To: Freedom Virginia

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Re: Results from a Recent Poll Around Revenue and Gaming in Virginia[i]

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Results from a survey recently conducted by TeamU at LRP show that Virginia voters strongly support finding ways to generate new revenue for the state to fund the right priorities and services Virginians rely on. At the same time, voters do not prioritize allowing skill-games in the state. In fact, a candidate who includes skill-game expansion in their agenda is much less likely to receive voters' support than one who does not.

Here are some of the key findings:

- **The data is clear – Virginia voters support generating new revenue to fund the right priorities over cutting taxes and reducing services**. Forty-seven percent of voters feel that finding new sources of revenue, even if it means raising taxes for some wealthy Virginians and corporations, is the better way to meet the service needs of Virginians, while just 28% prefer keeping spending down and cutting taxes. Even when framed as a way to balance the state budget, voters still prefer finding new sources of revenue over cutting taxes 43% to 27%.

- **Voters do not like skill-game machines and want to keep them out of Virginia.** Half of voters have an unfavorable opinion of slots-like gaming machines, also called skill-games (22% favorable). Forty-nine percent want their legislator to vote to keep these machines out of Virginia (37% strongly) while just 36% want to allow them (18% strongly).

  o **Among Democrats**, 54% have an unfavorable opinion of skill-games (22% favorable, 24% no opinion) and 49% want to keep machines out (34% want to allow them).

  o **Among independents**, 53% have an unfavorable opinion of skill-games (19% favorable, 28% no opinion) and 53% want to keep machines out (31% want to allow them).

  o **Among Asian American and Pacific Islander[ii] voters,** 56% have an unfavorable opinion of skill-games (18% favorable, 26% no opinion) and 62% want to keep machines out (26% want to allow them).

Voters are especially concerned about skill-game machines taking advantage of working and low-income families and preying on Black and Brown communities and those who can least afford it. Opposition to these games grows overall and in intensity after voters hear messaging from both sides (54% want to keep out – 43% strongly keep out; 34% want to allow – 18% strongly allow).

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- **A candidate for Delegate who includes skill-games expansion in their agenda is viewed much less favorably than a candidate who does not.** When asked whether they would be more or less likely to support a Delegate running for re-election after hearing their agenda, 67% of voters say they would be more likely to support a candidate with a generic agenda supporting affordable health care and public school funding, with 42% saying they'd be much more likely to support that candidate. Just 18% say they'd be less likely to support such a candidate.

  However, when this agenda includes expanding skill-games, voters' support for the candidate drops a whopping 29 points to just 38% more likely, with 15% much more likely to support them. And nearly twice as many voters (35%) say they would be *less* likely to support the candidate who mentions skill-games compared to the one who does not, and with more intensity (21% much less likely). Again, the only difference between the two candidates' agendas is their support for skill-games expansion, which is directly linked to that overall 29-point gap in support.

    o **Among Democrats**, support drops 32 points, from 89% more likely for the generic agenda to 57% including skill-games expansion (and opposition increases from one percent to 17%).

    o **Among independents**, support drops 44 points, from 70% more likely for the generic agenda to 26% including skill-games expansion (opposition increases from 19% to 60%).

    o **Among AAPI voters**, support drops 27 points, from 63% more likely for the generic agenda to 36% including skill-games expansion (opposition increases from 20% to 36%).

    o **Even among Black voters, who tend to be more favorable toward skill-games compared to other demographic groups,** support drops 41 points, from 92% more likely for the generic agenda to 51% including skill-games expansion (opposition increases from five percent to 11%).

- **What is clear is that voters want to raise revenue by making the tax system fairer. If there is a special session, voters want this to be a focus.** Several proof points speak to this sentiment:

    o If there is a special session, over seven in ten voters (71%) find it important (47% very important) for the General Assembly to focus on making the Virginia tax code fairer by making the wealthy pay their fair share, and even more find it important (78% important, 43% very important) to focus on making the system fairer by ensuring working families pay less.

        ▪ Meanwhile, 61% of voters find it *un*important for the Assembly to focus on expanding gambling opportunities in Virginia (45% not important at all).

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- o Seventy-nine percent of voters agree (55% strongly agree) that the wealthy can afford to pay their fair share in taxes, while 73% agree (42% strongly agree) that a fairer tax system means working families pay a lower rate than the wealthy.

  - Comparatively, only 27% of voters agree that Virginia cannot afford to raise taxes on the wealthy (55% disagree).

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[i] LRP designed and administered this survey. It was conducted both online and by telephone using professional interviewers as well as text-to-online from June 3 – 9, 2024. The survey reached 600 modeled likely voters in Virginia, with oversamples of 150 voters in targeted districts and 100 Asian American and Pacific Islander voters. The data were weighted slightly. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 4.0%, and larger for sub-groups.

[ii] This survey reached a total of 135 AAPI voters, including the base and oversample.