



Jersey Guy Trails the President: But Then, So Does Everyone Else

Visits to or from Iowa notwithstanding, New Jersey's Gov. Chris Christie does not stack up as well against President Barack Obama now as he did just a few months ago. In a head-to-head match-up against Obama, Christie trails 34%-50%, a backslide from 40%-46% measured in March, according to a new national poll of registered voters by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™.

The president's approval rating is slightly positive, 47%-45%, an improvement from a negative 44%-48% during his previous trial heat with Chris Christie in March. Meanwhile, Christie's approval back home in New Jersey took a turn for the worse, declining to 44%-44% (reported [here](#) May 24) from 51%-41% in early April.

"The president has had a better spring than the governor of New Jersey," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll. "As tough as the governor is, he has no Navy Seals to brighten his day, and he can't use the helicopter whenever he wants. Instead, New Jersey voters are showing signs of budget-cutting fatigue — and budget reform happens to be the governor's specialty."

In fact, the president beats all Republican comers in trial heats, despite that three of five voters (61%) continue to say the country is "on the wrong track," and just 28% say the nation is headed in the right direction."

Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney performs the best of a poorly performing lot, trailing the president by six points, 39%-45%. Romney also attracts four of five Republicans and Republican "leaners," a better showing than the rest of the field.

"Since Romney is by far the best known in the field, it would mean instant death if polls did not show him outperforming the field," said Woolley.

Minnesota Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, who is expected to announce her candidacy soon, trails 19 points behind at 32%-51%. But she is indistinguishable from former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum (33%-52%), or former Speaker Newt Gingrich (30%-50%). Former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty lags in the pack, losing 29%-56%.

"It's a good thing they're getting an early start with the campaigns," said Woolley. "They need the time."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 826 registered voters nationwide was conducted by telephone using both landlines and cell phones from June 1, through June 7, 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 conducted by telephone from June 1 through June 7, 2011, using a randomly selected national sample of 826 registered voters. 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 among the voting population.

In your opinion, is the country moving in the right direction or has it gotten off on the wrong track?								
	All	Men	Wom	Dem	Ind	Rep	March	Year ago
Right direction	28%	26	29	47	24	5	27%	34%
Wrong track	61%	62	60	40	64	87	59%	56%
Unsure/ref.	11%	12	11	13	12	7	15%	10%

In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?								
	All	Men	Wom	Dem	Ind	Rep	March	Year ago
Approve	47%	44	51	78	39	12	44%	44%
Disapprove	45%	49	41	16	50	82	48%	47%
Unsure/ref.	8%	7	9	6	11	6	8%	9%

I know it's early, but let me ask.... In a race for president between ... and Who would you vote for?
 [ROTATE ORDER, ROATE NAMES] IF "DK" ASK: "which way to you lean?"

<i>N= 826</i>	All	Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	wom	March
Barack Obama, the Democrat	50%	82	44	11	48	52	46%
Chris Christie , the Republican	34%	10	35	72	36	31	40%
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	16%	9	21	17	16	16	14%
<i>N=295</i>							<i>N=379</i>
Barack Obama, the Democrat	45%	78	42	3	44	46	44%
Mitt Romney , the Republican	39%	12	40	80	45	34	43%
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	16%	10	19	17	11	20	12%
<i>N=318</i>							<i>N=392</i>
Barack Obama, the Democrat	56%	84	50	13	53	59	48%
Tim Pawlenty , the Republican	29%	7	30	64	33	23	34%
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	16%	9	20	24	14	18	18%
<i>N=305</i>							<i>N=371</i>
Barack Obama, the Democrat	50%	85	41	13	48	52	52%
Newt Gingrich , the Republican	30%	8	34	65	36	24	37%
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	20%	8	25	22	16	23	10%
<i>N=298</i>							
Barack Obama, the Democrat	47%	80	39	10	52	42	n/a
Herman Cain, the Republican	33%	9	36	68	32	34	
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	20%	11	25	22	16	25	
<i>N=304</i>							
Barack Obama, the Democrat	48%	73	42	16	42	54	n/a
Ron Paul , the Republican	35%	14	36	74	41	29	
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	17%	13	22	10	17	16	
<i>N=826</i>							
Barack Obama, the Democrat	51%	83	44	13	50	52	n/a
Michele Bachmann , the Republican	32%	8	35	71	34	31	
unsure/neither/other	17%	9	21	16	16	17	
<i>N=308</i>							
Barack Obama, the Democrat	52%	83	46	8	44	59	n/a
Rick Santorum , the Republican	33%	13	33	76	40	25	
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	16%	4	21	16	16	15	

Question Wording and Order

US1. In your opinion, is the country 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]

D1. Regardless of who you might vote for, do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, or an independent?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent [ASK: which way do you lean?]
- Other [DON'T READ]
- Don't Know/Ref [DON'T READ]

[AT RANDOM ASK ½ D7A HERE AND ½ AFTER D7]

D7A. By the way... are you married, living as married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?

D7B. [If married or living as married, ASK:]
Would you say that your spouse earns... READ
More than you or
Less than you
About the same (DO NOT READ)
DK

D7C. [If divorced, separated, ASK:]
When you were married, would you say that your spouse earned... READ
More than you or
Less than you
About the same (DO NOT READ)
DK

[ASK Republicans, lean Republicans, independents, lean Democrats.... INSTRUCTION: at random respondents get 1 of 4 lists—1a-dd---includes all, includes Christie but not Palin, includes Palin but not Christie, includes neither Palin nor Christie.]

USP1a. In 2012 there will be an election for President of the United States. To run as the Republican candidate for President, who would you prefer....READ AS NECESSARY, ROTATE LIST?

- Michele Bachmann
- Chris Christie
- Sarah Palin
- Mitt Romney

Tim Pawlenty
Newt Gingrich
Herman Cain
Ron Paul
Rick Santorum
Don't know (vol): ASK "Which way do you lean?" IF lean "don't know" SKIP USP2.

USP1aa. And who would be your second choice...READ AS NECESSARY, ROTATE?

[ELIMINATE CHOICE FROM ABOVE]

Michele Bachmann
Chris Christie
Sarah Palin
Mitt Romney
Tim Pawlenty
Newt Gingrich
Herman Cain
Ron Paul
Rick Santorum
Don't know (vol): ASK "Which way do you lean?"

ASK ALL

USP2A-H. I know it's early, but let me ask.... In a race for president between ... and Who would you vote for?

ROTATE ORDER

Barack Obama, the Democrat
Michele Bachmann, the Republican

And in a race for president between... and... Who would you vote for?

ROTATE ORDER

Barack Obama, the Democrat
Chris Christie, the Republican

[AND CHOOSE ANY THREE MATCHED AGAINST BARACK OBAMA]

Mitt Romney, the Republican
Ron Paul, the Republican
Newt Gingrich, the Republican
Herman Cain, the Republican
Tim Pawlenty, the Republican
Rick Santorum, the Republican

DK (vol.) ASK: "which way do you lean?"

Sample Characteristics

Gender

Male	50
Female	50

Party ID

Democrat	36
Ind. Lean Dem.	10
Independent	15
Ind. Lean Rep.	10
Republican	24
Other/ref.	5

Age

18-29	13
30-44	26
45-59	30
60+	30
ref.	2

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

White	70
Black	12
Hispanic or Latino	10
Asian	3
Other/ref.	5

Census regions

Northeast	18
North central	26
South	35
West	21