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Minnesota House of Representatives

Kurt Zellers, Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2012 State Fair Poll Results Polltakers almost evenly split on legalizing more fireworks

Those taking the 2012 nonpartisan House Public Information Services Office State Fair Opinion Poll are almost evenly split on the legalization of firecrackers, bottle rockets and other consumer fireworks.

Of the more than 9,000 people participating in this year's poll, 47.8 percent believe such fireworks should be legalized, while 45 percent are against the idea. More than 7 percent are undecided or have no opinion.

The poll is an informal, unscientific survey of issues discussed in prior legislative sessions and may be topics of discussion in 2013.

Gov. Mark Dayton vetoed a bill in 2012 to expand legal fireworks in Minnesota to include bottle rockets, firecrackers and other fireworks classified by the American Pyrotechnics Association as consumer fireworks. "Most Minnesotans are responsible enough to ignite and explode those inherently dangerous devices properly and safely. Unfortunately some are not," Dayton wrote in his veto message.

Current Minnesota law allows for the use of party poppers, snappers, toy smoke devices, snakes, glow worms or sparklers, but supporters note that many Minnesotans already cross into neighboring states to spend their money for other consumer fireworks and will continue to do so.

A number of items that are taxable in stores, such as books, movies and music, are not subject to sales tax when downloaded from the Internet. Polltakers are also nearly split on the state collecting sales tax on these items with 47 percent in favor of the idea and 44.6 percent against.

A pair of education issues received support of polltakers.

Nearly 72 percent believe school districts should be authorized to use performance evaluations in making teacher layoff decisions, rather than basing the cuts on seniority. More than 56 percent support the idea of all school districts being permitted to start classes before Labor Day.

Two questions received overwhelmingly positive responses from people who took the poll.

Nearly 93 percent believe that employers should not be allowed to require employees to provide their social media passwords, such as those for Facebook and Twitter, as a condition of employment. Additionally, 85.1 percent of those filling out the opinion poll believe Lao-American and Hmong-American veterans who fought with the United States during the Vietnam War should be eligible for burial in the state cemetery near Camp Ripley.

More than half of the polltakers (53.4 percent) believe a higher legislative threshold should be established when it comes to getting constitutional amendments on the ballot, such as this year's photo identification and defining marriage questions. Currently, a simple majority in the House and Senate is needed to put a question before state voters.

Polltakers also believe:

- motorcyclists should be required to wear a helmet (69.9 percent);
- companies violating environmental laws should be ineligible for state tax breaks or subsidies (66.8 percent);
- liquor stores should be permitted to open on Sundays (63 percent);
- the right to defend oneself should not be expanded so that a person must no longer retreat before using force, including lethal force, against an attacker in a public place (47.9 percent); and
- each parent in a child custody dispute should not be guaranteed at least 45.1 percent of parenting time (45.5 percent). However, more than 27 percent had no opinion or were undecided on the issue.

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 employers be allowed to require employees to provide their social media passwords as a condition of employment?

Yes..... 3.9%..... (353)
No..... 92.6%..... (8,326)
Undecided/No Opinion 3.5%..... (317)

2. A number of items that are taxable in stores, such as books, movies and music, are not subject to sales tax when downloaded from the Internet. Should the state collect sales tax on these digital goods?

Yes..... 47.0%..... (4,218)
No..... 44.6%..... (4,006)
Undecided/No Opinion 8.4%..... (755)

3. Minnesotans can now legally purchase and use sparklers, toy smoke devices and glow worms. Should other consumer fireworks, such as bottle rockets and firecrackers, also be legalized?

Yes..... 47.8%..... (4,298)
No..... 45.0%..... (4,045)
Undecided/No Opinion 7.1%..... (640)

4. Should motorcyclists be required to wear a helmet?

Yes..... 69.9%..... (6,277)
No..... 25.0%..... (2,242)
Undecided/No Opinion 5.1%..... (460)

5. Should Hmong-American and Lao-American veterans who fought on the U.S. side during the Vietnam War be eligible for burial at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery near Camp Ripley?

Yes..... 85.1%..... (7,640)
No..... 6.8%..... (615)
Undecided/No Opinion 8.0%..... (720)

6. Currently, when schools need to lay off teachers, they must determine who will lose their jobs based on seniority. Should school districts be authorized to use performance evaluations in making layoff decisions?

Yes..... 71.9%..... (6,450)
No..... 20.4%..... (1,828)
Undecided/No Opinion 7.8%..... (697)

7. Should liquor stores be allowed to be open on Sundays?

Yes..... 63.0%..... (5,670)
No..... 29.9%..... (2,687)
Undecided/No Opinion 7.1%..... (634)

8. In child custody disputes, a parent is currently entitled to receive at least 25 percent of parenting time. Should each parent be guaranteed at least 45.1 percent of parenting time?

Yes..... 26.9%..... (2,408)
No..... 45.5%..... (4,076)
Undecided/No Opinion 27.7%..... (2,483)

9. Should companies that violate environmental laws be ineligible for state tax breaks or subsidies?

Yes..... 66.8%..... (5,996)
No..... 25.5%..... (2,290)
Undecided/No Opinion 7.7%..... (693)

10. A simple majority of both bodies of the Legislature is required to get a constitutional amendment on the ballot. Should there be a higher threshold?

Yes..... 53.4%..... (4,778)
No..... 36.3%..... (3,250)
Undecided/No Opinion 10.3%..... (923)

11. Should the right to defend one's self be expanded so that an individual would no longer have a duty to retreat before using force, including lethal force, against an attacker in a public place?

Yes..... 39.5%..... (3,537)
No..... 47.9%..... (4,297)
Undecided/No Opinion 12.6%..... (1,128)

12. Should all school districts be permitted to start classes before Labor Day?

Yes..... 56.4%..... (5,066)
No..... 32.1%..... (2,881)
Undecided/No Opinion 11.6%..... (1,042)

13. Every 10 years, legislative boundaries are reconfigured to ensure equal representation. Do you know which district you are in? If, not stop by the Senate booth next door to find out!

Yes..... 81.4%..... (7,257)
No..... 15.4%..... (1,372)
Undecided/No Opinion 3.3%..... (290)