

New Jerseyans lukewarm to sports betting, poll shows

By Matt Arco | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com
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TRENTON — Gov. Chris Christie was betting a [bill he signed into law last week would clear](#) the way for legalized sports betting in New Jersey's casinos and horse-racing tracks, but New Jersey residents are less sure the proposal will provide a meaningful boost to Atlantic City.

According to a poll released today, 44 percent of New Jersey residents say sports betting is a good step for Atlantic City while nearly half believe it's either bad or will have no impact at all on the city hit with a series of setbacks in recent years.

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Thirty-one percent of New Jersey residents said sports betting will have no impact and 17 percent said it will be bad for Atlantic City, according to the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

The governor signed a law on Friday paving the way for legal sports wagering by repealing old state laws banning it. The move was the latest step by lawmakers and the administration to revitalize Atlantic City. Earlier, they approved online gambling for the casinos.

But residents skeptical of online gambling.

More than half, 55 percent, said online gambling in the state is bad for Atlantic City and 23 percent said it made no difference – only 5 percent said it was good for the shore city.

“In the face of Atlantic City’s troubles, most New Jerseyans no longer think gambling is particularly good for the state,” said David Redlawsk, director of the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling.

“Nearly four decades after the first casino opened, residents are split on whether gambling should expand and clearly don’t believe some current plans will be of much help to Atlantic City itself,” he said.

Meanwhile, only 43 percent of New Jersey residents believe casinos should be limited to Atlantic City while 47 percent said gambling should be permitted in other parts of the state.

Support for expanding gambling to other areas of the state is up 12 percent from a similar question asked in 1999, according to the poll.

The survey was a statewide poll of 842 residents and was conducted from Sept. 29 to Oct. 5. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.4. percentage points.

Matt Arco may be reached at marco@njadvancemedia.com. Follow him on Twitter [@MatthewArco](https://twitter.com/MatthewArco). Find NJ.com Politics on Facebook.

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