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PRESS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**BAY STATERS HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT HOSTING THE OLYMPICS,
EXPRESS LOYALTY FOR THE PATS AND SOX, AND HAVE NO PATIENCE FOR
PROTESTERS BLOCKING TRAFFIC**

BOSTON (1/28/2015): Massachusetts residents are sharply divided on Boston hosting the 2024 summer Olympic Games, with 48% opposing the city's Olympic bid and 42% supporting it.

A statewide poll conducted by the Emerson College Polling Society (ECPS) found that people's biggest worry about the Olympics is the cost and debt associated with the Games, cited by 37% of survey participants. Their next biggest fear is terrorism, mentioned by 26%. Among the potential factors heightening concern about terrorism are vivid memories of the deadly 2013 Boston Marathon bombing and the media spectacle surrounding the upcoming trial of the suspected bomber. Another 18% of survey participants said traffic congestion and crowds are the top drawback of hosting the Games.

Jobs and economic gains (32%) were cited as the biggest benefit of the Olympics, followed by the chance to improve the city's reputation (18%). This contrasted to 29% of respondents who saw no positive benefits in Boston being the Olympic host city.

Who's in favor, and who's against?

The level of education and household income were factors in gauging public support for the Games in the Commonwealth. People with the lowest educational attainment and the lowest household incomes expressed the highest levels of support: 57% of those with some high school education and 56% of people with a high school diploma favor holding the Olympics in Boston. In contrast, only 35% of those with a post-graduate degree and 28% with a Bachelor or Associate degree would welcome the event.

In the lowest household income bracket (under \$25,000), 60% of respondents want the Olympics to come to town, compared to only 42% of those earning over \$75,000, and 33% in the \$25,000 to \$75,000 category. These results suggest that individuals who are the least well off may perceive the Games as a source of jobs.

On a regional basis, Worcester/Western Massachusetts expressed the highest level of support for the Games, at 58%. Areas closer to Boston were much less eager. Middlesex/Essex counties (34%), Suffolk County (36%), and the South Shore (42%) all fell short of majority support. Women favor the Olympics bid more than men do, by a margin of 47% to 37%, and Republicans (53%) are more enthusiastic than Democrats (44%) and Independents (37%).

Fans are confident the Patriots will win the Super Bowl

84% of respondents plan to watch the upcoming Super Bowl, and 86% expect the New England Patriots to beat the Seattle Seahawks. 79% believe the Pats had nothing to do with the “deflate-gate” controversy. (A more in-depth poll on the Super Bowl can be found at www.theecps.com.)

Hometown favorites

Fans narrowly chose the Red Sox (37%) over the Patriots (36%) as their favorite Boston sports team, with the Bruins (13%) and Celtics (5%) trailing far behind. The state’s favorite athlete is Big Papi, Red Sox designated hitter David Ortiz. He was chosen by 24% of respondents, followed by Patriots quarterback Tom Brady (22%) and tight end Rob Gronkowski (17%). Four in ten respondents (40%) said they attended a Red Sox game last season, 14% took in a Patriots game, and 10% and 9%, respectively, saw the Bruins and Celtics play.

The best-ever Patriots team

Asked to name the best Patriots team of all time, the top choice (cited by 28%), was the 2007 squad, which went undefeated during the regular season but lost to the New York Giants in the Super Bowl. New England’s 2001 team, the first to win a Super Bowl, was second on the all-time list, chosen by 27%. Fans ranked this year’s team third, with 17% saying it was the best Pats team ever.

Thumbs down on a protest that snarled traffic

84% of Massachusetts residents say they were opposed to a political protest that snarled the morning commute into Boston for several hours on January 15. Activists from the group “Black Lives Matter” blocked traffic on Interstate 93 as part of the ongoing national protest against police shootings of unarmed African Americans.

Only 12% of the public supports the group’s traffic protest action, as compared to 71% who oppose it; 14% oppose the traffic blockade but support the protesters’ larger cause. Opposition was strong (ranging from 56% to 76%) among all age groups, both genders, all party affiliations, and four out of five race/ethnicity categories. The one dramatic exception was African Americans, who support the protest 68% to 25%.

Caller ID

This Emerson College Polling Society survey was conducted statewide in Massachusetts from January 21-24, using an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. The survey sample consisted of 554 adults. The poll has a margin of error of +/-4.1% with a 95% confidence level. The full survey methodology and results can be found at www.theecps.com

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