

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

News from the House Majority

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Gaming Alternatives Merit Consideration

(Anchorage) -- A recent telephone poll indicating public receptivity to additional gaming activities in Alaska, conducted by the Alaska Cabaret, Hotel and Restaurant Retailers, is catching the attention of Alaskan lawmakers exploring possible solutions to fixing the state's fiscal gap.

"This poll underscores the importance of the gaming issue receiving a full and fair hearing before the legislature next session," said Rep. Mike Hawker (R- Eagle River/Anchorage). "The issue is both controversial and complex, and it will require a thorough examination of the alternatives."

The poll shows that nearly 70% of respondents support a state lottery. It also indicates that initially respondents were evenly split 45% for and against electronic gaming activities. However, when asked the same question a second time at the conclusion of the poll, respondents favored electronic gaming 59% to 38%. The poll included detailed questions on alternative gaming activities and their revenue potential.

"What's important about this poll is the seeming shift in public attitude toward gaming opportunities in the state as Alaskans get a greater understanding of the issue. There is reason to take a further look at how gaming revenues might fit into a comprehensive solution to our budget gap," said House Speaker Pete Kott (R-Eagle River).

The poll surveyed registered voters statewide during October of this year.

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