

TEXAS LYCEUM POLL: War in Iraq is top concern of Texans

Wednesday, June 13, 2007

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Immigration and public education are others big issues

(Austin, TX) According to the Texas Lyceum Poll, an independent poll, an overwhelming majority of Texans say the war in Iraq/support for the troops is the most important issue facing our country.

"Nationally, the Iraq War dominates all other issues; nothing else comes close. As for issues facing the state, Texans are most concerned about education and illegal immigration." said Daron Shaw, a pollster and associate professor at the University of Texas who conducted the poll for the Texas Lyceum, a non-partisan non-profit statewide leadership group focused on public policy facing Texas and the United States.

The poll, which was conducted April 26th – May 7th, , of 1,002 adults, half male, half female, shows Texas is perhaps more moderate than people outside Texas would expect.. "On the liberal side, Texans favor federal funding of embryonic stem cell research, and believe that abortion should be allowed under certain circumstances,. Surprisingly, they also prefer a non-denominational "moment of silence" to denominational prayer in the public schools. On the conservative side, they favor the death penalty, public displays of the Ten Commandments, faith-based initiatives, and school vouchers.."

"Skepticism about the progress of the U.S. venture in Iraq and the evidence of moderation on many key issues suggests that Texas is becoming a much more "purple" state that it has been in recent elections," said Professor Jim Henson, Director of the Texas Politics Project at the University of Texas. "After years of responding to rhetoric about fiscal conservatism, there's some evidence of broad concerns about the ability of government both to provide basic support services and to respond to crises of the moment.

"The legislature was publicly wrangling over transportation, immigration, and environmental issues. The public clearly cares about all of these issues, and sees both state and federal government flailing in their efforts to respond to public concerns. The poll's

results are clearly another shot across the bow of incumbents in all institutions at all levels," said Henson.

"Public policy is a chief concern of the Texas Lyceum," said Maggie Radford, the group's president. "We commissioned the poll to gain a better understanding of the issues that most concern Texans today, and we intend to measure these concerns over time so that the Texas Lyceum Poll will become a useful tool not only to our members, but also to leaders throughout Texas."

Full poll results will be available on the Texas Lyceum Website (www.texaslyceum.org) tomorrow and the complete data set will be posted in July to coincide with the group's annual public conference, to be held this year on July 13th in Austin. The Texas Lyceum Poll is a non-partisan, scientific survey designed to provide specific data points on issues of interest, and a time series of key demographics, attitudes, and opinions.

Radford concluded, "Our hope is that the hallmark of the Texas Lyceum Poll will be transparency."

More about the Texas Lyceum

The 27 year-old Texas Lyceum is comprised of 96 Texas men and women who begin their tenure as Lyceum Directors before the age of 46. Each of them has demonstrated leadership in their community and profession, together with a deep commitment to Texas. The Texas Lyceum gained its name from the oak grove (lyceum) where Aristotle and his fellow Greek philosophers convened to debate issues more than 2500 years ago.

The association acts as a catalyst to bring together diverse opinions and expertise to focus on national and state issues, and seeks to emphasize constructive private sector, public sector and individual responses to the issues.

To accomplish these purposes, the Lyceum conducts periodic public forums, publishes the Lyceum Journal, The Texas Lyceum Poll, and conducts programs for the Directors to explore and discuss key economic and social issues of the state and nation. For more information about the Texas Lyceum, please visit: www.texaslyceum.org

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