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Strong consumer support for congressional action on E-fairness

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The International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) released the results of a national poll finding that a majority of Americans support the congressional effort to require online retailers to collect sales tax at the point-of-purchase. The poll was conducted just before the holiday shopping season to gauge consumer sentiment about online sales and use tax collection. ICSC strongly supports two bills currently under consideration in Congress—the Marketplace Fairness Act and the Marketplace Equity Act—which are designed to level the playing field for all retailers.

"Support for a federal solution to the problem that has plagued brick-and-mortar retailers across the country for more than two decades has never been stronger," said Michael Kercheval, president and CEO of ICSC. "With bills in the House and the Senate that have strong bipartisan support, we expect Congressional supporters of the legislation to push for passage during the lame-duck session."

The ICSC national poll identified a number of key findings, including:

- * 59% of consumers support the Congressional effort to require online retailers to collect sales tax at the point-of-purchase, up three percentage points since May.
- * 71% of respondents are motivated to shop locally because 68 cents of every dollar spent at a locally-owned retailer stays in the community.
- * 82% of consumers who support federal legislation do so because "common sense dictates that if you buy a product online you should pay the same sales tax as if you had bought the same product in a store."

When told that 68 cents of every dollar spent at a locally-owned retailer stay in the community, seven in 10 Americans opt to shop at local brick-and-mortar stores. "Local retailers invest in their communities and play a significant role in the overall quality of life in the places we call home," said Betsy Laird, senior vice president of global public policy. "This is clearly an issue that matters to consumers, and we are working closely with Congress to get the bills enacted this year."

ICSC has promoted sales tax fairness for over a decade, advocating that a "sale is a sale" regardless of whether the purchase takes place on Main Street, at shopping centers, via mail-order or over the Internet.

For more information about sales tax fairness and how the current sales tax system is unable to support the 21st Century retail marketplace visit www.21stcenturyretail.org.

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