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*UNH Media Relations*

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## Media Relations

# "What's At Stake" Presents Gambling Report To Governor's Commission

Apr 22, 2010



DURHAM, N.H. – As expanded gambling in New Hampshire heats up the state’s political landscape, a team from the University of New Hampshire presented the final report of “What’s at Stake: Community Conversations on the Benefits and Risks of Expanded Gambling” to the Governor’s Study Commission on Expanded Gaming earlier this week.

What’s at Stake gathered community input on expanded gambling via 19 small-group conversations around the state in February; 221 people participated in the conversations and an additional 275 participated in an online forum. Among the key conclusions presented in the report:

- Participants in Salem and the Berlin region were more likely to favor expanded gambling than those in other communities.
- Participants in Portsmouth and Littleton were more likely to

oppose expanded gambling.


- At the other sites – in Conway, Rochester, Laconia, Keene, Manchester, Concord and Lebanon -- participants expressed a range of views for and against expanded gambling and were more likely to say they opposed facilities in their own communities but not in other locations.
- A need for alternative revenue given the state’s current budget deficit was broadly recognized.
- There was a degree of consensus that it is more important to consider how to go about expanding gambling, than it is about whether or not to expand.
- Whether for or against expanded gambling, participants agreed on three fundamental tenets that should be considered in the decision-making: maintaining good jobs, quality of life, and a vital economy.


The report is available to download at <http://carseyinstitute.unh.edu/docs/WAS-4-20-10.pdf>.


“This process successfully captured the diversity of Granite Staters’ views – including the nuances within the ‘for’ and ‘against’ camps – on expanding gambling in our state,” says Charlie French, extension associate professor at UNH and the member of the What’s at Stake team who presented the report to the Governor’s Commission. “My fellow team members and I are grateful for the day citizens spent engaged in conversation over an issue important to the future of our state.”


In an effort to gather broad citizen input to inform the policy question of whether or not to expand legalized gambling in New Hampshire, What’s at Stake convened 19 small-group dialogues at 11 sites across the state in February. Trained facilitators guided the day-long discussions.

A preliminary evaluation report independently conducted by Public Agenda indicates the overall assessment of What’s At Stake is positive. The individuals who participated in the face-to-face event expressed high levels of satisfaction with the experience and suggested that they both enjoyed and

  
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learned from the experience. A majority of participants indicated they valued the opportunity to engage a contentious issue through this type of process where they were able to grapple with the pros and cons of the issue in uncommonly productive ways.

What's at Stake was carried out by faculty and staff affiliated with the Carsey Institute at UNH with support from UNH Cooperative Extension. It was led by UNH professor of education and Carsey Institute fellow Bruce Mallory; in addition to French, other team members are Ph.D. candidate Martha Parker; Michele Holt-Shannon, administrative director of UNH's Discovery Program; and Mica Stark, special assistant to the president for government relations. Financial support was provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

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*Reporters & Editors: What's at Stake team member Charlie French, who presented the report to the Governor's Study Commission on Expanded Gaming, is available at [charlie.french@unh.edu](mailto:charlie.french@unh.edu) or 603-862-0316.*

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