

FOR RELEASE MARCH 11, 2011

EDITOR'S NOTE: ATTENTION POLITICAL, ASSIGNMENT EDITORS, Professor David Redlawsk may be contacted at 319-400-1134, 732-932-9384, ext. 285, or redlawsk@rutgers.edu.

Visit <http://eagletonpoll.blogspot.com> for a link to specific questions and full tables.

**IN NEW JERSEY POLITICS, VOTERS PREFER CHECKS AND BALANCES;
WANT DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURE PAIRED WITH GOP GOVERNOR**

Favor Obama Re-election in 2012 by nine points

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – With all 120 seats up for grabs in November, a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll finds that voters prefer to keep Democrats in control of the New Jersey Legislature. A majority (54 percent) want Democrats as a check on Gov. Chris Christie, while 37 percent want Republicans in charge to support their leader's plans for change. However, the poll finds an undercurrent of anti-incumbency: only 30 percent would vote for their "current legislators" while 54 percent would "prefer to vote for someone new."

"Though it's early, voters are quite clear they prefer divided state government," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University. "They also show a limited understanding of the current environment, since throwing out incumbents would basically mean giving Republicans control in Trenton."

Looking toward the 2012 presidential election, nearly half the state's registered voters (48 percent) say President Barack Obama deserves re-election, while 39 percent disagree. Republicans are split on an opponent, with former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney at 12 percent, Christie at 11 percent, and former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin receiving 10 percent support. Forty-two percent did not name a candidate.

The poll of 912 New Jersey adults was conducted among both landline and cell phone households Feb. 24-26, with a margin of error of +/- 3.3 percentage points. A weighted subsample of 811 registered voters is reported here, with a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points.

First read on legislative elections

The majority (54 percent) of registered voters prefer a Legislature controlled by Democrats who can act as a check on the governor's plans, while only 37 percent want Republicans to be in control to support Christie, the poll finds. More than 80 percent of partisans

want their own party to win in the fall, but independents prefer Democratic control by 48 percent to 38 percent, with 13 percent unsure.

Not surprisingly, a dislike of Christie correlates strongly to wanting to check his power: 80 percent of registered voters with an unfavorable impression want Democrat victories. Among those liking Christie, 66 percent want to help him by turning the Legislature over to the GOP.

“While independents generally favor the governor, their good feelings are tempered by a wish that state government remain divided between the two parties,” said Redlawsk. “This seems to reflect a desire for bipartisanship and compromise between Republicans and Democrats, rather than strong endorsement of either side.”

Respondents’ preference for Democratic control may be offset by a persistent, underlying anti-incumbent feeling, Redlawsk said. Asked to choose their “current legislators” or “someone new,” 54 percent chose the latter. Only 30 percent say they would vote for their current legislators if the election was today, while 16 percent are unsure.

“Voters often don’t know their legislators names or even party affiliation, leading to this apparently contradictory result,” said Redlawsk. “They do know they want change of some sort, but they also don’t want to give the governor carte blanche.” He added that even among voters who want someone new, 52 percent want Democrats to retain control of the Legislature. Only 39 percent of anti-incumbents want to see the GOP in charge. Among supporters of their current lawmakers, 60 percent prefer a Democratic majority compared to 36 percent pro-Republicans.

Obama re-election favored

Nearly half (48 percent) New Jersey’s registered voters believe President Obama deserves to be re-elected in 2012, while 39 percent say one term is enough, the poll finds. Thirteen percent are unsure. Today, 81 percent of Democrats support a second term, while only 14 percent of Republicans agree. Among independents, opinion is split: 40 percent say Obama deserves re-election, 42 percent say he does not. Eighteen percent are unsure.

“The president is strongly supported by the state’s Democrats and given their edge in voter registration, Obama can be in good shape, even if independents split down the middle,” said Redlawsk. “Still, for a ‘blue’ state, these numbers seem pretty tight.”

Women, by 53 percent to 43 percent, are more likely than men to support a second term for Obama. Members of public employee unions also are strongly in favor of re-election, with 57 percent saying Obama deserves a second term.

No clear Republican preference for a 2012 challenger

More than four-in-10 registered Republicans and independents leaning Republican could not name a preferred challenger to Obama. Among those who could, Romney (13 percent) edges Christie (12 percent) and Palin (11 percent), while only 6 percent name former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee. Texas Congressman Ron Paul, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty all receive minimal support.

Among the 46 percent of Republicans and Republican leaners with a favorable impression of the Tea Party movement, Romney is the preferred candidate, at 17 percent. Christie and Palin follow at 13 percent support each. The 56 percent not favorably disposed toward the Tea Party movement split support among Palin (11 percent), Christie (10 percent) and Romney (9 percent).

GOP men favor Romney (18 percent) and Christie (16 percent). Women choose Palin (13 percent) and Huckabee (10 percent). Only 7 percent of female Republicans name Romney or Christie as their candidate of choice. Among GOP men, Palin receives 9 percent and Huckabee, 3 percent.

Among those with a favorable impression of Christie, New Jersey's governor edges Romney as their preferred candidate by one percentage point, 16 percent to 15 percent. Huckabee gets 8 percent and Palin trails with 7 percent. The former GOP vice presidential nominee gets support from 20 percent of the small number of Republicans who dislike Christie.

"November is far off, but it is clear Christie is not the default choice of New Jersey Republicans," Redlawsk said. "This is probably due mostly to his continuing denial of interest in running. But were he running, I suspect many would line up behind him."

QUESTIONS AND TABLES FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 24-26, 2011
Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release of March 11, 2010 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are Registered Voters unless otherwise stated.

[ASKED ONLY OF REGISTERED REPUBLICANS AND INDEPENDENTS LEANING REPUBLICAN]

Q. Now, thinking ahead to the 2012 Presidential Election, which Republican would prefer as the nominee to run against President Obama? Just tell me the name. [Do Not Read List; Code to list]

Mitt Romney	13%
Chris Christie	12%
Sarah Palin	11%
Mike Huckabee	6%
Ron Paul	3%
Michael Bloomberg	1%
Newt Gingrich	1%
Tim Pawlenty	1%
David Petraeus	0%
Michelle Bachman	0%
Scott Brown	0%
Jeb Bush	0%
Others	9%
Don't Know	42%
N=	255

	Impression of Governor Chris Christie	
	Favorable	Unfavorable
Mitt Romney	15%	2%
Chris Christie	16%	0%
Sarah Palin	7%	20%
Mike Huckabee	8%	2%
Ron Paul	4%	0%
Michael Bloomberg	0%	6%
Newt Gingrich	2%	0%
Tim Pawlenty	2%	0%
David Petraeus	0%	2%
Others	8%	6%
Don't Know	37%	61%
N=	190	46

NJ Legislative; Presidential Elections Feb 2011
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

	Gender		Ideology		Rep. (incl leaners) Tea Party Support		
	Male	Female	Middle	Conserv	Fav	Unfav	DK
Mitt Romney	18%	7%	8%	18%	17%	4%	13%
Chris Christie	16%	7%	12%	13%	13%	14%	8%
Sarah Palin	9%	13%	12%	9%	10%	9%	12%
Mike Huckabee	3%	10%	7%	5%	6%	7%	7%
Ron Paul	3%	3%	2%	4%	4%	2%	2%
Michael Bloomberg	0%	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Newt Gingrich	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	1%
Tim Pawlenty	2%	0%	0%	3%	0%	6%	0%
David Petraeus	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%
Michelle Bachman	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Scott Brown	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Jeb Bush	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%
Others	13%	3%	7%	9%	8%	11%	7%
Don't Know	33%	53%	45%	37%	40%	44%	44%
N=	142	115	129	117	119	55	85

[REMAINING QUESTIONS ASKED OF ALL RESPONDENTS]

Q. Thinking ahead to the 2012 Presidential election, does President Obama deserve to be re-elected for another term?

Yes	48%
No	39%
DK	13%
N=	808

	Party ID			Ideology			Union Household		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Private Union	Public Union	Not Union
Yes	81%	40%	14%	74%	49%	19%	36%	57%	48%
No	10%	42%	79%	16%	35%	74%	41%	33%	40%
DK	9%	18%	7%	10%	16%	8%	22%	11%	12%
N=	284	326	185	169	462	164	64	128	612

	Employment				Race				Education			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retire	Not Empl	White	Black	Asian	Hisp	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Yes	49%	48%	46%	48%	38%	87%	69%	67%	41%	46%	48%	57%
No	36%	40%	42%	43%	47%	4%	12%	31%	45%	43%	39%	29%
DK	15%	11%	12%	10%	14%	9%	18%	2%	13%	11%	13%	14%
N=	416	107	147	135	584	71	51	82	167	208	235	194

***NJ Legislative; Presidential Elections Feb 2011
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll***

	Age				< 50K	Income			Gender	
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+		50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female
Yes	52%	51%	44%	45%	57%	50%	46%	43%	43%	53%
No	33%	38%	41%	45%	33%	37%	39%	47%	42%	36%
DK	15%	11%	15%	10%	10%	13%	15%	10%	14%	11%
N=	135	335	200	137	201	249	126	135	397	412

Q. There will be elections for the state legislature in November. Democrats say they need to win so they can continue to act as a check on Governor Christie's plans. Republicans say they need to win so that the governor's plans for change will not be blocked. Thinking about this, would you prefer that the Democrats or the Republicans win control of the legislature this coming fall?

Democrats	54%
Republicans	37%
DK	9%
N=	802

	Impression of Gov. Chris Christie		
	Favorable	Unfavorable	DK
Democrats	27%	80%	63%
Republicans	66%	10%	19%
DK	7%	10%	18%
N=	374	348	79

	Party ID			Ideology			Union Household		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Private Union	Public Union	Not Union
Democrats	89%	48%	10%	86%	55%	16%	56%	67%	51%
Republicans	5%	38%	85%	9%	34%	75%	38%	28%	39%
DK	7%	13%	5%	5%	11%	8%	6%	6%	10%
N=	282	320	186	170	454	166	64	123	610

	Employment				Race				Education			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retire	Not Empl	White	Black	Asian	Hisp	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Democrats	56%	50%	49%	54%	45%	93%	62%	70%	54%	52%	49%	61%
Republicans	38%	32%	39%	37%	45%	2%	28%	21%	35%	38%	46%	27%
DK	6%	18%	13%	9%	10%	4%	10%	9%	11%	10%	5%	12%
N=	413	106	146	135	583	70	51	78	165	204	234	195

	Age				< 50K	Income			Gender	
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+		50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female
Democrats	56%	57%	52%	44%	62%	53%	51%	50%	48%	59%
Republicans	31%	36%	39%	45%	27%	39%	40%	45%	45%	30%
DK	13%	7%	9%	11%	11%	8%	9%	5%	7%	11%
N=	135	334	196	136	196	245	127	135	389	413

NJ Legislative; Presidential Elections Feb 2011
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

Q. If the election were today, would you vote to re-elect your current legislators or would you prefer to vote for someone new?

Current Legislators	30%
Someone New	54%
DK	16%
N=	808

Vote to re-elect current legislators or prefer to vote
for someone new?

Prefer to See Control Legislature	Current legislators	Someone new	Don't Know
Democrats	60%	52%	45%
Republicans	36%	39%	34%
DK	4%	9%	20%
N=	243	429	128

Impressions of Gov. Chris Christie

	Favorable	Unfavorable	DK
Current Legislator	33%	29%	20%
Someone New	52%	57%	49%
DK	14%	14%	30%
N=	374	352	79

	Party ID			Ideology			Union Household		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Private Union	Public Union	Not Union
Current legislators	39%	21%	32%	35%	29%	30%	40%	35%	28%
Someone new	46%	64%	50%	52%	54%	55%	43%	53%	55%
Will not vote	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
DK	15%	14%	17%	13%	17%	15%	18%	11%	17%
N=	284	324	186	170	461	164	64	127	612

	Employment				Race				Education			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retire	Not Empl	White	Black	Asian	Hisp	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Current legislators	29%	34%	35%	25%	29%	39%	23%	31%	26%	31%	30%	32%
Someone new	56%	45%	46%	62%	54%	49%	55%	60%	56%	52%	55%	52%
Will not vote	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
DK	15%	22%	19%	12%	17%	12%	22%	9%	18%	16%	14%	16%
N=	416	107	147	135	585	71	51	82	167	208	234	195

	Age				Income				Gender	
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	< 50K	<100K	100K - <150K	150K+	Male	Female
Current legislators	28%	26%	34%	36%	34%	29%	30%	30%	30%	30%
Someone new	51%	61%	51%	44%	52%	57%	53%	52%	55%	53%
Will not vote	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
DK	21%	12%	16%	20%	14%	14%	17%	18%	15%	17%
N=	135	335	199	137	200	249	127	135	396	412

NJ Legislative; Presidential Elections Feb 2011
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

Q. I'd like to ask about some people and organizations. Please tell me if your general impression of each one is favorable or unfavorable, or if you do not have an opinion. First, [next]: [ROTATE]

	Gov. Christie	Pres. Obama	Sen. Menendez	St. Sen. Sweeney	Democrats in Legisl.	Republicans in Legisl.	Tea Party Movement
Favorable	46%	57%	34%	23%	33%	31%	24%
Unfavorable	44%	36%	28%	19%	38%	37%	48%
DK	10%	7%	38%	58%	29%	32%	28%
N=	810	810	810	809	811	811	811

**[Among Registered Voters who identify as Republican
& those who lean toward the Republican party]**

The Tea Party Movement

Favorable	46%
Unfavorable	22%
DK	32%
N=	256

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 24-26, 2011
New Jersey Statewide Poll

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone from February 24-26, 2011 with a scientifically selected random sample of 912 New Jersey adults. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey population, using gender, age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity matching to US Census Bureau data. All results are reported with these weighted data. This telephone poll included 775 landline respondents and 137 cell phone respondents, acquired through random digit dialing. Data reported in this release are from a weighted sample of 811 registered voters drawn from the full sample of adults.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error for 811 registered voters is +/-3.4 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey voters favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.6 and 53.4 percent (50 +/-3.4) had all New Jersey voters been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by Braun Research, Inc., of Princeton, New Jersey. The questionnaire was developed and all data analysis was completed in house at the Eagleton Institute of Politics Center for Public Interest Polling. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, a non-partisan academic center focused on the study and teaching of politics and the political process.

Weighted Sample Characteristics (811 New Jersey Registered Voters)			
35% Democrat	49% Male	17% 18-29	74% White
42% Independent	51% Female	41% 30-49	9% Black
23% Republican		24% 50-64	10% Hispanic
		17% 65+	6% Asian
			1% Other