

Freedom2Choose Smoking Ban Survey by YorView predicts Labour Meltdown

Pub landlords in 2,600 pubs and clubs in England surveyed are so fed up with the smoking ban that it is costing Labour votes, according to a survey by YorView on behalf of pro-choice group Freedom2Choose.

For Immediate Release

PRIESTFIELDS, Middlesbrough United Kingdom/EWORLDWIRE/May 20, 2008 --- Published in the week prior to the local council elections which saw Labour support decimated across the country, the survey from Freedom2Choose revealed record levels of dissatisfaction with government policy affecting the licensed trade, and the smoking ban in particular.

The ban is so unpopular with landlords that 35 percent say it will change the way they vote at the next General Election. Nineteen percent plan to switch from Labour to Conservative and 43 percent to "Other," with a party opposing the ban the most preferred option.

Tim Hunter of YorView stated, "This report predicted the recent Labour meltdown. Spin doctors take note: landlords are an excellent barometer of public opinion. Labour have U-turned on the 10 percent tax rate - perhaps its time to honour manifesto commitments and reconsider this blanket smoking ban."

The survey found that 64 percent of pubs in England are losing trade since last July; 98 percent blame the ban for some or all of the downturn. Sixty-eight percent want choice restored to landlords, with smoking rooms cited as the most preferred option.

Findings also revealed that 97 percent of publicans feel the government is unsympathetic towards problems faced by the trade. Cheap supermarket booze, taxation, red tape and measures to combat binge drinking were further sources of concern.

Colin Grainger, Chairman of Freedom2Choose, stated, "This survey shows in no uncertain terms how devastating the ban has been for the hospitality industry. It should be a clarion call for politicians of all stripes. Politicians have acted without considering the consequences. Smoker bans damage us all - consumers, the hospitality trade, and, because the damage is indiscriminate, even anti and non-smokers lose out as their local pubs and clubs close down. The price is too high to pay. The science is very clear, second-hand smoke harms no one. Restore choice, for all, before we have absolutely nowhere left in which to socialise."

A comprehensive 2,600 pubs and clubs from all over England were surveyed. The Freedom2Choose survey follows recent figures from the British Beer and Pub Association showing pubs closing at the record rate of 4 per day, and it confirms findings that support for Labour amongst landlords is at an all time low of 3 percent, with 65 percent saying they will vote UKIP, the only party promising to oppose the ban (Morning Advertiser; 'http://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/news_detail.aspx?articleid=59284').

Freedom to Choose seeks to amend the smoking ban to allow freedom of choice for businesses and their customers, in line with the majority of EU countries.

For more information visit '<http://www.freedom2choose.info>'. The survey report is available at '<http://www.freedom2choose.info/docs/tsgv1.pdf>' and the BBPA report 'http://www.beerandpub.com/newsList_detail.aspx?newsId=235'.

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