



The possibility of a casino at the Meadowlands Sports Complex seems like a long shot based on the results of a poll by Stockton University that were released Friday.

Stockton asked 638 likely voters about a Nov. 8 ballot question on whether to amend the state constitution to allow two casinos to be built in North Jersey. An overwhelming majority — 68 percent — responded that they oppose the idea while just 27 percent expressed support for the measure.

Among residents of South Jersey, 74 percent opposed ending Atlantic City's nearly 40-year statewide casino monopoly. Of respondents in the state's 13 northernmost counties, 63 percent were opposed.

The poll, which was conducted over the previous seven days, has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.9 percentage points.

"These results should provide some comfort to residents of the Atlantic City region, which has seen the loss of 5,400 casino industry jobs since the start of 2014," said Sharon Schulman, executive director of Stockton's William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. "Clearly the voters — especially those in South Jersey — do not want to see Atlantic City casino competition within the state."

The Meadowlands and Jersey City — where Paul Fireman, the former Reebok chief executive and the owner of the Liberty National Golf Club, has proposed a multi-billion dollar casino and resort — are most often mentioned as the sites of the North Jersey casinos, although the ballot question would allow them to be built anywhere north of New Brunswick. However, 53 percent of those polled said knowing the exact locations would have no impact on their vote.

On June 2, a Monmouth University poll showed that respondents were split, 48 percent to 48 percent, on the casino expansion proposal, while a Fairleigh Dickinson University-PublicMind poll on July 11 suggested that public opinion had shifted against it, with 57 percent opposed and 35 percent support. A Rutgers University poll last week found that 50 percent opposed the casino proposal while 37 percent supported it.

Opponents have vastly outspent supporters in television and radio advertising, with a non-profit group called Trenton's Bad Bet framing the casino expansion proposal as an ill-conceived plan by untrustworthy state legislators. The ad blitz and grim public and internal polling led Jeff Gural — the Meadowlands Racetrack operator who has expressed support for a casino as an extension of the track's grandstand — and Fireman last week to suspend the public relations campaign that they had been running under the name OURTurnNJ.

Email: [brennan@northjersey.com](mailto:brennan@northjersey.com) Blog: [northjersey.com/brennan](http://northjersey.com/brennan) Twitter: @BergenBrennan

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