No	43.6%	(3,107)
Undecided/ No Opinion	3.6%	(255)

10. In 2000, license tab registration fees were reduced to their current levels, including a \$99 fee from the time a car is three years old, until it is 10 years old. Several bills discussed during the 2003 legislative session proposed increasing those fees to fund transit and additional road construction projects. Should license tab fees be increased?

Yes	36.5%	(2,598)
No	59.3%	(4,219)
Undecided/ No Opinion	4.2%	(300)

11. Minnesota has a bicameral legislature, which means that it has both a House and Senate, like the U.S. Congress and 48 other states. One state, Nebraska, has a unicameral legislature, where there is a single lawmaking body. Would you support making Minnesota’s Legislature unicameral?

Yes	31.0%	(2,200)
No	60.7%	(4,312)
Undecided/ No Opinion	8.3%	(592)

12. Should the Legislature increase cigarette taxes?

Yes	70.7%	(4,963)
No	22.8%	(1,599)
Undecided/ No Opinion	6.5%	(454)

13. During 2003, a new law was enacted changing the way handgun permits are issued in the state, requiring permits to be granted to individuals who meet a set of criteria, including a gun safety course. Do you plan to apply for a handgun permit or have you already applied for one?*

Yes	12.3%	(881)
No	84.2%	(6,011)
Undecided/ No Opinion	3.4%	(243)

14. In general, the 2004-05 budget passed by the Legislature reflected reductions to 2002-03 levels and some fee increases to accommodate for a projected budget shortfall. Do you support budget cuts during times of economic distress as opposed to increasing certain taxes?

Yes	44.9%	(3,186)
No	47.4%	(3,359)
Undecided/ No Opinion	7.7%	(544)

*Question 13 does not attempt to measure support for the law passed during the 2003 session which changes the way handgun permits are issued in the state. It is merely an opportunity to see how many polltakers are planning to apply for a handgun permit.

(All percentages are rounded off to the nearest one-tenth. Percent total votes left blank or not tallied are included for those above 1 percent. On questions 8 through 14, percentages are based on the number who actually voted on the question, because those questions appeared on the back side of the ballot and may have been inadvertently skipped.)

Note: The Minnesota House of Representatives’ survey is informal and unscientific. It is simply a measurement of the opinions expressed by those who took the time to complete the poll while visiting our booth at the fair. Our main purpose in conducting this opinion poll was to familiarize fairgoers with some of the issues that have recently been discussed by the Legislature and issues that may be debated during the 2004 legislative session.