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Public Policy Research

News Release

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Poll: Despite the cost, residents would recommend hosting political conventions to other cities

BOSTON – A poll conducted by the Suffolk University Political Research Center (SUPRC) finds that a majority of Massachusetts residents believe that the national political conventions are a costly, but, nevertheless, worthwhile part of the democratic process. That's the conclusion drawn from survey data about the ongoing Democratic National Convention in Boston. The poll was conducted July 16 through July 18 and has margin of error of +/- 5 %.

As part of its continuing economic analysis, the Beacon Hill Institute, also housed at Suffolk University, asked SUPRC to include a question about the value of hosting a major political convention. SUPRC asked 400 Massachusetts residents, "*Based on your experience with the Democratic National Convention in Boston thus far, would you recommend to people in other cities the idea of hosting future political conventions?*" Fifty-five percent responded that they would recommend hosting the convention to other cities, while 27% would recommend against it. The rest, 19%, were undecided or refused to answer. The same survey also found that 44% of respondents believe that the city of Boston will lose money from the convention, while 39% believe that Boston will make money.

Commenting on the results, John Barrett, BHI Director of Research, said, "There seems to be a paradox at play, while a majority of citizens would recommend that other cities host a convention, they also acknowledge that the event is likely to lose money for the local economy." Barrett further observed, "These contradictory sentiments may be attributable to the civic pride that comes with hosting a national convention."

BHI has conducted several studies on the economic benefits of this summer's political conventions in Boston and New York. Using economic models that track new spending into local economies, BHI found that the DNC will lose \$8.2 million rather than the \$150 million in economic benefits claimed by convention sponsors in Boston. Meanwhile, New York City stands to generate only \$163 in economic activity rather than the \$260 million claimed by mayor Michael Bloomberg. Security measures account for the major portion of productivity losses in both cities. BHI estimates of the costs and benefits were revised as new security plans for both cities were announced by U.S. Secret Service and other authorities.

Details of the survey are available at Suffolk University Political Research Center (<http://www.suffolk.edu/suprc/index.html>) and www.beaconhill.org.