For Immediate Release
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National JSU Poll: Religious Freedom Laws Divide Americans - Evenly

- Two-Thirds (65.5%) See Need for Some Religious Freedom Laws;
- Many (63.0%) also see Religious Freedom Laws as Means to Discriminate and Hide Real Intent (60.2%);
- Near Majority (47.7%) Will Not Boycott States with Religious Freedom Laws while 38.2% Will

Jackson – The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government has released a national survey of 1000 adults. The Poll was conducted May 11 – 17, 2016.

The latest national poll by Jackson State University’s Institute of Government Polling Center measured awareness, interest and support for various aspects of religious freedom laws nationally.

There exists strong awareness and interest in “religious freedom laws” – laws designed to allow businesses and individuals the right to refuse service to members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered populations by stating a sincerely-held religious belief. Three-quarters of all Americans surveyed, 76.5%, were aware (very or somewhat) of the laws while 79.1% expressed interest (very or somewhat interested) in the laws.

Support for religious freedom laws is evenly split among those polled – 44.4% strongly or somewhat in support and 45.1% somewhat and strongly opposed. Some, 10.4%, were unsure.

Many respondents appear to see value in both sides of the issue of religious freedom laws based on their agreement or disagreement with related statements. Interestingly, as overall support/opposition to religious freedom laws is evenly split, 65.5% agreed that there does need to be some religious freedom laws to protect those with legitimate beliefs and faiths. Just under one-quarter, 23.0%, disagreed.

Agreement and disagreement was recorded for a number of other statements regarding religious freedom laws…

- A private parish pastor should have the right not to marry a lesbian/gay couple – 66.2% agreed, 21.0% disagreed;
• We do need some religious freedom laws to protect those with legitimate beliefs and faiths – 65.5% agreed, 23.0% disagreed;
• Sometimes states do pass laws that are designed to discriminate – 63.0% agreed, 24.2% disagreed;
• These religious laws are creeping in nature and will only get more restrictive and discriminatory – 62.0% agreed, 26.0% disagreed;
• Sponsors of these laws have the real hidden intent of discrimination – 60.2% agreed, 28.0% disagreed;
• I see these religious freedom laws as a way to legislate morality – 54.8% agreed, 30.6% disagreed;
• I would support some level of religious freedom laws in my own state – 50.4% agreed, 37.6% disagreed;
• I would support boycotts of states with religious freedom laws by companies or sports figures – 42.5% agreed, 41.7% disagreed;
• A public Justice of the Peace should have the right not to marry a lesbian/gay couple – 38.9% agreed, 48.3% disagreed;
• I can see myself boycotting or not vacationing in a state with religious freedom laws in place – 38.2% agreed, 47.7% disagreed;
• These laws are accurately and properly titled: “Religious Freedom Laws” – 35.6% agreed, 43.3% disagreed.

ABOUT THE POLL: The Poll was conducted by The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government. Polling by the Center is conducted on a regular basis and may also include spontaneous polling on occurring events. www.jsums.edu/instituteofgovernment - tab “Community Service, Training, and Research” click JSU Polling Center

METHODOLOGY: The Poll sampled opinions of 1000 approximately proportional to state population contribution nationwide. The survey was conducted May 11 - 17, 2016. All surveys were conducted using an online survey instrument. The poll has a +/- 3.0 percent margin of error at a 95 percent confidence level on a composite basis.

ABOUT JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY: CHALLENGING MINDS, CHANGING LIVES
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National JSU Poll: Majority of Americans (54.4%) Say Trump Would Expand Religious Freedom Laws – from LGBT Community to Muslims, immigrants and Mexicans

➢ Percent seeing Donald Trump Expansion of Religious Freedom Laws Highest Among Democrats – 71.7%;
➢ Near Majority, 47.0%, See More Restrictive Religious Freedom Laws Under a President Trump;
➢ Percent Seeing More Restrictive Religious Freedom Laws Under President Trump at 68.8% among Democrats

Jackson, MS – The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government has released a national survey of 1000 adults. The poll was conducted May 11 - 17, 2016.

The latest national poll conducted by the Polling Center collected views on Religious Freedom Laws under Donald Trump if he should win the 2016 Presidential election in November.

By nearly a two-to-one margin, poll respondents agreed that a Donald Trump presidency would likely move religious freedom laws to include, beyond the LGBT community, Muslims, immigrants and Mexicans. The margin was 54.4% agreeing (that Donald Trump would support allowing businesses and individuals to refuse service to Muslims, immigrants and Mexicans) with 24.7% disagreeing. Nearly three-quarters, 71.7%, of Democrats surveyed agreed that Donald Trump would support stronger religious freedom laws.

Similarly, 47.0% of Americans surveyed suggested we would see more restrictive religious freedom laws under a President Donald Trump. Fewer, 32.9% disagreed.

Among Democrats polled, 68.8% agreed that we would see more restrictive laws while 32.7% of Republicans agreed.

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National JSU Poll:  More Americans Favor Public Access to Bath and Locker Rooms Restricted by Biological Gender

- Awareness (83.3%) and Interest (75.1%) in Bathroom Laws High;
- Support for Restricting Bathroom Access to Biological Gender Only at 47.8% with 38.4% Opposed;
- Most, 78.9%, See Nation Founded on Religious Freedom;
- However, Most See Compromise on the Issue of Religious Freedoms Possible

Jackson, MS – The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government has released a national survey of 1000 adults. The poll was conducted May 11-17, 2016.

The latest national poll conducted by the Polling Center collected views religious liberty laws or “bathroom laws”.

Some existing laws are termed religious liberty laws or described as “bathroom laws”. These laws restrict access to public restrooms and locker rooms based on a person’s biological gender. Awareness and interest in these laws appears high – 83.3% (very and somewhat aware) and 75.1% (very and somewhat interested).

Support for laws restricting bathroom access to biological gender only, at 47.8%, is higher than opposition at 38.4%. Some, 14.0% are unsure.

The issue of religious freedom and liberty laws is difficult for many Americans.

While more than three-quarters, 78.9%, agreed (strongly or somewhat) that the nation was founded on religious freedom and we should strive to protect those rights, only one-quarter, 27.0% could agree (strongly or somewhat) that the nation is moving toward unity on these issues.

However, many see hope and room for compromise on these sometimes controversial laws...

More Americans surveyed, 56.1%, agreed it is possible to compromise on the issue of religious freedoms to make both sides somewhat comfortable than those disagreeing – 29.8%.
Further, 64.7% of all respondents agreed (strongly or somewhat) that it is possible to bridge between civil liberties and constitutional protections. Some, 18.8%, disagreed.

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Half of College Experienced Americans Say Paying for College Was Difficult According to New JSU Poll

- Finances Are Leading Barrier for those Not Attending;
- Majorities Urge Free College for Low-Income and Minorities;
- Majorities Urge Federal Funding for Historically Black Universities and Colleges (HBUCs);
- Large Percent (42.2%) Willing to Pay More in Taxes to Increase Financial Assistance for Lower-Income Students

Jackson, MS – The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government has released a national survey of 1000 adults. The Poll covered perceptions of college affordability, barriers to attending among those who missed college, and support for increased financial assistance programming. The Poll was conducted May 11-16, 2016.

Two-thirds, 65.7%, of all respondents have had some experience with college – either currently attending, having attended or graduated.

Of this group, a large percentage (48.7%) suggested it was very or somewhat difficult to pay for college.

Further, one-third (32.6%) suggested they experienced a delay or postponement during their college experience due to the cost.

According to college attendees, the leading resources for funding their education were their own personal funds (61.0%), parent financial support (45.0%), grants such as Pell (39.6%) and scholarships (36.1%). Some also accessed college savings/savings accounts (11.0%) and gifts (9.3%).

Unfortunately, for two-thirds, 67.3%, of those not attending college, finances were the primary barrier.

Among those not attending college, the primary reasons centered on lacking the financial resources (46.5%) and not desire/no interest (40.4%). Others mentioned that their preferred avocation did not require college (12.0%), could not secure find financial assistance (12.0%),
was accepted but ultimately could not afford to attend (5.3%), couldn’t qualify for admission (3.5%) or family had too much money to qualify for financial assistance (3.5%).

Respondents were presented with the following statement: “Statistics show that 79% of students coming from the top quartile of family income receive a BA Degree while just 11% of those students coming from the bottom quartile of family income receive the same BA Degree. These statistics and declines in the number of Pell Grants and other financial assistance awards make it increasingly difficult for college bound students.”

Majorities agreed with a number of statements related to financial assistance for college attendance…

- 52.7% agreed (somewhat or strongly) that public colleges and universities should be free of charge for everyone;
- 52.2% agreed (somewhat or strongly) that public colleges and universities should be free of charge for students from lower-income families; and
- 52.2% agreed (somewhat or strongly) that Historically Black Universities and Colleges (HBUCs), which strive to support minority students, should receive federal funding to grow their efforts.

Further, strong agreement was also found in a number of other financial assistance areas…

- 47.2% agreed (somewhat or strongly) that there are fewer financial assistance opportunities for lower income students;
- 42.2% agreed (somewhat or strongly) that they would be willing to pay reasonably more in taxes to increase financial assistance programs for lower-income students trying to attend college; and
- 40.4% agreed (somewhat or strongly) that there are fewer financial assistance opportunities for minority students in the United States.

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