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Left-wing conservatives

Bay State conservatives seem to be getting more liberal.

That's my reading of this year's **State of the Household Survey** by the conservative **Beacon Hill Institute**.

The annual poll of 450 conservative voters suggests a whopping 73 percent favor allowing states, cities and towns to freely import prescription drugs from Canada — in violation of federal **Food and Drug Administration** rules.

The Canadian drug issue has been a favorite of liberals from Boston to the Berkshires.

But the BHI survey, with a margin of error of plus or minus 6 percent, suggests ideology should be no obstacle to reaching consensus.

Meanwhile, opposition among conservatives to universal health care appears to be slipping. BHI reports 51 percent of respondents said no to socialized medicine, down from 56 percent last year.

The numbers are basically even on a statewide smoking ban — with 45 percent in favor and 43 percent against.

And unrestricted outsourcing, or

privatization, of government functions — a hallmark of Bay State conservatives barely a decade ago — was opposed by 40 percent.

Even tax cuts — the bedrock of conservative principles — are on shaky ground. Respondents strongly opposed targeted tax cuts for the biotech industry (42 percent to 30 percent), while overwhelmingly approving tax breaks for manufacturing (74 percent to 17 percent).

A mere 26 percent of those polled would give tax incentives to both industries.

The Beacon Hill Institute has been conducting the State of the Household survey each January since 1998.