

## **Part Deux: Many think US is bailing out Greece; NPR, Jon Stewart Out-Fox Cable News**

Most New Jersey residents don't have a basic understanding of the Euro debt crisis that is rocking the world's finances and has already toppled two European administrations, according to the latest results of Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind Poll.

Asked which country has had to spend the most money bailing out the most financially troubled members of the European Union, just 30% correctly identify Germany, while 36% admit not knowing, 22% say it's the US, and the remaining 12% name some other country altogether.

"Whether we like it or not, we depend on the health of the European economy," said Dan Cassino, a professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson and an analyst for the PublicMind Poll. "We are not bailing out Greece. We can barely bail out ourselves. But Greece and others threaten to swamp our boat. This is important."

The survey also asked what media sources people use to gather information about politics and world affairs. Combined with demographic factors such as gender, education and partisanship, this data allows analysts to calculate the effects of watching various news sources on information. For instance, someone who hasn't watched the news at all, has about a 33% chance of saying that Germany is responsible for the bailout, a 31% chance of naming the US, and a 24% chance of admitting that he or she didn't know. But watching the evening news makes them 8-points more likely to correctly name Germany as the country on the hook.

*NPR* does the best job of informing respondents about the debt crisis: Listening to *NPR* is associated with a 26-point increase in the likelihood of correctly naming Germany as the bailer, and a 12-point decrease in thinking that the US is behind the Euro-bailout. Sunday morning talk shows, talk radio and *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* have similar positive impacts. On the other hand, people who report watching *Fox News* are five-points *more* likely than those who watch no news at all, to incorrectly say it's the US that is bailing out European countries.

"Since we're controlling for partisanship and education, it seems like there really is something about watching *Fox* that makes people less informed on this issue than they would be otherwise," said Cassino. "Given that *Fox's* ratings are well above their competitors, the findings are very troubling."

Independent voters are least likely to be able to answer the question correctly. While 36% of Republicans and 33% of Democrats identify Germany as the biggest donor to the bailouts, only 26% of political independents do so. Meanwhile, 30% of independents say it's the US that is bailing out failing countries, compared with just 19% of Democrats and 21% of Republicans.

"In many cases, independents have a harder time learning about politics than partisans," said Cassino. "They often don't have a clear 'good guys and bad guys' storyline for politics, and don't necessarily know who to trust to get their information."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 612 adults statewide was underwritten by *WFDU-FM* radio and conducted by telephone using both landlines and cell phones from Oct. 17 through Oct. 23, 2011, and has a margin of error of +/-3.5 percentage points.

### Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was commissioned by WFDU Radio, and conducted by telephone from Oct. 17, 2011, through Oct. 23, 2011, using a randomly selected sample of 612 registered voters statewide. The margin of error for a sample of 612 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.

**K1:** Americans now have more ways than ever before to get their news about politics and world affairs. I'm going to read you a list of news sources. As I read the list, just say "yes" if you got news from that source any time in the past week.

News Sources	Yes	No
A Local Newspaper	74	26
A Local TV News Broadcast	67	33
CNN	65	35
Fox News	64	36
A National News Broadcast	62	38
MSNBC	51	49
A National Newspaper like the <i>New York Times</i> or <i>USA Today</i>	42	58
A Talk Radio Show	41	59
A Political Blog or News Website	30	70
A Sunday Morning Political News Show	27	73
NPR	21	79
The Daily Show with Jon Stewart	18	82

**K4:** Some countries in Europe are deeply in debt, and have had to be bailed out by other countries. To the best of your knowledge, which country has had to spend the most money to bail out European countries?

News Sources	Germany	France	Britain	US	Greece	Other	Don't Know
NPR	60%	1%	2%	11%	5%	0%	21%
The Daily Show with Jon Stewart	43%	1%	1%	14%	5%	6%	29%
CNN	32%	1%	2%	21%	4%	5%	35%
Fox News	29%	1%	2%	26%	3%	5%	35%
MSNBC	29%	1%	3%	24%	3%	5%	35%
NJ-TV	27%	1%	2%	24%	4%	6%	36%
A National News Broadcast	34%	1%	2%	25%	5%	4%	29%
A Talk Radio Show	36%	1%	2%	24%	5%	4%	29%
A Local TV News Broadcast	28%	1%	2%	25%	3%	4%	36%
A Sunday Morning Political News Show	41%	1%	2%	17%	7%	5%	26%
A Local Newspaper	30%	1%	2%	24%	4%	4%	35%
A National Newspaper like the <i>New York Times</i> or <i>USA Today</i>	36%	1%	4%	18%	4%	3%	34%
A Political Blog or News Website	36%	1%	4%	22%	2%	4%	31%

**K4:** Some countries in Europe are deeply in debt, and have had to be bailed out by other countries. To the best of your knowledge, which country has had to spend the most money to bail out European countries?

Countries	All	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Don't Know	36%	31	38	31
Germany	30%	36	33	26
The United States	22%	21	19	30
Someone Else	12%	12	10	12

BELOW: Marginal effects of reported exposure to a media source, controlling for Education, Party Identification, Gender, and all other media sources. Figures represent the expected change relative to an individual who reported no media exposure at all, e.g., "12.5" refers to a 12.5 point increase in the likelihood of a particular response, while "-4.6" refers to a 4.6 point decrease in the likelihood of a particular response.

**K4:** Some countries in Europe are deeply in debt, and have had to be bailed out by other countries. To the best of your knowledge, which country has had to spend the most money to bail out European countries?

	Germany	Other	US	DK
NPR	26.1%	-4.9%	-11.7%	-9.5%
Sunday Show	9.6%	9.3%	-12.5%	-6.4%
Talk Radio	9.5%	-3.3%	2.3%	-8.5%
Evening News	7.5%	0.9%	2.4%	-10.8%
Daily Show	7.1%	0.7%	-10.0%	2.2%
National Newspaper	4.1%	3.6%	-6.4%	-1.3%
Blog	1.1%	0.8%	0.5%	-2.5%
Fox News	0.1%	-5.1%	4.6%	0.4%
MSNBC	-4.2%	-2.6%	3.7%	3.1%

## Exact Question Wording and Order

US1-4 released October 27, 2011

NJ1-8 released October 31, 2011

NJFB1-12 released November 14, 2011

K1-3 release November 21, 2011.

K4. Some countries in Europe are deeply in debt, and have had to be bailed out by other countries. To the best of your knowledge, which country has had to spend the most money to bail out European countries?

[Open-Ended: do not read response categories]

Germany

France

The UK, England, Britain

The US/America/"us"

Greece

Other

Don't Know [vol]

### Sample Characteristics (%)

Gender	
Male	50
Female	50

Age	
18-29	17
30-44	28
45-59	28
60+	26
Ref.	2

In addition to being American, would you say you are...?	
White	63
Black	14
Hispanic or Latino	11
Asian	6
Other/ref.	6

Party ID	
Dem. + lean Dem.	43
ind. + unsure + ref.	23
Rep. + lean Rep.	34