



For release... **Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2011.**

7 pp.

Contact: Peter Woolley 973.670.3239

N.J. Voters Oppose Takeover of Atlantic City Tourism District

According to the most recent poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind, New Jersey voters disapprove of the state's takeover of Atlantic City's tourism district: 29% favor the state directly administering parts of Atlantic City, but 43% say they oppose it. Another 27% are unsure or have mixed views. Voters in the state's six southern-most counties are more likely to favor the action than voters in other regions, but even in those southern counties voters split: 37% in favor and 40% against it.

"The state has taken over local functions before," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll, "with little or nothing to show for it. Moreover, many voters want to curb state government spending, not expand its functions. They're simply not confident the state can run things well."

In addition, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to oppose the takeover: Republicans oppose the move by a margin of 48%-29% while Democrats oppose it 39%-30%. Independents go against it by 41%-25%. Liberals oppose it 41%-30% and conservatives by 49%-27%. In fact, those who approve of the job the governor is doing oppose the takeover by 43%-34% (though those who disapprove of the governor's performance oppose the Atlantic City takeover by an even larger margin of 51%-20%).

"This issue has strange cross-currents," said Woolley. "On the one hand many voters oppose more and bigger state government. On the other hand, they want Atlantic City to do what it's supposed to do: draw investment, jobs, and tourists."

Despite the state intervention in Atlantic City, the governor's approval rating remains strong: 51% of New Jersey voters approve of the way Chris Christie is handling his job, while 39% disapprove, little different from PublicMind's January measurement of 53%-36%. Indeed, approval of the governor runs strongly enough that even those who oppose the Atlantic City takeover approve of the governor by 52%-41%.

Three of five voters (62%) continue to say the state should hold the line on spending even if many programs are reduced, while just one in five (21%) say the state should raise taxes if necessary to support state programs. Among those who say "hold the line," Christie's approval rate is 65%-27%. Among those who say the state needs to raise taxes to support its programs, Christie's approval runs well behind, 22%-69%.

Meanwhile, President Obama's Garden State support also remains strong: 54% approve of the president's performance, while 36% disapprove, his best showing in a year. Voters are more optimistic about the direction of the country: 39% say the country is on the right track, up from 35% a month ago, while 49% say the country is on the wrong track, down from 52% a month ago.

But the president's senatorial ally, Bob Menendez, has not moved the needle: Half of all voters (49%) say they haven't heard of him or have no opinion of him, and more than half of Democrats (53%) say the same. By contrast 52% of Democrats have a favorable opinion of the senior senator, Frank Lautenberg.

New Jersey's other statewide elected official, Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno, hardly registers: 77% say they haven't heard of her, and another 11% say they have no opinion of her.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 801 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from Feb. 7, 2011, through Feb. 13, 2011, and has a margin of error of +/-3.5 percentage points.

*Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 201.692.7032*

Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from Feb. 7, 2011, through Feb. 13, 2011, using a randomly selected sample of 801 registered voters statewide. The margin of error for a sample of 801 randomly selected respondents is +/- 3.5 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers. PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a land-line phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected. Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone-only-households, interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

Question: Recently, the state of New Jersey decided to take over the downtown casino and tourism district in Atlantic City. How much have you heard or read about this ...READ?

	All	Northeast	Northwest	Urban Core	Central	South
A great deal	11%	5	11	4	12	23
Some	26%	28	21	26	28	24
Just a little	30%	26	41	23	30	30
Nothing	33%	41	27	47	30	23

Question: Do you favor or oppose the state directly administering the casino and tourism district in Atlantic ...?

	All	Party id			ideology			Region*					Gov	
		Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	lib	mod	cons	Northeast	Norwest	Urban Core	Central	South	Approv	disapprov
Favor	29%	30	25	29	30	32	27	30	27	21	30	37	34	20
Oppose	43%	39	41	48	41	41	49	39	48	37	46	40	43	51
mixed	5%	5	7	5	6	5	5	7	5	9	5	3	4	5
unsure	22%	26	27	16	22	21	18	23	19	32	18	20	18	23

* **Northeast** = Passaic and Bergen counties. **Northwest** = Sussex, Hunterdon, Warren, Morris, and Somerset counties. **Urban Core** = Essex, Hudson and Union counties. **Central** = Ocean, Burlington, Mercer, Monmouth, and Middlesex counties. **South** = Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Camden, Atlantic and Salem counties.

Question: In your opinion, do you believe that the country is moving in the right direction or do you believe it has gotten off on the wrong track?

	All	Men	Women	Dem	Ind	Rep.
Right direction	39%	40	38	56	36	19
Wrong track	49%	49	48	31	49	71
Unsure/ref.	12%	11	13	11	15	10

Right/wrong direction trend

	2011	2010							2009							2008
	Jan	Nov	Oct	Aug	My	Mar	Mar	Jan	Oct	Oct	Sep	July	Apr	Mar	Jan	Oct
Right	35	31	30	33	34	42	38	35	41	41	44	49	51	51	34	13
Wrong	52	58	60	54	52	51	52	53	50	49	46	41	37	37	52	78
Unsure/ref.	13	11	10	13	13	8	10	12	8	9	10	11	11	12	13	9

US2: In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

	All	Men	Women	Dem	Ind	Rep.
Approve	54%	52	57	83	55	19
Disapprove	36%	42	31	8	32	74
Unsure/ref.	10%	6	12	9	12	6

Obama approval, previous measures

	2011	2010							2009						
	Jan	Nov	Oct	Aug	May	Mar 30	Mar 3	Jan	Oct 30	Oct 6	Sep	Jun	Apr	Mar	Jan*
Approve	47%	51	47	49	49	54	53	48	52	52	56	61	66	66	72
Disapprove	41%	40	43	40	40	37	38	41	37	35	36	29	22	21	10
Unsure/Ref.	12%	9	10	11	11	9	9	11	10	12	8	10	12	13	18

*January 2009 question asked how Obama was handling his transition to the presidency.

Question: Now, turning to New Jersey... In your opinion, do you think things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction or do you think the state has gotten off on the wrong track?

	All	Party			Gender		Public employee household	
		D	I	R	men	wom	No	Yes
Right direction	44%	26	48	65	53	35	47	34
Wrong track	47%	62	42	29	39	54	43	58
Unsure/mixed	10%	12	10	6	8	11	10	7

Right /Wrong direction past year

Jan 2011	Nov	Oct	Aug	May	Mar. 30	Mar. 3	Jan. 2010
44%	40%	44%	42%	35%	33%	32%	27%
48%	51%	48%	48%	55%	55%	49%	55%
8%	10%	9%	11%	10%	13%	20%	18%

Right/Wrong direction Corzine term ...

	Oct 09	Se 09	Jul 09	Apr 09	Mar 09	Jan 09	Nov 08	Oct 08	Sept 08	Jun 08	Apr 08	Fe 08	Jan 08	Oct 07	Se 07	Jn 07	My 07	Mr 06	Jan 06
Right track	21%	22	21	23	25	25	24	23	23	25	26	25	28	30	38	36	42	39	34
Wrong track	68%	68	66	64	59	65	65	67	67	64	66	65	61	59	49	50	44	47	48
DK	11%	10	14	13	16	10	10	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	12	14	14	15	18

	Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/no opinion	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Frank Lautenberg	14%	13%	26%	19%	13%	14%
<i>Republicans only</i>	8	6	22	18	17	30
<i>Independents only</i>	15	6	27	28	15	8
<i>Democrats only</i>	17	21	31	17	11	3
<i>Nov 2010</i>	6%	15%	27%	21%	14%	17%
<i>Republicans only</i>	4	6	16	17	24	34
<i>Independents only</i>	5	9	37	20	16	14
<i>Democrats only</i>	7	24	34	22	7	5
<i>March 2010</i>	9%	14%	28%	20%	14%	15%
<i>Jan 2010</i>	8%	12%	23%	19%	20%	15%
<i>Jan 2009</i>	8%	13%	30%	19%	14%	16%
Bob Menendez	21%	10%	19%	28%	11%	10%
<i>Republicans only</i>	17	3	14	26	19	21
<i>Independents only</i>	22	13	20	29	9	7
<i>Democrats only</i>	26	15	24	27	6	2
<i>Nov 2010</i>	15%	11%	20%	29%	12%	13%
<i>Republicans only</i>	12	1	10	30	19	28
<i>Independents only</i>	12	5	19	36	16	11
<i>Democrats only</i>	17	19	28	26	6	4
<i>March 2010</i>	17%	8%	21%	28%	13%	12%
<i>Jan 2010</i>	17%	7%	21%	27%	15%	13%
<i>Jan 2009</i>	17%	9%	20%	30%	13%	11%

Question: Have you heard of [rotate list]? If you haven't just tell me. [If yes, ask:] Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of ...? Would that be very or somewhat?

	Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/mixed	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Chris Christie (all)	1%	27%	19%	11%	16%	26%
<i>Republicans only</i>	--	52	25	8	6	9
<i>Independents only</i>	1	21	28	17	13	20
<i>Democrats only</i>	2	9	12	11	26	41
Previous Surveys...						
	2%	28%	19%	11%	12%	27%
<i>Christie 11/10</i>	1%	26%	19%	13%	11%	30%
<i>Christie 10/10</i>	2%	30%	18%	11%	15%	24%
<i>Christie 8/10</i>	1%	21%	20%	21%	13%	23%
<i>Christie 5/10</i>	3%	21%	19%	14%	12%	31%
<i>Christie 3/30/10</i>	3%	18%	20%	20%	17%	22%
<i>Christie 3/3/10</i>	2%	19%	28%	25%	10%	15%
<i>Christie 1/10</i>	3%	16%	29%	28%	14%	9%
<i>Christie 10/09</i>	1%	17%	24%	14%	20%	24%
<i>Christie 09/09</i>	3%	15%	23%	25%	17%	18%
<i>Christie 07/09</i>	13%	10%	24%	28%	14%	11%
<i>Christie 04/09</i>	38%	14%	17%	20%	8%	4%
<i>Christie 03/09</i>	43%	12%	18%	22%	4%	2%
<i>Christie 01/09</i>	56%	11%	12%	15%	4%	2%
<i>Christie 09/08</i>	60%	2%	3%	14%	11%	9%

	Haven't heard of	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	No opinion	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
Kim Guadagno	77%	2%	5%	11%	3%	1%
Previous Surveys...						
<i>Guadagno 10/09</i>	85%	2%	2%	8%	2%	1%
<i>Guadagno 09/09</i>	85%	1%	3%	8%	1%	2%

Job rating, current

Question: How would you rate the job Chris Christie is doing as governor... [READ]?

	All	Party			Public Employee Household		Budget remedy?		AC takeover	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes	Cut	Tax	Favor	Oppose
Excellent	15%	3	10	32	17	11	22	5	24	14
Good	30%	20	35	42	32	26	36	13	34	33
Only fair	26%	32	27	18	26	22	23	33	26	24
Poor	26%	41	23	8	22	38	17	48	15	26
Unsure	3%	3	5	1	3	2	2	2	1	2

Job rating, trend	Jan. 2011	Nov.	Oct.	Aug.	May	Mar. 30	Mar. 3
Excellent	17%	17%	19%	13%	13%	10%	8%
Good	27%	28%	26%	26%	24%	24%	31%
Only fair	31%	25%	26%	32%	23%	31%	26%
Poor	23%	27%	25%	24%	33%	21%	13%
Unsure	3%	4%	3%	6%	7%	14%	21%

Approve/disapprove, Current

Question: Do you approve or disapprove of way Chris Christie is handling his job as governor? Would that be somewhat... or strongly....?

	All	Party			Public Employee Household		Budget?		AC takeover			
		men	wom	Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes	cut	tax	favor	opp
Approve	51%	61	41	27	54	82	56	37	65	22	67	52
Disapprove	39%	32	47	61	28	15	34	54	27	69	26	41
Mixed/d.k.	10%	7	12	12	18	3	9	8	8	9	7	8

Approve/disapprove, trend [* Question was "...handling his transition to governor."]

	Jan 2011	Nov 2010	Oct 2010	Aug. 2010	May 2010	Mar. 30 2010	Mar. 3 2010	Jan. 10* 2010
Approve	53%	49%	51%	47%	44%	43%	52%	48%
Disapprove	36%	39%	37%	36%	42%	32%	21%	13%
Mixed/d.k.	11%	12%	13%	17%	15%	25%	28%	38%

Question: How much have you heard or read recently about the state's budget problems ...READ?

	All	Public Pension Household		Party			Time					
		no	yes	Dem	ind	Rep	Jan.	Nov	Oct [#]	Aug [#]	May*	Mar.*
A great deal	46%	42	56	42	54	49	44	50	20	25	29	23
Some	36%	37	35	37	27	36	33	32	40	37	41	41
Just a little	13%	14	8	15	11	11	14	14	27	26	21	23
Nothing	6%	7	1	7	7	4	8	4	14	11	9	13

*Question wording was: How much have you heard or read about the Governor's proposed state budget for the coming year?"

Question wording was: How much have you heard or read about the state's budget for the coming year...?

Question: In order to balance the budget, some people say.... Others say to balance the budget.... Which position comes closest to your view?

[Rotate statements]	All	Party			Ideology			Public union household	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Con	No	yes
... the state should hold the line on spending even if many programs are reduced	62%	46	63	83	46	61	81	64	57
...the state should raise taxes if necessary and continue to support state programs	21%	35	9	9	37	23	8	20	25
Unsure/mixed	16%	19	28	7	17	17	11	16	18

Cut or tax, trend

	Jan 2011	Nov 2010	Oct 2010	Aug 2010	May 2010	Mar. 30 2010	Mar. 3 2010	Jan. 10 2010	2009	2006	2005
Cut	62%	60%	60%	60%	60%	62%	66%	70%	72%	67%	63%
Tax	21%	22%	22%	22%	23%	21%	21%	17%	19%	21%	26%
Unsure	16%	18%	18%	19%	16%	17%	13%	13%	9%	11%	12%

###

Question Wording and Order

US1. In your opinion, do you believe that the country is moving in the right direction or has it gotten off on the wrong track?

Right direction
Wrong track
DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]
Ref. [DON'T READ]

US2. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

Approve
Disapprove
DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]
Ref. [DON'T READ]

NJ1. Now, thinking about [New Jersey...](#) In your opinion, do you think things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction or have they gotten off on the wrong track?

Right direction
Wrong track
DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]

NJ2. Now I'm going ask about some people. If you haven't heard of one of them, just say so. Have you heard of ... [ROTATE LIST]? Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of ... [MATCH ROTATION]? Would that be very or somewhat?

Chris Christie
Bob Menendez
Frank Lautenberg
Kim Guadagno [gwah-DAH-nyo]

NJ3. How would you rate the job Chris Christie is doing as governor—excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Excellent
Good
Only fair
Or poor
DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]

NJ4. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor? [If answer, ASK "would that be somewhat [answer] or strongly [answer]?"

Strongly Approve
Somewhat approve
Somewhat disapprove
Strongly Disapprove
Neither [vol] or Neutral [vol]
DK [vol] or both [vol]

NJ5. How much have you heard or read recently about the state's budget problems...READ?

A great deal
Some
Just a little
Nothing

NJ6. In order to balance the state budget, some people say.... Others say to balance the budget.... Which position comes closest to your view? ROTATE

- ...the state should cut spending even if many programs are reduced
- ...the state should raise taxes if necessary and continue to support state programs
- Neither/both/DK (VOL)

AC1. Recently, the state of New Jersey decided to take over the downtown casino and tourism district in Atlantic City. How much have you heard or read about this...READ?

- A great deal
- Some
- Just a little
- Nothing

AC2. Do you favor or oppose the state directly administering the casino and tourism district in Atlantic City? DO NOT READ...

- Favor
- Oppose
- DK
- Mixed
- Ref.

Sample Characteristics (%)

Gender	
Male	49
Female	51

Age	
18-29	12
30-44	24
45-59	32
60+	30
Ref.	2

In addition to being American, would you say you are...?	
White	67
Black	15
Hispanic or Latino	9
Asian	5
Other/ref.	4

Public Employee Household?	
yes	24
no	74
not sure/ref.	2

Party ID	
Dem. + lean Dem.	47
ind. + unsure + ref.	16
Rep. + lean Rep.	38