



# WHO BET THE BIG GAME?

PUBLIC OPINION AND SUPER BOWL BETTING IN  
NEWLY LEGALIZED GAMBLING ENVIRONMENTS

FROM THE CREATORS OF THE LIFE, LIBERTY, AND HAPPINESS PROJECT

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#### THE CENTER FOR SURVEY RESEARCH

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## PUBLIC OPINION AND SUPER BOWL BETTING IN NEWLY LEGALIZED GAMBLING ENVIRONMENTS

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Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, a federal law that prohibited states from authorizing sports gambling (except Nevada). In the aftermath of the ruling, New Jersey and Mississippi were two of the first states to legalize sports gambling, adopting legislation in June 2018. Nine months later, and following the Super Bowl, one of the biggest sports gambling events of the year, a new ECU Center for Survey Research (CSR) poll of more than 1,000 adults (age 21 and over) in New Jersey and Mississippi, conducted between February 6-12, 2019 (n=1,024, +/- 3.5.), examines the gambling activities and opinions of residents in these two very different states - a northern "blue" state dominated by Democrats and a southern "red" state dominated by Republicans.

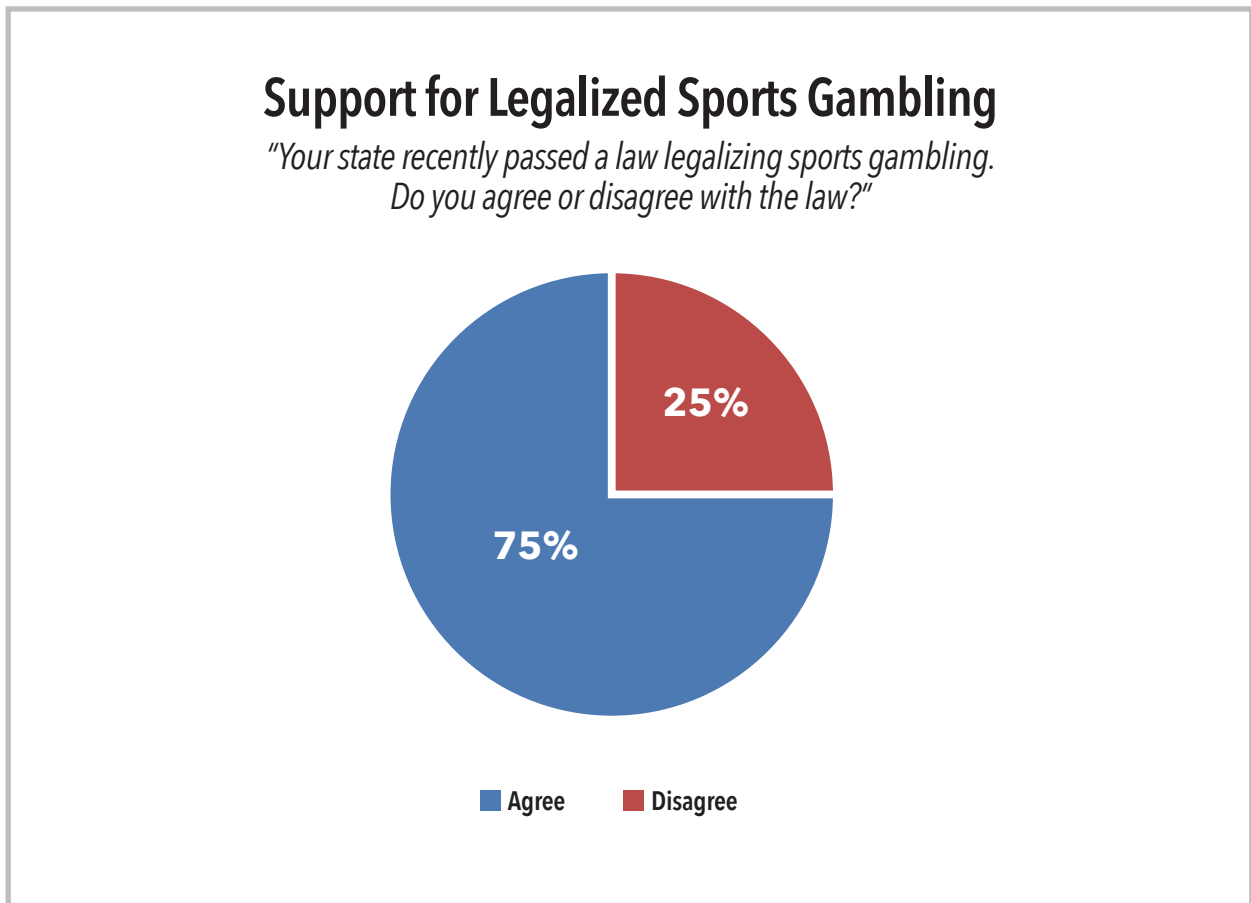
### KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ A significant majority of New Jersey and Mississippi residents support legalization of sports gambling.
- ▶ Despite political and regional differences, New Jersey and Mississippi residents hold remarkably similar views on a variety of issues related to legalized sports gambling.
- ▶ Religion and partisan identification have little influence on support for legalized sports gambling.
- ▶ People who think legalized sports gambling is good for their state's economy outnumber those who think it is bad by a 3-to-1 margin.
- ▶ A majority, however, have concerns that legalized sports gambling will lead to higher rates of gambling addiction.

## FINDINGS

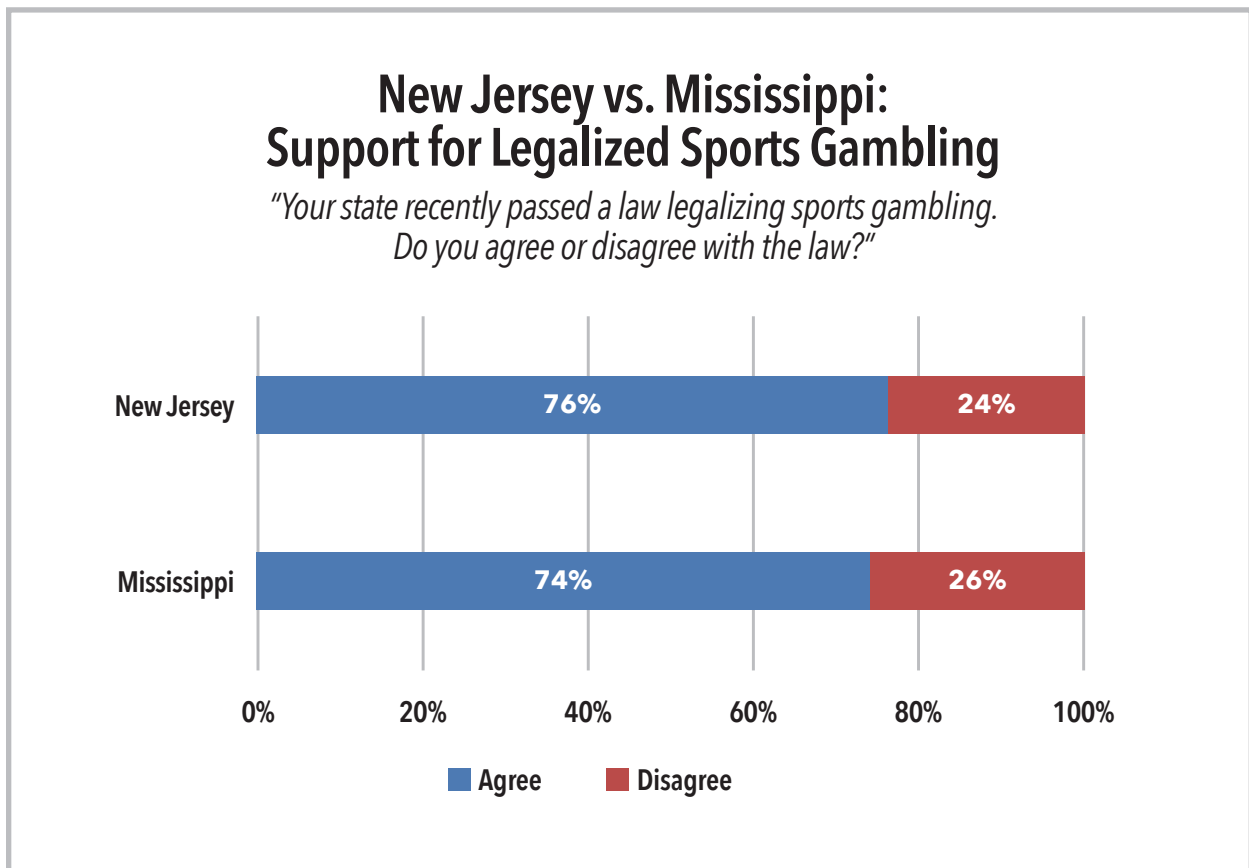
► **SUPPORT FOR LEGALIZED GAMBLING IS HIGH.**

- 75 percent of those surveyed agreed with the recently-passed law in their state that legalized sports gambling.



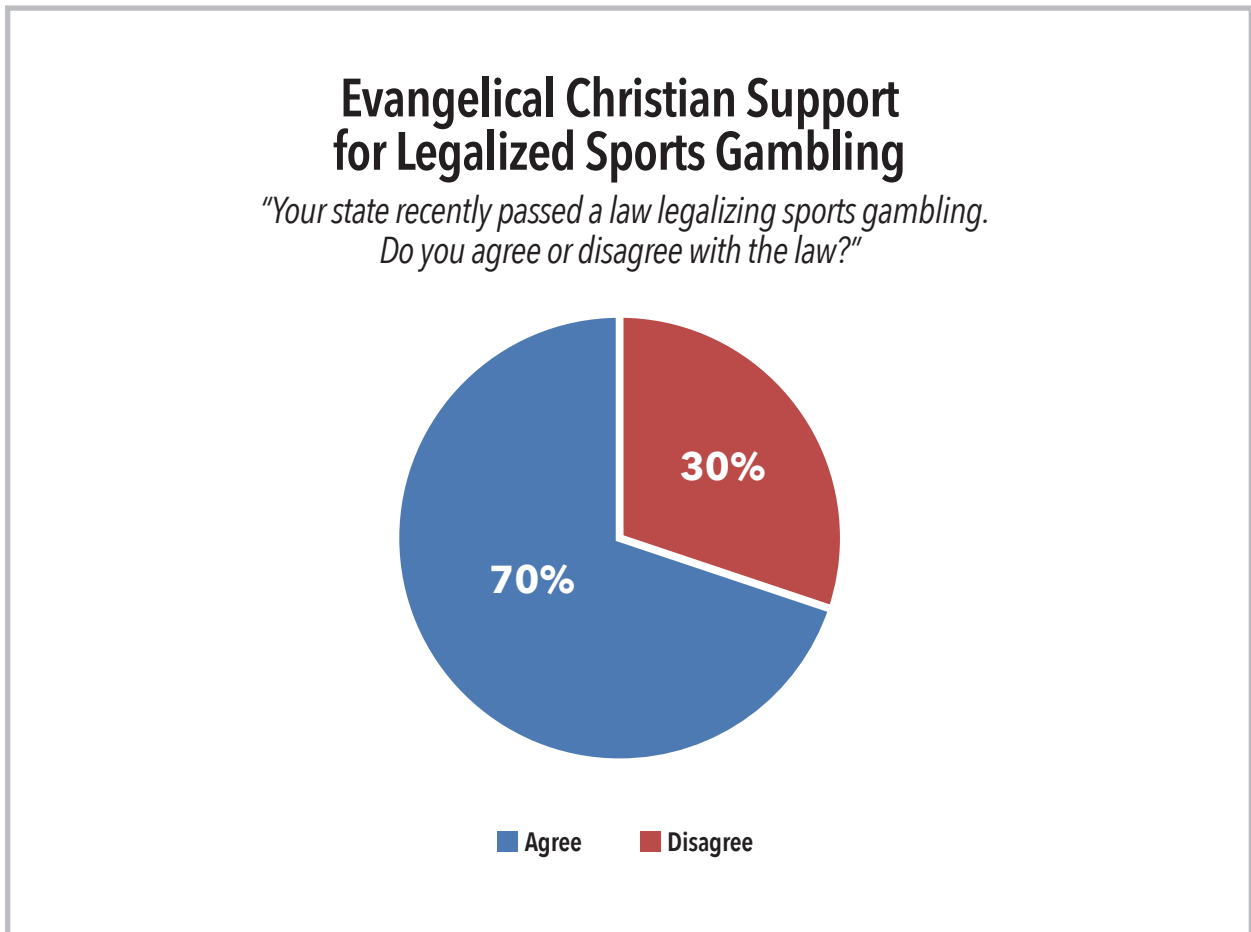
► **DESPITE POLITICAL DIFFERENCES, CITIZENS HOLD SIMILAR VIEWS ON LEGALIZED GAMBLING.**

- Support for legalized sports gambling is 76 percent in blue-state New Jersey and 74 percent in red-state Mississippi.
- 71 percent of self-identified Republicans support legalized sports gambling; a similarly high 77 percent of self-identified Democrats support legalized sports gambling.

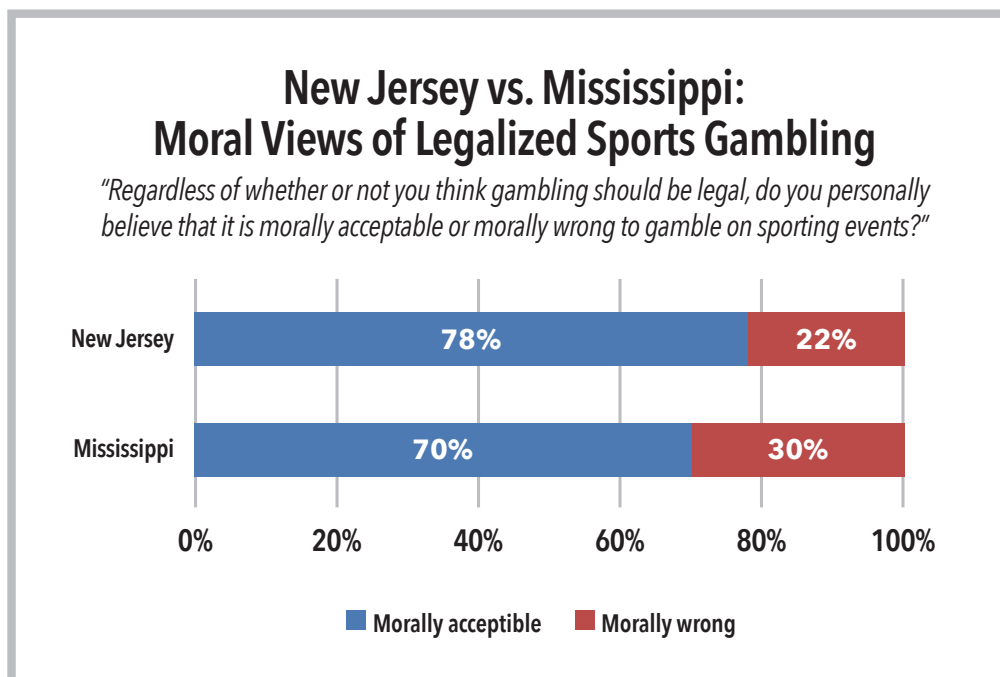


► **RELIGION HAS ONLY A MINIMAL IMPACT ON SUPPORT FOR LEGALIZED SPORTS GAMBLING.**

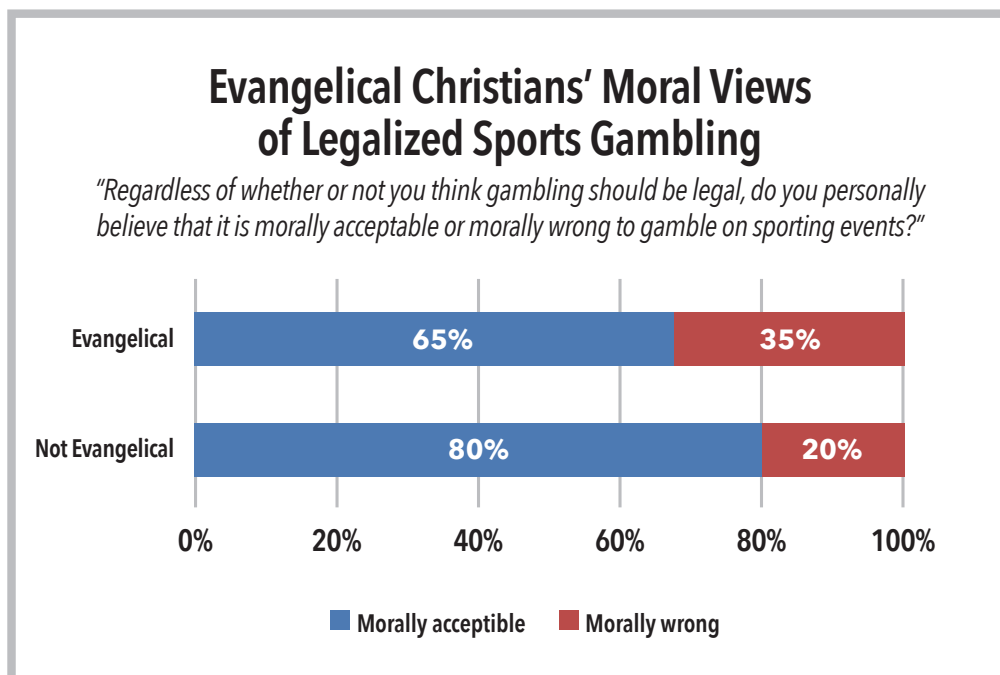
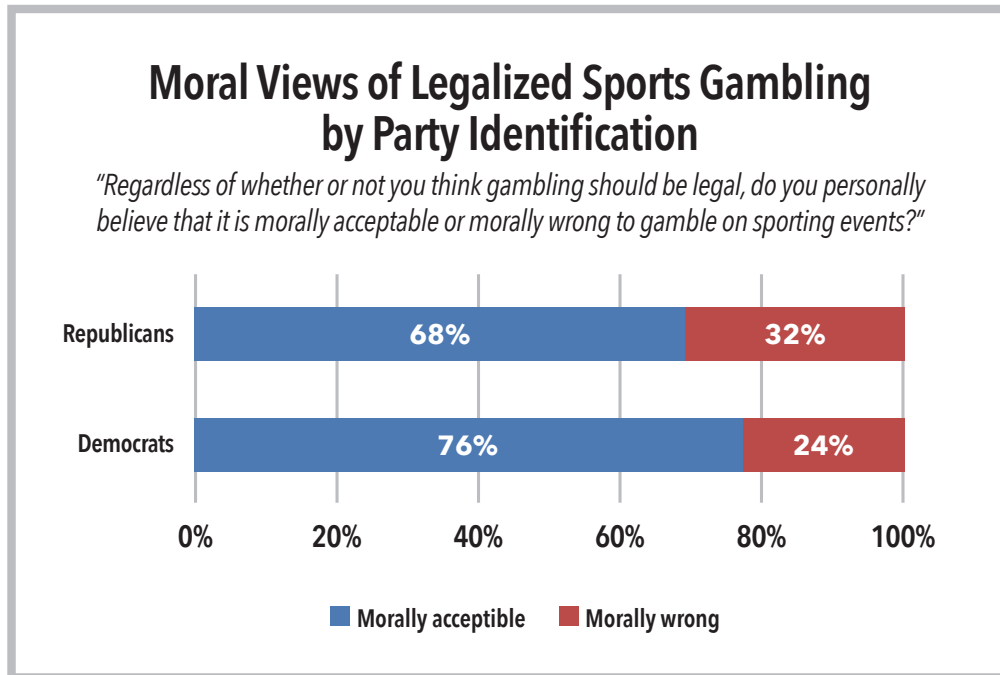
- 70 percent of Evangelical Christians support the legalization of sports gambling, which is only marginally lower than those who do not identify as Evangelical Christians (78 percent).
- Nearly two-thirds of those who attend church at least once a week support legalized sports gambling (65 percent), although to a lesser extent than those who attend church less frequently (81 percent).



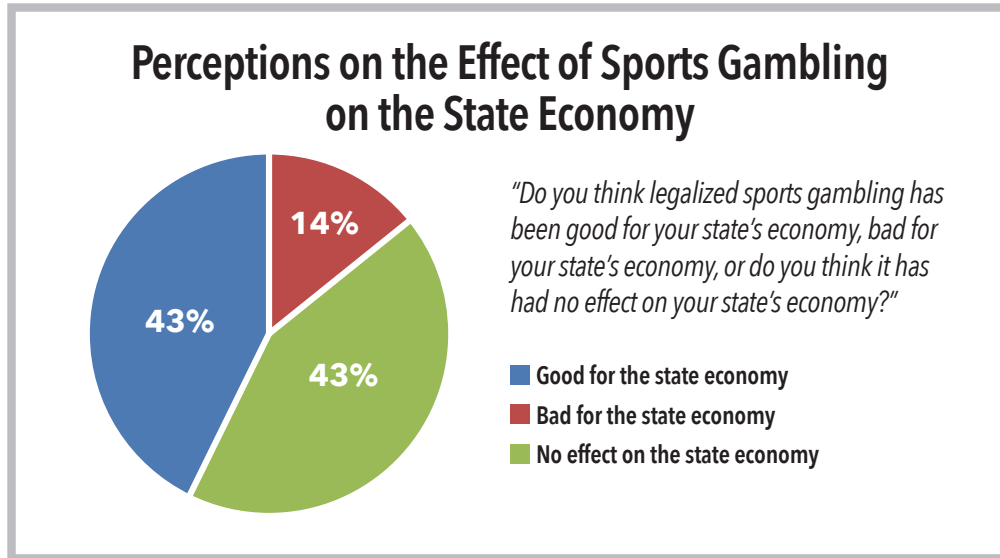
- Only 26 percent of respondents thought gambling on sports was morally wrong.
- 22 percent of people in New Jersey thought sports gambling was morally wrong, compared to 30 percent in Mississippi.



- 68 percent of Republicans find sports gambling morally acceptable compared to 76 percent of Democrats.
- Two out of three (65 percent) Evangelical Christians thought sports gambling was morally acceptable compared to 80 percent of those who did not identify as Evangelical Christian.

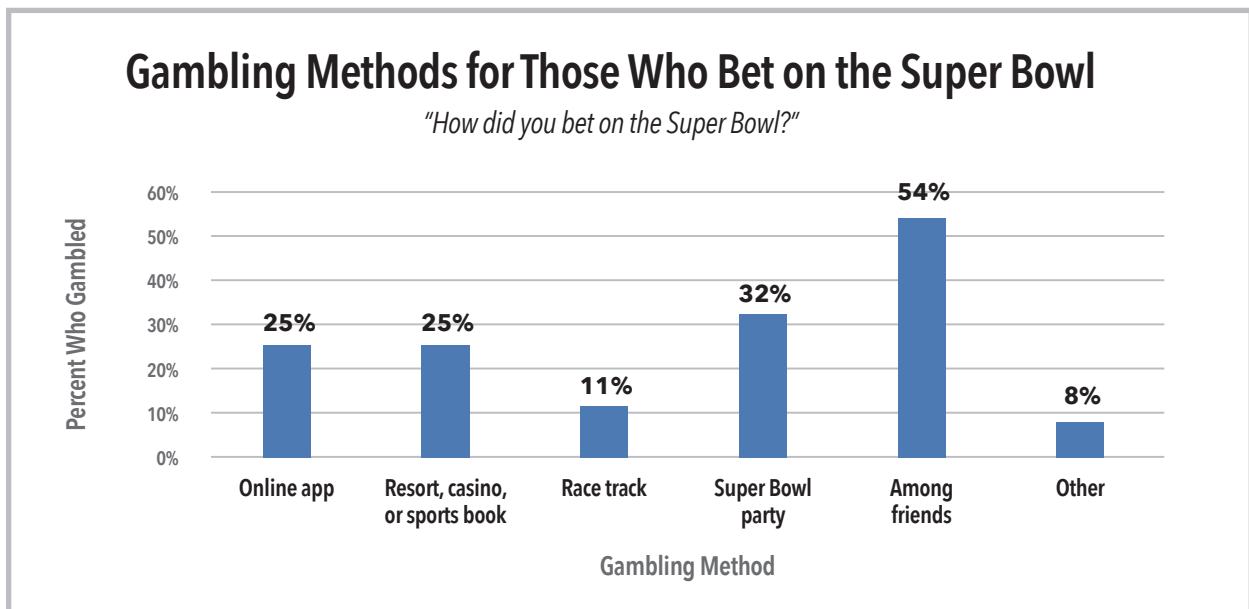


- 43 percent think legalized gambling has been good for their state’s economy, while only 14 percent think it has been bad (43 percent said gambling has had no impact).



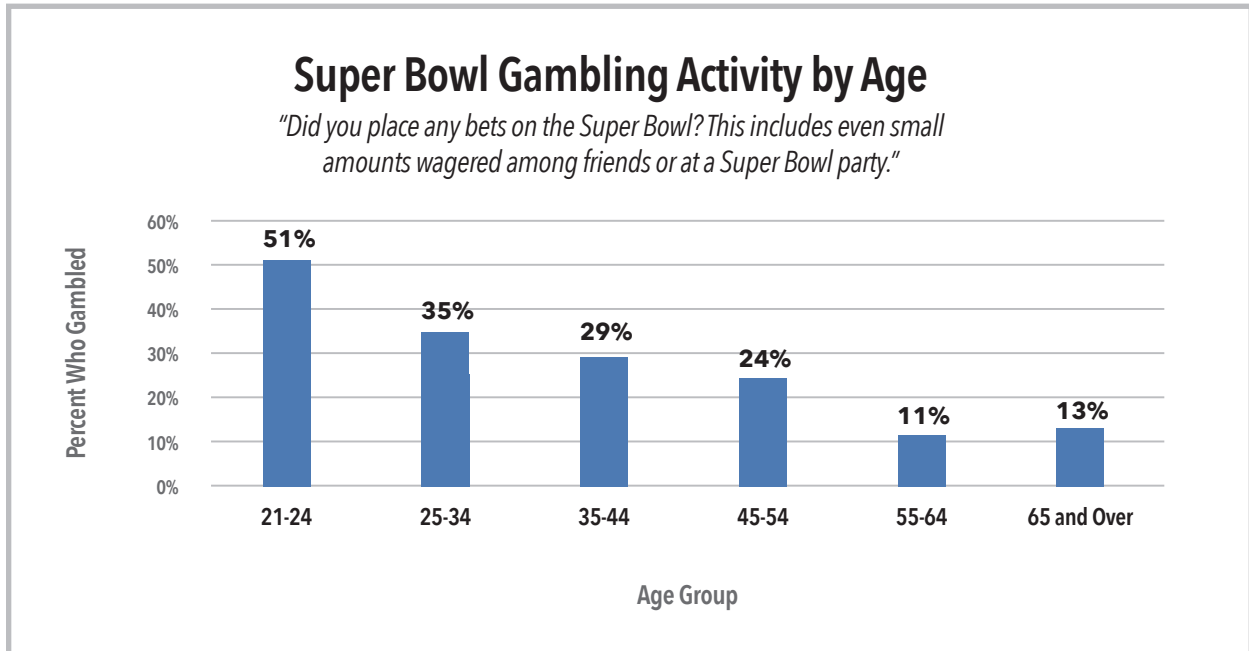
► **ROUGHLY ONE IN FOUR (26 percent) REPORTED GAMBLING ON THE SUPER BOWL.**

- Of those who gambled on the game, 25 percent bet through an online app, while a similar 25 percent placed their Super Bowl bets in person at a resort, casino or sportsbook. Another 11 percent placed their bets at a race track. The majority of Super Bowl bettors gambled among friends (54 percent) and one-third (32 percent) gambled at a Super Bowl party. (Note: Respondents were able to list multiple methods of gambling on the game).





- The most active bettors were young adults. Half of all 21- to 24-year-olds (51 percent) bet on the game. Only 11 percent of 55- to 64-year-olds, and 13 percent of those 65 and older bet on the game.



► **CONCERNS OVER GAMBLING ADDICTION LOOM.**

- Six out of 10 respondents are at least somewhat concerned that legalized sports gambling will lead to higher rates of gambling addiction in their states.

**SURVEY METHODS**

The poll was conducted between February 6-12, 2019 by the ECU Center for Survey Research. The sample consisted of 1,024 respondents (n=493 from New Jersey, and n=531 from Mississippi) with a credibility interval, much like a poll’s margin of error, of +/- 3.5 percentage points. The data were weighted by age, race, gender, education and party identification. Data were collected using an Interactive Voice Response system of landline telephone (n=320) and an online sample (n=704) provided by Dynata (formerly Survey Sampling International).



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