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## California Statewide Poll Results

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Ben Tulchin, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner

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Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research recently conducted a statewide poll among likely California voters for the California Tribal Business Alliance (CTBA) assessing the public's attitudes towards Indian gaming and issues related to it.<sup>1</sup> The survey found many interesting findings regarding the mindset of the California electorate in terms of their current views on this subject.

### Highlighted Findings

The survey found that the public continues to support Indian gaming in general, but voters do not appear to have much of an appetite for significantly increasing any type of gambling in California.

- **A majority of Californians remains supportive of Indian gaming** (50 percent support to 35 percent oppose).
- **There is strong opposition to radical changes to the state lottery –**
  - **Voters do not want the lottery privatized** (51 percent oppose it versus only 29 percent who support it);
  - **Nor do voters want video lottery terminals (VLTs) introduced as an option** (18 percent support to 74 percent oppose).
- **Voters believe off-reservation gaming should remain off-limits.** Nearly three quarters of voters (72 percent) oppose the idea of allowing Indian gaming operations outside of Indian reservations as only one out of five (21 percent) supports it. This high level of opposition holds when presented the specific example of Big Lagoon.
- **Californians are split over the five Southern California tribes' new compacts (47 percent support to 45 percent oppose).** After balanced arguments for and against them, support drops and a plurality of voters then opposes them (43 percent support to 49 percent oppose).

We present below a more in-depth analysis of the poll findings that includes breakdowns of key demographic data on the most relevant data points.

## General Findings

**General Support for Indian Gaming.** On a fundamental level, California voters continue to support the rights of Native American tribes to own gaming operations. Specifically, exactly half of California voters (50 percent) would vote yes on an initiative to allow Indian gaming if it were on the ballot again while slightly more than a third (35 percent) would oppose such a measure. The remaining 15 percent are undecided. This ratio of support-to-opposition is on par with the 62-38 margin of victory Proposition 5 passed with in 1998 and represents a slight rise from a survey we conducted a year ago for CTBA, which found a similar level of support but a marginally higher level of opposition (51 percent yes to 40 percent no).

**Limit the Lottery.** Simply put, voters do not want the lottery privatized. A majority of voters opposes such a proposal (51 percent) whereas only 29 percent support the concept. One out of five voters are unsure. Democrats (63 percent oppose) and independents (48 percent oppose) line up squarely against privatizing the lottery while Republicans are evenly split (37 percent support to 38 percent oppose).

### ■ Majority Opposition to Privatizing the Lottery

*As you may have heard, Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed privatizing the lottery by having a private, for-profit company manage and run the lottery instead of the state. In return, the state would receive a lump sum and payments every year. Would you say you support or oppose privatizing the lottery?*

Support	29%
Oppose	51%
Undecided	22%

Providing more information about the issue changes opinions slightly, but even after votes hear arguments for and against the idea, a plurality still opposes privatization. In fact, nearly half are still against it (48 percent) whereas support increases slightly to 37 percent and the number of undecided voters on this issue drops somewhat.

Whereas voters may have some misgivings over privatizing the lottery, they are solidly against the lottery implementing video lottery terminals. Few voters like the idea as only one out of six voters (18 percent) want to see VLTs made available compared to an overwhelming majority of 74 percent of voters who oppose them. Every demographic group and region in the state strongly opposes VLTs. Similarly, voters reject expanding the lottery through the use of VLTs – 22 percent favor this form of expansion and 73 percent oppose it.

### ■ Voters Do Not Want Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs) in California

*Currently, lottery tickets are only sold at designated spots like convenience stores and gas stations. A new proposal would allow people to play the lottery using Video Lottery Terminals, or VLTs. These look and sound like slot machines in a casino and give an instant payout, just as slot machines do. VLTs are currently illegal under state law. Do you favor or oppose allowing the use of VLTs in California?*

Favor	18%
Oppose	74%
Undecided	8%

**Continued Opposition to Off-Reservation Gaming.** As we have seen from the outset of our research on Indian gaming, voters insist that gaming stay on Indian reservations and do not want it allowed off-site. By a nearly four-to-one margin, voters oppose off-reservation gaming – 72

percent disapprove of it to only 21 percent who do. Intensity is squarely on the side of opponents as more than half of all voters (55 percent) *strongly* disapprove of it. Few voters do not have an opinion on this issue as only seven percent are currently undecided.

### ■ Intense and Long-Term Disapproval of Off-Reservation Indian Gaming

*In recent years, several Indian gaming casinos have been proposed on land that is not part of existing Indian reservations. In general, would you say that you approve or disapprove of building casinos off of Indian reservations?*

Approve	21%
Disapprove	72%
Undecided	7%

This issue unites Democrats, Republicans, and independents in opposition as all reject off-reservation gaming, and not a single demographic group or region in the state approves of it. Furthermore, opposition to this appears quite resolute as voter opinion has not budged at all since the survey we conducted last year (21 percent approve to 74 percent disapprove).

The strong opposition to off-reservation gaming in general holds up when presented a real-world example. We described the situation with Big Lagoon and presented arguments for both sides, including mentioning that Governor Schwarzenegger supports this off-reservation casino. Nevertheless, opponents outnumbered supporters by two-to-one (63 percent oppose to 30 percent support), with opponents much more strongly opposed (47 percent strongly oppose) than supporters backing it (only 15 percent strongly support). The Governor may be popular, but even he cannot persuade the public to support off-reservation gaming.

**Divisive Compacts.** The new compacts for the five Southern California tribes are a veritable lightning rod of controversy. They divide voters initially as 47 percent support the new compacts after hearing a neutral description of them and 45 percent oppose them, a statistical tie as the difference falls within the survey's margin of error.

### ■ Electorate Divided Over New Compacts

*As you may know, five Southern California tribes recently renegotiated their gaming compacts with the state. The tribes want to increase the number of slot machines from 10,000 to 32,500 in their six casinos. In exchange, the tribes would pay a larger percentage of their gambling revenues to the state. In addition, the state -- instead of the federal government -- would provide fiscal oversight of the casinos and to make sure the tribes abide by the agreement. The governor and the state Senate have approved these new compacts, but the state Assembly is still debating them. Based on this description, would you say you support or oppose these new gaming compacts?*

Support	47%
Oppose	45%
Undecided	8%

- Democrats (46 percent support to 44 percent oppose) and Republicans (44 percent support to 49 percent oppose) are closely divided, though independents are somewhat more inclined to initially favor the new compacts (55 percent to 38 percent).
- The Los Angeles media market leans towards supporting these compacts at the outset (52 percent support to 41 percent oppose) whereas the San Francisco media market is against them (37 percent support to 53 percent oppose). The Central Valley is a swing region of the state as voters here are divided (44 percent support to 46 percent oppose).

After hearing pro and con arguments about the compacts, support drops and a plurality of voters end up opposing the new compacts. Nearly half of voters (49 percent) oppose the compacts after arguments to 43 percent who support them. Strikingly, opponents have a significant edge in

intensity as twice as many voters *strongly* oppose the new compacts (34 percent) as *strongly* support them (18 percent) after each side has had their say.

Given these findings, the poll results demonstrate that if the new compacts were to face a referendum and appear on the ballot in front of voters, then they would face a difficult time passing and would be vulnerable to attack.

**Maintain tribal identity.** Voters would like to see Indian tribes maintain their tribal identities (51 percent), though a significant plurality of voters (35 percent) feels they should be integrated into the general population. This margin has increased since the survey we conducted a year ago, when the margin was much closer (47 percent felt tribes should maintain their separate identities and 43 percent believed they should move towards integration).

**Tax Indian casinos like ordinary businesses.** Voters do not like the current way tribes and gaming are taxed. When presented a choice of keeping the status quo or changing it, two-thirds of voters (64 percent) indicate they would prefer Indian casinos be taxed like ordinary businesses. One out of five voters (22 percent) feel the status quo should be continued where casinos are not taxed but members do pay taxes and tribes contribute a portion of their casino revenue to state and local governments. One in ten voters feels Indians should not pay anything to the state.

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**Survey Methodology:** From June 28- July 2, 2007, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted a statewide survey in California by telephone among 810 likely voters. The survey's margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percent.

References to a previous poll refer to a statewide poll conducted from February 19-23, 2006, by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research in California by telephone among 800 likely voters. The survey's margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percent.