

Election 2016: Insights from Massachusetts

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Election insights from the Bay State

- Recent presidential elections in Massachusetts have provided little suspense
- But the 2016 cycle included interesting ballot questions, as well as the unique dynamics of the Clinton vs. Trump match-up
- There are useful findings to consider before we move on to the next election cycle

Ballot initiatives in 2016

Voters considered four statewide questions this year. Should Massachusetts:

1. License a second slots parlor
2. Lift the cap on charter schools
3. Outlaw cramped living conditions for farm animals
4. Legalize marijuana for adults ages 21 and older

Ballot initiatives in 2016 – Results

| Question | Yes | No | Margin |
|--|-----|-----|--------|
| #1 Licensing a second slots parlor | 39% | 61% | -22 |
| #2 Lifting cap on charter schools | 38% | 62% | -24 |
| #3 Outlawing cramped conditions for farm animals | 78% | 22% | +56 |
| #4 Legalizing marijuana for adults 21 and older | 54% | 46% | +8 |

Ballot initiatives in 2016 – Results

| Question | Yes | No | Margin | WNE Poll 10/23 – 11/2 |
|--|-----|-----|--------|-----------------------------|
| #1 Licensing a second slots parlor | 39% | 61% | -22 | -18 |
| #2 Lifting cap on charter schools | 38% | 62% | -24 | -13 |
| #3 Outlawing cramped conditions for farm animals | 78% | 22% | +56 | +40 |
| #4 Legalizing marijuana for adults 21 and older | 54% | 46% | +8 | +27 |

Opinion shifts on charter schools

| WNE Poll – Lifting the cap | Support | Oppose | Don't know | Refused |
|--|---------|--------|------------|---------|
| Oct. 23 – Nov. 2, 2016 417 likely voters | 39% | 52% | 8% | 1% |
| Sept. 24 – Oct. 3, 2016 403 likely voters | 34% | 47% | 18% | 1% |
| April 1 – 10, 2016 497 registered voters | 51% | 26% | 23% | 0% |

Opinion shifts on charter schools

| WNE Poll – How closely following the discussion? | Very closely | Somewhat closely | Not very closely | Not at all closely | DK / RF |
|--|--------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Oct. 23 – Nov. 2, 2016 417 likely voters | 44% | 35% | 12% | 8% | 1% |
| Sept. 24 – Oct. 3, 2016 403 likely voters | 28% | 35% | 21% | 14% | 2% |
| April 1 – 10, 2016 497 registered voters | 17% | 25% | 20% | 36% | 2% |

Opinion shifts on charter schools

- Across the three surveys, the partisan divisions followed a typical pattern, with Democrats opposed to lifting the cap and Republicans in favor.
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- Unenrolled voters shifted from supporting lifting the cap in April to opposing lifting the cap in the fall.

Opinion shifts on charter schools

- Statistically significant differences in opinion by household income emerged in April
- Voters with lower household incomes were more likely to support lifting the cap in April
- Those differences disappeared in the fall surveys

Opinion shifts on charter schools

- Statistically significant differences emerged along racial lines in the Sept. 24 – Oct. 3 survey, with non-white voters supporting raising the cap, and white voters opposed
- That difference disappeared in the Oct. 23 – Nov. 2 survey, with voters in both categories more likely to oppose lifting the cap

Opinion on marijuana legalization

| WNE Poll – Marijuana legalization | Support | Oppose | Don't know | Refused |
|--|---------|--------|------------|---------|
| Oct. 23 – Nov. 2, 2016 417 likely voters | 61% | 34% | 4% | 1% |
| Sept. 24 – Oct. 3, 2016 403 likely voters | 52% | 42% | 5% | 1% |
| April 1 – 10, 2016 497 registered voters | 57% | 35% | 7% | 1% |

Opinion on marijuana legalization

- Differences were consistent in their direction
- Younger voters were far more likely to support legalization than older voters
- Democrats and unenrolled voters were more likely than Republicans to support legalization
- Men were more likely than women to support legalization

Opinion on marijuana legalization

- Differences did not emerge, however, along one key demographic
- Parents of children under the age of 18 were no more likely to oppose legalization than voters who did not have minor children
- Mean age of parents of minor children: 44 years old; all others: 56 years old

Clinton vs. Trump in MA

Election results:

Clinton 61%, Trump 34%, Johnson 4%, Stein 1%

Results of WNE Poll of 417 likely voters conducted
Oct. 23 – Nov. 2, 2016:

Clinton 56%, Trump 26%, Johnson 8%, Stein 3%,
Undecided 3%, Refused 4%

Shy Trump supporters?

- Was there evidence of interviewer effects in measuring support for Donald Trump?
- It is possible to test for this by breaking down responses by the following interviewer characteristics: gender, race, and national origin

Demographics of interviewing staff for Oct. 23 – Nov. 2 survey

Of the 76 interviewers who worked on the survey:

- Male, 60 percent; Female, 40 percent
- White, 53 percent; Non-White, 47 percent
- Native-born, 72 percent; Foreign-born, 28 percent

Presidential preference by gender of respondent and interviewer gender

| Gender of interviewer | Gender of respondent | Clinton | Trump | Johnson | Stein | Unweighted N |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|--------------|
| Male | Male | 50% | 29% | 10% | 3% | 126 |
| | Female | 59% | 23% | 8% | 4% | 130 |
| Female | Male | 51% | 30% | 7% | 2% | 87 |
| | Female | 66% | 22% | 7% | 2% | 74 |

Presidential preference by race of respondent and interviewer race

| Race of interviewer | Race of respondent | Clinton | Trump | Johnson | Stein | Unweighted N |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|--------------|
| White | White | 52% | 27% | 10% | 4% | 167 |
| | Non-White | 68% | 19% | 3% | 3% | 31 |
| Non-White | White | 55% | 28% | 9% | 2% | 193 |
| | Non-White | 76% | 14% | 0% | 0% | 26 |

Presidential preference by race of respondent and national origin of interviewer

| National origin of interviewer | Race of respondent | Clinton | Trump | Johnson | Stein | Unweighted N |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|--------------|
| Native-born | White | 49% | 29% | 10% | 4% | 246 |
| | Non-White | 70% | 17% | 2% | 2% | 41 |
| Foreign-born | White | 62% | 26% | 7% | 2% | 114 |
| | Non-White | 81% | 10% | 0% | 0% | 16 |

Results

- There is little evidence of interviewer effects based on the gender or race of the interviewer.
- Non-white voters were somewhat more likely to express support for Hillary Clinton and less likely to support Donald Trump when speaking with a foreign-born interviewer compared to non-white voters who spoke with a native-born interviewer ($p = 0.07$).
- The small number of respondents in each category, however, requires caution in accepting this finding.