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## **Governor's Approval Is Strong: Can it Translate to Legislative Elections?**

New Jersey voters continue to give the Garden State governor sturdy approval ratings. According to the most recent poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind, 51% of New Jersey voters approve of the way Chris Christie is handling his job as governor; while 41% disapprove.

"He's not the Teflon governor," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll, "But right now he looks like the armored governor."

Christie's approval rating is slightly better than his favorability rating: he is viewed favorably by 47% and unfavorably by 41%. That is better than the NJEA, the teachers' union he has consistently criticized, which is viewed favorably by 39% and unfavorably by 38%.

"The NJEA's numbers have not improved despite their recent and expensive advertising efforts," said Woolley. Moreover, voters who have a favorable view of the NJEA disapprove of the governor's performance by 64%-26%. Voters who have an unfavorable view of the NJEA approve of the governor by 78%-17%.

There are other notable differences in the governor's approval rating among subgroups. Men approve strongly of the governor's performance by 58%-34%, while women split 45% approving and 47% disapproving. Non-public employee households give the governor thumbs up by 57%-34%, but he is completely upside down with public employee households 34%-61%.

Meanwhile, more than three of five voters (64%) continue to say the state should hold the line on spending even if many programs are reduced, while one in four (26%) say the state should raise taxes if necessary to support state programs. Those who say the budget should be cut, even if it means cutting programs approve of the governor by a 2-to-1 margin (63%-29%), while those who say taxes should be raised disapprove of the governor by more than a 2-to-1 margin (69%-25%).

Asked who they prefer to control the state Assembly and Senate after the next election, voters prefer Democrats by a 41%-36% margin. Public employee households prefer that Democrats keep control by more than a 2-to-1 margin (56%-25%). Non-public employee household voters split, 39% for Republicans, 37% for Democrats.

"The governor would certainly like his support this year to translate into gains in legislative seats," said Woolley, "but the new district map as well as registration that favors the Democratic Party will make that a real challenge."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 711 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from March 29 through April 4, 2011, and has a margin of error of +/-4 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 March. 29, 2011, through April 4, 2011, using a randomly selected sample of 711 registered voters statewide. The margin of error for a sample of 711 randomly selected respondents is +/- 4 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:** Now, thinking about 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	<b>44%</b>	26	39	69	49	40	49	26
Wrong track	<b>47%</b>	66	46	24	43	51	41	67
Unsure/mixed	<b>9%</b>	8	15	7	8	10	10	7

**Right /Wrong direction past year**

	Feb	Jan 2011	Nov	Oct	Aug	May	Mar. 30	Mar. 3	Jan. 2010
44%	44%	44%	40%	44%	42%	35%	33%	32%	27%
47%	48%	48%	51%	48%	48%	55%	55%	49%	55%
10%	8%	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	Oc 07	Se 07	Jn 07	My 07	Mr 06	Jan 06
<b>Right track</b>	<b>21%</b>	22	21	23	25	25	24	23	23	25	26	25	28	30	38	36	<b>42</b>	39	34
<b>Wrong track</b>	<b>68%</b>	68	66	64	59	65	65	67	67	64	66	65	61	59	49	50	<b>44</b>	47	48
<b>DK</b>	<b>11%</b>	10	14	13	16	10	10	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	12	14	<b>14</b>	15	18

**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
<b>Chris Christie (all)</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<i>Republicans only</i>	1	53	26	4	5	10
<i>Independents only</i>	1	28	16	17	13	25
<i>Democrats only</i>	2	3	19	11	21	44
<b>Previous Surveys...</b>						
<i>Christie 02/11</i>	1%	27%	19%	11%	16%	26%
<i>Christie 01/11</i>	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%

Christie 07/09	13%	10%	24%	28%	14%	11%
Christie 04/09	38%	14%	17%	20%	8%	4%
Christie 03/09	43%	12%	18%	22%	4%	2%
Christie 01/09	56%	11%	12%	15%	4%	2%
Christie 09/08	60%	2%	3%	14%	11%	9%

**Question: And have you heard of the NJEA?**

	Current	Nov '10	June '10	March '10
Yes	71%	74%	74%	70%
No	29%	26%	26%	30%

**The NJEA is the public teachers' union. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the NJEA? Would that be very or somewhat?**

	Very Favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/ Mixed	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
<b>All</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>21%</b>
<i>men</i>	17	21	24	15	23
<i>Women</i>	19	21	22	20	18
<i>Democrats</i>	<b>27</b>	<b>30</b>	26	10	8
<i>independents</i>	18	18	21	22	22
<i>Republicans</i>	6	12	18	<b>27</b>	<b>36</b>
<i>Non-public union household</i>	13	19	28	18	23
<i>Public union household</i>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>	8	18	15
Nov All	21%	18%	23%	15%	23%
June All	15%	18%	23%	18%	26%
March 30 All	17%	18%	30%	16%	19%

**Job rating, current**

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

	<b>All</b>	Party			Public Employee Household		Budget remedy?		Gender	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes	Cut	Tax	men	Wom
Excellent	<b>17%</b>	2	15	37	19	11	23	3	21	13
Good	<b>26%</b>	14	31	38	29	14	31	13	22	29
Only fair	<b>28%</b>	39	32	14	28	30	25	36	32	25
Poor	<b>27%</b>	41	21	10	22	44	20	46	22	31
Unsure	<b>3%</b>	4	2	1	3	1	1	2	2	3

<b>Job rating, trend</b>	Feb.	Jan. 2011	Nov.	Oct	Aug	May	Mar. 30	Mar. 3
Excellent	15%	17%	17%	19%	13%	13%	10%	8%
Good	30%	27%	28%	26%	26%	24%	24%	31%
Only fair	26%	31%	25%	26%	32%	23%	31%	26%
Poor	26%	23%	27%	25%	24%	33%	21%	13%
Unsure	3%	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....?**

	<b>All</b>	Party					Public Employee Household		Budget?		NJEA	
		men	wom	Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes	cut	tax	favor	Unfav
Approve	<b>51%</b>	<b>58</b>	45	27	49	<b>83</b>	<b>57</b>	34	<b>63</b>	25	26	<b>78</b>
Disapprove	<b>41%</b>	34	<b>47</b>	<b>63</b>	36	14	34	<b>61</b>	29	<b>69</b>	<b>64</b>	17
Mixed/d.k.	<b>8%</b>	8	9	10	15	3	9	5	8	6	11	5

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

	Feb.	Jan	Nov	Oct	Aug.	May	Mar. 30	Mar. 3	Jan. 10*
	2011	2011	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010
Approve	51%	53%	49%	51%	47%	44%	43%	52%	48%
Disapprove	39%	36%	39%	37%	36%	42%	32%	21%	13%
Mixed/d.k.	10%	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	Feb	Jan.	Nov	Oct <sup>#</sup>	Aug <sup>#</sup>	May*	Mar.*
A great deal	<b>49%</b>	43	68	43	61	53	46	44	50	20	25	29	23
Some	<b>33%</b>	36	22	34	25	34	36	33	32	40	37	41	41
Just a little	<b>13%</b>	14	9	17	10	9	13	14	14	27	26	21	23
Nothing	<b>5%</b>	7	2	7	3	4	6	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	<b>64%</b>	45	64	87	40	63	82	69	50
...the state should raise taxes if necessary and continue to support state programs	<b>26%</b>	42	21	8	52	25	8	20	42
Unsure/mixed	<b>11%</b>	12	16	6	8	13	10	12	9

**Cut or tax, trend**

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

**Question:** In November, everyone in the state assembly and senate are up for election. Would you prefer that the... or the... control the assembly and senate after the election?

READ, ROTATE Democrats, Republicans

	All	Party			Gender		Public employee household	
		D	I	R	men	wom	No	Yes
Republicans	36%	6	18	78	37	34	39	25
Democrats	41%	76	24	5	41	42	37	56
Split (vol)	5%	4	9	4	4	5	4	5
Vote against incumbent (vol)	2%	1	5	4	4	1	3	1
Unsure (vol)	13%	11	38	8	11	15	14	8
Don't care (vol)	3%	3	6	2	3	3	3	4

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## Question Wording and Order

US1-2 Held for later release.

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]

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]

NJ2.1 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?

- a. Chris Christie
- b. Bob Menendez (Held for later release.)
- c. Frank Lautenberg (Held for later release.)

NJ2d. And have you heard of the NJEA?

- Yes
- No/ DK

NJ2e. [ASK ALL] The NJEA is the public teachers' union. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the NJEA? Would that be very or somewhat?

- Very favorable
- Somewhat favorable
- No opinion/DK
- Somewhat unfavorable
- Very unfavorable

NJ3a-c (Held for later release)

NJ4. 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]

NJ5. 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]

NJ6a. How much have you heard or read recently about the state’s budget problems...READ?

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

NJ6b. 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)

NJ7. In November, everyone in the state assembly and senate are up for election. Would you prefer that the... or the... control the assembly and senate after the election?

ROTATE

- Republicans
- Democrats
- Split/one of each (vol)
- Vote against incumbent (vol)
- DK (vol)
- Don’t care (vol)

Sample Characteristics (%)

Gender	
Male	50
Female	50

Age	
18-29	12
30-44	25
45-59	32
60+	28
Ref.	3

In addition to being American, would you say you are...?	
White	70
Black	14
Hispanic or Latino	9
Asian	3
Other/ref.	4

Public Employee  
Household?

yes	22
no	76
not sure/ref.	2

Party ID

Dem. + lean Dem.	48
ind. + unsure + ref.	14
Rep. + lean Rep.	38