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**Recent Texas Lyceum Poll shows a majority of Texans Support expanding Gambling, taxing Alcohol and Marijuana to make up for State Budget Shortfall**  
***Immigration Surpasses Economy as Number One Issue Facing Texas***  
**55% of Texans Favor Arizona-Style Immigration Laws**

(AUSTIN) The Texas Lyceum's fourth annual independent poll released today shows that in order to pay for the state's looming budget deficit, most Texans would rather collect new taxes from legalized gambling and alcoholic beverages than increase or broaden sales taxes or impose an income tax. Voters also say their third choice out of a list of eight options is to legalize and tax marijuana sales.

These are just some of the interesting findings from a poll conducted September 22 - 30<sup>th</sup> and sponsored by the Texas Lyceum, a non-profit, non-partisan statewide leadership organization now celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> year.

"Legislators convening in Austin in January may want to take note that Texans are willing to soak the so-called 'sinners' when it comes time to tackle the budget shortfall," said Lyceum pollster Professor Daron Shaw, Ph.D. of the University of Texas at Austin.

The below question dealt with options for raising revenue in the coming session:

**Q.35 Which of the following would be your FIRST choice for raising additional revenue should Texas face a budget short-fall during the next legislative session? [Randomize 1-6]**

<u>First Choice</u>	<u>Second Choice</u>	
34%	20%	Legalize gambling and impose taxes on casinos.
4%	12%	Broaden the sales tax to include items not currently taxed.
27%	31%	Increase taxes on alcoholic beverages.
14%	16%	Legalize the use of marijuana and imposes taxes on its purchase.
6%	9%	Increase the state sales tax rate (currently 6.25%).
3%	3%	Implement a state income tax.
10%	4%	I do not support any new taxes.

3%

5%

Don't know/Refused/NA.

Texans also have strong opinions about which programs should be exempt from budget cuts (Q.36). A majority of Texans support maintaining or increasing education funding even in the face of a budget shortfall, with 53% of those surveyed supporting directing additional funding for a combination of aid to public schools, local school districts, and community colleges and universities. 30% of Texans consider funding for health care for children, the elderly and the mentally ill to be a priority.

### **Immigration, Education, Economy: the Most Important Issues Facing Texas**

Immigration has risen considerably in importance in Texans' minds, although the economy and jobs continue to remain forefront. The July 2009 Texas Lyceum survey found that 35% percent of Texans believed the economy and unemployment were the most important issues facing the state, while just 6% cited immigration. Fourteen months later, significant attention has shifted to immigration. While 25% of Texans still identify jobs and the economy as the most important issues, 21% now believe immigration is more important (Q.6).

When considering the issue of immigration, 55% of Texans say they would support similar measures passed by the Arizona legislature that empower "state agencies to enforce federal immigration laws, including asking about immigration status of anyone stopped for any offense." (Q.28)

"This shift from the economy to immigration as the most important issue may mean Texans have a more positive outlook on the state's economy than they did last year, or perhaps the national media's attention on the Arizona laws has heightened everyone's sensitivity regarding the need for national immigration reform," said Lyceum Director and Professor Amy Jaspersen, Ph.D. of the University of Texas at San Antonio who collaborated with Shaw on the poll.

Another issue that garnered national media attention relates to proposed school textbook revisions by the State Board of Education. The poll shows 41% of Texas voters feel that professional standards and practices were compromised in favor of the elevation of non-scientific viewpoints. At the same time, 38% of Texans believe the SBOE was promoting "alternative ideas to balance of liberal, secular viewpoints." A substantial proportion of Texans, however, had not formed an opinion of the debate, with 21% answering "don't know." (Q.34)

"The Texas Lyceum is proud to share our 4<sup>th</sup> statewide independent poll with the public," said Texas Lyceum President John James of Midland. "Across the years, our mission for this poll has remained the same: to offer a non-partisan, timely, incisive look at the issues that matter most to Texans."

Tomorrow the Texas Lyceum will release additional numbers from its 2010 poll, including tabulations of likely voters' choices for statewide office seekers including the races for Texas Governor, Lt. Governor and Attorney General. To get details of today's findings regarding state policy issues please go to [www.texaslyceum.org](http://www.texaslyceum.org).

## **Methodology**

From September 22-30, 2010, The Texas Lyceum conducted a statewide telephone survey. The survey utilized a stratified probability sample design, with respondents being randomly selected at the level of the household. On average, respondents completed the interview in 17 minutes. Approximately 5,000 records were drawn to yield 725 completed interviews. The final data set is weighted by race/ethnicity, age and gender to achieve representativeness. The margin of error for the poll is +/- 3.75 percentage points.

The ballot numbers and analysis were produced with a screen for likely voters. Voters were deemed "likely" if they indicated that they were registered to vote, indicated that they were "somewhat" or "extremely" interested in politics, and indicated that they had voted in "almost every" or "every" election in the last 2-3 years. This screen produced 416 likely voters, 57% of the full sample and 73% of registered voters. The margin of error for the survey of likely voters is +/- 4.75 percentage points.

## **About the Lyceum**

The Texas Lyceum, now celebrating its 30th anniversary, is a non-profit, non-partisan statewide leadership organization focused on identifying the next generation of Texas leaders. The Texas Lyceum consists of 96 men and women from throughout the state. Directors begin their service while under the age of 46 and have demonstrated leadership in their community and profession, together with a deep commitment to Texas.

Earlier this year, Lyceum members traveled to San Antonio, home of a growing cyber security industry, and hosted a conference entitled "Our Growing Lives Online: Safe or Not?" There, attendees examined our federal cyber security laws and other issues of cyber security. In April, Lyceum Directors gathered in Houston to tour the world's largest medical center complex and hear experts and elected officials address members of the Lyceum in a conference entitled "Beyond Healthcare Reform: Re-Imagining Affordability, Wellness and Accessibility for all Texans." Most recently, Lyceum Directors convened in Midland in August to tour an oil rig, a wind farm and examine the all-important energy industry in Texas for the conference entitled, "Texas Energy: Present and Future." All three 2010 conferences featured Great Debates, televised across the state in partnership with Texas Public Broadcasting Corporation.

The Lyceum has an impressive list of former members who are serving or have served in public office, including: Former President George W. Bush, Senator Kay

Bailey Hutchison, Governor Rick Perry, State Attorney General Greg Abbott, former Texas Comptroller John Sharp, Texas State Senators Rodney Ellis and Kirk Watson, Texas State Representatives Dawnna Dukes, Jose Menendez, David Farabee, Tommy Merritt, Pete Gallego, Garnet Coleman, and Allen Vaught, Houston Mayor Bill White, Galveston Mayor Joe Jaworski, Texas Supreme Court Justices Don Willett and Dale Wainwright, U.S. District Judge Vanessa Gilmore, former Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, and Congressmen Pete Olson and Jim Turner. Current Directors include Texas Representatives Veronica Gonzales and Marc Veasey.

The Texas Lyceum acts as a catalyst to bring together diverse opinions and expertise to focus on national and state issues, and seeks to emphasize constructive private sector, public sector, and individual responses to the issues.

To accomplish these purposes, the Lyceum conducts periodic public forums, publishes the Lyceum *Journal*, commissions The Texas Lyceum Poll, and convenes programs for the Directors to explore and discuss key economic and social issues of the state and nation. For more information, please visit [www.texaslyceum.org](http://www.texaslyceum.org).