



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 9, 2007

**Contact: Chris Fitzsimon (919) 573-4643, cfitzsimon@ajf.org or
Rob Schofield (919) 573-4655, rschofield@ajf.org**

NC POLICY WATCH UNVEILS INAUGURAL “CAROLINA ISSUES POLL”

Results Show that Voters Support Public, Humane Solutions in Mental Health and Affordable Housing

Raleigh, N.C. – NC Policy Watch, North Carolina’s leading provider of commentary and analysis on state public policy issues, released the results of its first “Carolina Issues Poll” today. The results showed that North Carolinians are broadly supportive of new, publicly funded efforts to aid the mentally ill, oppose executing mentally ill and disabled persons convicted of murder and support more public efforts to ease the state’s affordable housing and foreclosure crises.

When asked if they supported a new state mandate that would require health insurance companies to cover the treatment of mental illness just like any other illness, 79% of voters surveyed said “yes” and only 14% said “no.” While voters were much more closely divided on whether such mandatory coverage (often referred to as “mental health parity”) should also be extended to cover substance abuse, poll respondents voiced strong support (better than two to one) for increased public spending to provide adequate housing so that mentally ill persons can be housed separately from seniors as is currently the practice in many places.

Voters also expressed strong support for the humane treatment of mentally ill and disabled persons convicted of murder. According to the poll, voters disapproved by a wide margin (52% to 30%) of the practice of sentencing such persons to death.

The poll generated similar results with respect to voter attitudes toward the idea of expanding public solutions to the state’s affordable housing and mortgage foreclosure crises. On both of these topics, voters expressed support for increased public investment (in the state Housing Trust Fund and Home Protection Pilot Program) by a three to two ratio.

According to NC Policy Watch Director, Chris Fitzsimon, the poll results demonstrated that North Carolina voters want and expect more from state lawmakers. “North Carolinians are extremely uncomfortable with the state’s “hands off” attitude toward these crucial issues,” he said. “It’s clear that there is widespread public support for the expanded use of intentional and humane public solutions to what ails our state.”

The Carolina Issues Poll was conducted by the private firm of Public Policy Polling. 574 North Carolina voters were surveyed on March 29 and 30. The survey has a margin of error of $\pm 4.1\%$. Complete results are attached and can be found at www.ncpolicywatch.com. These include exact question wording and crosstabs broken down by gender, party affiliation, race, and age.

If you have technical questions about the poll, you may contact Justin Guillory at (888) 621-6988 or (919) 744-6312.

###