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Contact: Peter Woolley 973.670.3239

## New Jersey Headed in Right Direction. Really.

For the first time in a very long time, more New Jersey voters say the state is headed in the right direction than say it's on the wrong track. According to the most recent poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind, 46% say that "things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction" compared to 43% who say it's "off on the wrong track."

"Statistically speaking we could say that 46-43 is an even split," said Peter Woolley, director of the poll, "but I think it would be fairer to New Jersey to say it's a milestone."

Not since 2004 has the state's right direction number exceeded the wrong direction number. In July of 2004, despite controversies surrounding then Gov. McGreevey's associates, the right direction exceeded the wrong direction by one percentage point, 42%-41%. Two weeks after the FDU poll took [that measure](#), the governor himself, engulfed in scandal, resigned, pushing the [wrong direction number up to 51%](#), and the right direction number down to 31%.

Also in this most recent poll, Gov. Chris Christie is well ahead on his approval ratings: 51% say they approve of the job he's doing, 36% disapprove. And at the same time, the governor marks a new high with 47% saying he's doing a "good" or "excellent" job.

"Positive or negative, the governor sparks strong reactions from voters," said Woolley. Indeed, while one in four (28%) have a "very favorable" opinion of Christie, another one in four have a "very unfavorable" opinion of him.

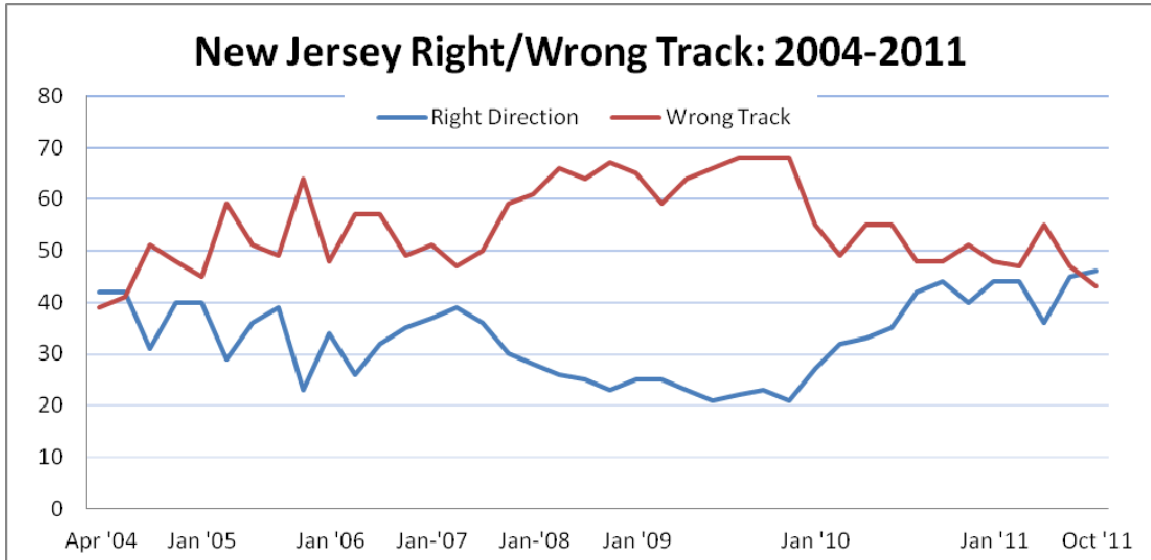
Among his potential Democratic rivals in the next race for governor, former Gov. Richard Codey's favorable to unfavorable ratio is the strongest at 7:2 (28%-8%), while Mayor Corey Booker's ratio is almost 3:1 (35%-13%). But Rep. Frank Pallone breaks about even, 12%-13%, as does Senate Pres. Steve Sweeney (13%-15%). Sen. Barbara Buono is largely unknown.

More immediately, the governor's popularity does not necessarily translate into legislative victory in the upcoming elections. For one, less than a majority (44%) have a "great deal" of interest in the elections—though a majority of public employee households (58%), a group critical of the governor, say they have a great deal of interest in them. Moreover, 40% of voters say they prefer that Democrats control the state assembly and senate, compared to 34% who prefer Republicans in control. Finally, among those who approve of the governor, 56% say they want Republican control of the legislature, but among those who disapprove of the governor, 68% say they want Democrats in control.

"Legislative races turn more on the visibility, likability and party affiliation of the candidates, than on statewide issues," said Woolley. "The best even a popular governor can do, is raise money for his party, and raise the profile of local candidates."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 800 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone with both landline 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 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 Oct. 17, 2011, through Oct. 23, 2011, using a randomly selected sample of 800 registered voters statewide. The margin of error for a sample of 800 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:** 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>46%</b>	28	38	71	52	40	48	37
Wrong track	<b>43%</b>	60	49	23	38	48	40	54
Unsure/mixed	<b>11%</b>	12	13	7	10	12	11	8

**Right /Wrong direction Christie's term**

Sep	May	Apr	Feb	Jan 2011	Nov	Oct	Aug	May	Mar. 30	Mar. 3	Jan. 2010
45%	36%	44%	44%	44%	40%	44%	42%	35%	33%	32%	27%
47%	55%	47%	47%	48%	51%	48%	48%	55%	55%	49%	55%
9%	9%	9%	10%	8%	10%	9%	11%	10%	13%	20%	18%

**Right/Wrong direction Corzine's 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
<b>Right track</b>	21%	22	21	23	25	25	24	23	23	25	26	25	28	30	38	36	42	39	34
<b>Wrong track</b>	68%	68	66	64	59	65	65	67	67	64	66	65	61	59	49	50	44	47	48
<b>DK</b>	11%	10	14	13	16	10	10	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	12	14	14	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>1%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<i>Republicans only</i>	1	53	27	7	5	5
<i>Independents only</i>	--	29	19	19	6	27
<i>Democrats only</i>	1	8	19	9	21	41
<b>Previous Surveys...</b>						
<i>Christie 09/11</i>	2%	28%	21%	9%	14%	27%
<i>Christie 05/11</i>	3%	22%	18%	11%	12%	33%
<i>Christie 04/11</i>	2%	26%	21%	9%	13%	28%
<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%
<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%

**Christie Job rating, current**

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

	All	Party			Public Employee Household		Gender	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes	men	Wom
Excellent	<b>16%</b>	4	17	33	18	13	19	14
Good	<b>31%</b>	21	31	43	31	28	33	28
Only fair	<b>25%</b>	32	21	16	25	26	22	28
Poor	<b>24%</b>	38	29	7	22	31	21	27
Unsure	<b>3%</b>	5	2	1	4	2	4	3

<b>Job rating, trend</b>	Sep	May	Apr	Feb	Jan. 2011	Nov	Oct	Aug	May	Mar. 30	Mar. 3
Excellent	18	14	17	15	17	17	19	13	13	10	8
Good	28	22	26	30	27	28	26	26	24	24	31
Only fair	29	28	28	26	31	25	26	32	23	31	26
Poor	24	32	27	26	23	27	25	24	33	21	13
Unsure	1	3	3	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?

	All	gender		Party			Public Employee Household	
		men	wom	Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes
Approve	<b>51%</b>	58	45	27	50	81	54	41
Disapprove	<b>36%</b>	31	41	60	35	11	33	49
Mixed/unsure	<b>12%</b>	11	14	13	16	8	12	10

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

Sep May Apr Feb Jan | Nov Oct Aug. May Mar. 30 Mar. 3 Jan. 10\*

	2011					2010						
Approve	54%	44	51	51	53	49	51	47	44	43	52	48
Disapprove	36%	44	41	39	36	39	37	36	42	32	21	13
Mixed/d.k.	10%	12	8	10	11	12	13	17	15	25	28	38

**Question:** In November, everyone in the state assembly and state senate are up for election. How much interest do you have in this election...READ?

	All	gender		Party			Public Employee Household		age		
		men	wom	Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes	18-34	35-54	55+
A great deal	<b>44%</b>	46	43	44	39	46	40	58	22	44	49
Some	<b>34%</b>	32	35	32	31	36	35	30	40	35	32
A little	<b>16%</b>	17	15	17	18	14	18	7	26	15	13
Or none	<b>7%</b>	5	8	6	12	4	7	5	12	6	6

**Question:** Would you prefer that the... or the... control the state assembly and senate after the election?  
 READ, ROTATE Democrats, Republicans

	All	Party			Governor approval		Public Employee household		Sep	May	Apr
		D	I	R	approv	disapp	No	Yes			
Republicans	34%	4	20	79	56	9	35	33	34	32	36
Democrats	40%	77	19	3	17	68	40	38	46	42	41
Split (vol)	6%	4	10	7	7	3	6	6	4	6	7
Unsure (vol)	17%	11	45	10	18	16	16	20	13	16	13
Don't care (vol)	3%	4	7	1	3	3	3	3	3	4	3

**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?

[ROTATE NAMES]	Haven't heard of	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	No opinion	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
Richard Codey	41%	12%	16%	22%	5%	3%
Cory Booker	33%	18%	17%	19%	9%	4%
Stephen Sweeney	50%	2%	11%	22%	8%	7%
Frank Pallone	51%	2%	10%	24%	7%	6%
Barbara Buono	78%	1%	3%	13%	5%	1%

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## Question Wording and Order

US1-4 held for later release.

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]

US2. 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? [ROTATE NAMES, ASK "Chris Christie" + ANY TWO]

- a. Chris Christie [ask ALL]
- b. Richard Codey
- c. Cory Booker
- d. Stephen Sweeney
- e. Frank Pallone
- f. Barbara Buono

NJ3. How would you rate the job Chris Christie is doing as governor—READ excellent, good, only fair, or poor? DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]

NJ4. [So... ]Do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor?

- Approve
- Disapprove
- Neither [vol] or Neutral [vol]
- DK [vol] or both [vol]

NJ5A. In November, everyone in the state assembly and state senate are up for election. How much interest do you have in this election?

- A great deal
- Some
- a little
- or none

NJ5B. In this election do you think you will.... READ?

- Certainly vote
- Probably vote
- Maybe
- Probably not
- Or not
- DK [vol]

NJ5C. Would you prefer that the... or the... control the state assembly and senate after the election?

ROTATE

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

**Sample Characteristics (%)****Gender**

Male	49
Female	51

**Age**

18-29	12
30-44	26
45-59	31
60+	29
Ref.	2

**In addition to being American,  
would you say you are...?**

White	70
Black	14
Hispanic or Latino	8
Asian	4
Other/ref.	4

**Public Employee  
Household?**

yes	22
No	77
not sure/ref.	1

**Party ID**

Dem. + lean Dem.	45
ind. + unsure + ref.	18
Rep. + lean Rep.	37