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Christie's RNC Speech Mostly Helps Self, Approval Remains High

A recent poll from Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind finds that almost three-in-five (58%) registered New Jersey voters with knowledge of Governor Christie's speech at the Republican National Convention believe he was more successful in selling himself to the American public than he was in advocating for the Romney/Ryan ticket. Only 23% say his speech was more effective at helping to convince the electorate to support Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan (23%).

"Governor Christie's speech was seen or heard by a national audience, many of whom were being introduced to the governor for the first time. The tension between using this opportunity to establish his identity as a national figure versus advocating on behalf of Governor Romney came with the assignment," said Krista Jenkins, director of the poll and professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University. "It's notable that even among New Jersey Republicans, almost half - or 48% - evaluate his speech as more helpful to himself rather than the Republican ticket."

The poll also indicates widespread awareness of Governor Christie's speech. Almost three-quarters (71%) of all registered New Jersey voters report being aware of the governor's speech, having watched or heard it as it was delivered or in the days after.

Beyond the convention, however, Garden State residents continue to give the governor high marks for his job performance, with 51% of registered voters giving him their stamp of approval and 35% disapproving. Furthermore, more than half of all respondents (52%) say the state is moving in the right direction, a number that continues to underscore Republican Governor Christie's support in a state with more Democrats than Republicans.

“These numbers have basically remained the same across polls conducted throughout the year,” said Jenkins. “Policy battles have come and gone, new ones have emerged, and the state continues to struggle with an unemployment rate that’s greater than the national average. Yet, Governor Christie remains in good standing with a broad cross-section of registered voters.”

The survey also points to the healthy degree of support he receives from independent and Democratic constituents. A majority of independents, who will be important to him should he seek re-election next year, approve of the job he’s doing (55%) and believe the state is on the right track (54%). In addition, a sizable number of Democrats give him high marks across both measures as well (28% and 32%, respectively).

“These numbers underscore his broad base of support among political allies and potential foes alike,” said Jenkins. “They also are what distinguish him from his peers in statehouses around the country who struggle with an ability to connect across party lines and yet face similar challenges as New Jersey. Should Governor Christie seek re-election, his campaign will begin from a place that those in similar positions will envy.”

The Fairleigh Dickinson University statewide poll of 901 registered voters was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from September 6, 2012 through September 12, 2012, and has a margin of error of +/-3.3 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

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from September 6, 2012 through September 12, 2012, using a randomly selected sample of 901 registered New Jersey voters statewide. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of plus or minus 3.3 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 respondents interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

Tables – Registered voters

Approve/disapprove Chris Christie, Current

Now thinking about New Jersey, do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor?

	All	Party			Gender		Public employee household	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	Yes	No
Approve	51%	28	55	84	54	49	39	60
Disapprove	35%	55	30	10	32	39	47	27
Neither	9%	11	12	5	10	8	11	9
Mixed/unsure	4%	7	3	1	4	5	3	4

Approve/disapprove Chris Christie, trend

Jul	May	Mar	Jan	Oct	Sep	May	Apr	Feb	Jan	Nov	Oct	Aug	May	Mar 30	Mar 3
2012				2011						2010					
55	56	54	53	51	54	44	51	51	53	49	51	47	44	43	52
35	33	34	37	36	36	44	41	39	36	39	37	36	42	32	21
10	11	12	10	12	10	12	8	10	11	12	13	17	15	25	28

Right/Wrong direction Christie's term, current

In your opinion, do you think things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction or are they on the wrong track?

	All	Party			Gender		Public employee household	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	No	Yes
Right direction	52%	32	54	80	56	49	59	46
Wrong track	34%	51	29	15	33	36	30	41
Mixed/unsure	13%	17	16	5	11	16	11	13

Right/Wrong direction Christie's term

Jul	May	Mar	Jan	Oct	Sep	May	Apr	Feb	Jan	Nov	Oct	Aug	May	Mar. 30	Mar. 3
2012				2011						2010					
49	50	51	44	46	45	36	44	44	44	40	44	42	35	33	32
40	41	39	47	43	47	55	47	47	48	51	48	48	55	55	49
11	9	10	9	11	9	9	9	10	8	10	9	11	10	13	20

Chris Christie, Republican National Convention Speech

Did you personally watch or hear Governor Christie's speech at the Republican National Convention, did you read or hear about it even if you didn't personally watch or hear it, or did you not have a chance?

	All	Party			Gender		Public Employee Household	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	Yes	No
Heard/saw	48%	43	48	60	48	49	58	46
Heard later	23%	23	23	24	26	20	21	24
Didn't hear	27%	34	26	16	24	29	19	29
Unsure	2%	1	3	1	2	2	1	1

Impact of Chris Christie's RNC speech

Which of the following best describes how you feel, even if neither statement is perfect: *Governor Christie's speech was more successful in selling himself to the American public...or...Governor Christie's speech was more effective in persuading voters to support the Romney/Ryan ticket.*

N=645	All	Party			Gender		Public Employee Household	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	No	Yes
Good for Christie	58%	75	49	43	57	58	55	68
Good for Romney/Ryan	23%	12	22	34	23	22	25	16
Both	6%	2	3	12	6	6	7	7
Neither	6%	6	13	3	5	6	6	5
Mixed/unsure	8%	5	12	8	8	8	7	4

Question Wording and Order

NJ1. Now thinking about New Jersey, do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor?

- 1 Approve
- 2 Disapprove
- 3 Neither [vol] or Neutral [vol]
- 8 DK [vol] or both [vol]

NJ2. In your opinion, do you think things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction or are they on the wrong track?

- 1 Right direction
- 2 Wrong track
- 8 DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]

NJ3 Did you personally watch or hear Governor Christie's speech at the Republican National Convention, did you read or hear about it even if you didn't personally watch or hear it, or did you not have a chance?

- 1 Heard/saw it personally [Ask NJ4]
- 2 Heard about it later [Ask NJ4]
- 3 Didn't hear/see anything about it
- 9 DK/Can't recall

NJ4 Which of the following best describes how you feel, even if neither statement is perfect: Governor Christie's speech was more successful in selling himself to the American public....or Governor Christie's speech was more effective in persuading voters to support the Romney/Ryan ticket [RANDOMIZE]

- 1 Governor Christie's speech was more successful in selling himself to the American public
- 2 Governor Christie's speech was more effective in persuading voters to support the Romney/Ryan ticket
- 3 Both
- 4 Neither
- 9 DK/Unsure

Sample Characteristics - Registered voters (%)**Gender**

Male	49
Female	51

Age

18-29	13
30-44	18
45-59	35
60+	33
Refused	2

Race/Ethnicity

White	70
Black/African-American	12
Latino or Hispanic	10
Asian	5
Other/refused	3

Public employee household

Yes	23
No	74
Unsure/refused	3

Party identification

Democrat/Lean Democrat	48
Independent/DK/refused	19
Republican/Lean Republican	33