



For release Thursday, June 20, 2013 ... 7 pp.
Contact: Krista Jenkins Office: 973.443.8390 Cell: 908.328.8967
kjenkins@fdu.edu

NO PUBLIC CONSENSUS AMONG THE PUBLIC OVER BOND MONEY FOR RELIGIOUS COLLEGES AND LIFETIME ALIMONY REFORM

Garden State registered voters are split over two separate issues being debated by state political leaders: the appropriate use of bond money for higher education and alimony reform, finds Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind.

Higher Education Bond

In November, voters approved a bond that would give New Jersey's colleges and universities \$1.3 billion for infrastructure repairs and improvements. Recently, it was decided the money would go to schools that are both open to students of all faiths and those that restrict enrollment to students of a particular faith.

The vast majority of registered voters say they've heard a little (35%) or nothing at all (35%). However, when asked whether religious institutions should or should not be eligible to receive funds from the higher education bond act, the ratio of those who support and oppose the practice is one-to-one. Forty-five percent say religious institutions should be eligible to receive the money, and 44 percent are opposed. A similar trend is apparent when the question turns to whether the use of taxpayer money for religious institutions of higher learning is or is not a violation of the First Amendment and its separation of church and state mandate. Forty-four percent believe it is a violation while 40 percent think otherwise.

"There is no consensus among Garden State voters. Some see the use of taxpayer funds for religious schools as inappropriate, while others are more sanguine about the practice," said Krista Jenkins, professor of political science and director of PublicMind. "All schools would like a piece of the pie, and these findings underscore the difficulty of parsing how religiosity should factor into any decision regarding where the funds will go."

Among those in favor of allowing religious institutions to receive bond funding are Republicans (51%), younger adults (53% of those aged 18-29; 50% of those aged 30-44), the less educated (51%), and non-whites (58%). Accordingly, they are also the groups among whom the majority or a plurality say the funding does not contradict the Second Amendment.

--more--

Those opposed to eligibility include Democrats and independents (47% each), men (49%), those 60 and older (52%), the college educated and college graduates (48% and 49%), and whites (50%). In general, these groups are also among those who express the most concern over breaching the wall that separates church and state.

“Although there is no group who overwhelmingly accepts or rejects the practice, it’s notable that some groups break on the issue in a predictable fashion,” said Jenkins.

Alimony Reform

Alimony reform is also currently before the legislature. The proposed bill would set guidelines for how long alimony should last following a failed marriage or civil union, rather than leaving it solely to a judge’s discretion. PublicMind asked a series of questions about alimony, including the appropriateness of awarding lifetime alimony, and how long a marriage or civil union should last in order for one to receive alimony.

The poll finds that opinion is divided over whether to support or oppose legislation that would make it harder for one to receive lifetime alimony following a divorce. A third (33%) support the legislation, 40 percent oppose it, and another quarter (26%) are unsure. When asked how long a marriage should last in order for one to receive alimony, over half say at least ten years, with fewer who say a couple should make it to at least their fifteen year anniversary.

“The complexity of determining financial support following a divorce is mirrored in public attitudes. Garden State voters support the practice of making someone support his or her ex, but they are not united in their opinion over the issue of lifetime alimony,” said Jenkins.

A clear story regarding which groups support or oppose the legislation is also not apparent. Although there are some marginal partisan differences, with Republicans more supportive (40%) than Democrats (25%), other group differences are less pronounced.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 705 registered voters in New Jersey was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from June 10 through June 16, 2013, and has a margin of error of +/-3.7 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 June 10 through June 16, 2013 using a randomly selected sample of 705 registered voters who reside in New Jersey. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/- 3.7 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 landline 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.

Education Bond

Last year, voters passed a bond issue for higher education. There has been some discussion about whether the money should go only to public institutions or private ones as well. How much had you heard or read about this issue?

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
A lot	9%	10	8	9	8	10	5	10	9	10
Some	19%	17	14	23	19	20	10	16	23	23
Just a little	35%	38	36	33	39	32	42	34	36	34
Nothing at all	35%	35	42	34	33	37	40	40	32	33
Unsure (vol)	1%	1	0	1	1	1	3	0	1	0
Refused (vol)	1%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Education			Race	
	HS or less	Some college	College grad	White	Non-white
A lot	7	8	10	8	11
Some	9	20	23	23	12
Just a little	36	37	34	33	40
Nothing at all	46	33	32	35	37
Unsure (vol)	1	2	0	1	0
Refused (vol)	0	0	0	0	0

Proper Use of Higher Education Bond Funding

Do you think religious institutions should or should not be eligible to receive funds from the higher education bond? [Randomize order of should/should not]

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Should	45%	41	43	51	43	48	53	50	43	39
Should not	44%	47	47	41	49	40	38	40	44	52
Unsure(vol)	10%	12	10	7	8	12	9	10	12	8
Refused(vol)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Education			Race	
	HS or less	Some college	College grad	White	Non-white
Should	51	45	42	40	58
Should not	29	48	49	50	30
Unsure (vol)	20	6	9	10	11
Refused (vol)	0	1	0	0	0

Higher Education Bond – Separation of Church and State

Do you think giving tax payer money to religious colleges and universities IS or IS NOT a violation of the separation of church and state? [Randomize order of Is/IS NOT]

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Is	44%	50	48	37	44	44	38	41	44	50
Is Not	40%	35	33	50	41	39	45	40	42	34
Refused (vol)	15%	15	18	12	14	17	17	17	13	15
Unsure (vol)	1%	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1

	Education			Race	
	HS or less	Some college	College grad	White	Non-white
Is	37	42	48	48	35
Is not	35	42	40	40	38
Unsure (vol)	26	15	11	11	26
Refused (vol)	2	1	0	1	1

Alimony Legislation Awareness

How much have you heard or read about the proposed legislation in New Jersey that would limit the possibility of lifetime alimony being awarded to either spouse following a divorce?

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
A lot	3%	3	5	3	4	3	6	2	4	4
Some	10%	7	9	15	10	10	3	13	11	10
Just a little	16%	17	16	15	16	15	9	12	18	19
Nothing at all	69%	71	66	66	67	70	79	73	64	65
DK (vol)	2%	2	2	1	2	2	3	1	3	3
Refused (vol)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

	Education			Marital status		Race	
	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Married	Not married	White	Non-white
A lot	4	1	4	2	6	3	4
Some	8	10	11	13	6	11	7
Just a little	13	17	16	17	14	17	13
Nothing at all	71	70	66	67	71	65	76
Unsure (vol)	4	1	2	2	2	3	1
Refused (vol)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Lifetime Alimony

Do you favor or oppose the proposed legislation that would limit the possibility of lifetime alimony being awarded to either spouse following a divorce? [Randomize order of Favor/Oppose]

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Favor	33%	25	41	40	39	26	26	34	37	29
Oppose	40%	43	40	36	39	41	31	48	37	41
Unsure (vol)	26%	30	18	23	20	32	43	1	22	29
Refused (vol)	2%	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	4	2

	Education			Marital status		Race	
	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Married	Not married	White	Non-white
Favor	25	35	34	37	27	36	23
Oppose	44	41	38	37	44	37	47
Unsure (vol)	29	24	25	24	28	25	28
Refused (vol)	2	0	2	2	1	2	2

Marital Tenure for Alimony

In your opinion, how long does a marriage need to last in order for a spouse to receive alimony from his former husband or wife?

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Any length of time	12%	11	13	14	11	13	7	15	12	11
At least 5 years	23%	24	26	21	22	23	31	23	24	16
At least 10 yrs	23%	24	12	29	20	26	22	29	21	20
At least 15 yrs	5%	7	4	3	7	3	10	3	6	4
16+ years	11%	10	15	10	12	10	15	11	9	13
Depends (vol)	14%	14	15	12	13	14	6	12	15	18
Unsure (vol)	11%	11	14	8	12	10	8	7	11	16
Refused (vol)	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	2	3

	Education			Marital status		Race	
	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Married	Not married	White	Non-white
Any length of time	7	14	13	13	10	12	12
At least 5 years	18	25	24	23	23	21	29
At least 10 yrs	27	22	22	22	25	21	27
At least 15 yrs	7	5	4	4	6	5	5
16+ years	9	13	11	11	11	11	10
Depends (vol)	14	15	14	14	14	18	4
Unsure (vol)	16	5	11	11	10	10	13
Refused (vol)	0	1	2	2	1	2	0

Exact Question Wording and Order

US1 and US2 released Tuesday, June 18, 2013

NJ1 through NJ5 released Tuesday, June 1

NJ6 Last year, voters passed a bond issue for higher education. There has been some discussion about whether the money should go only to public institutions or private ones as well. How much have you heard or read about this issue?

- 1 A lot
- 2 Some
- 3 Just a little
- 4 Nothing at all
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused

NJ7 Do you think religious institutions should or should not be eligible to receive funds from the higher education bond? [Randomize order of should/should not]

- 1 Should
- 2 Should not
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

NJ8 Do you think giving taxpayer money to religious colleges and universities IS or IS NOT a violation of the separation of church and state? [Randomize order of IS/IS NOT]

- 1 Is
- 2 Is not
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

AL1 How much have you heard or read about the proposed legislation in New Jersey that would limit the possibility of lifetime alimony being awarded to either spouse following a divorce?

- 1 A lot
- 2 Some
- 3 Just a little
- 4 Nothing at all
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

AL2 Do you favor or oppose the proposed legislation that would limit the possibility of lifetime alimony being awarded to either spouse following a divorce? [Randomize order of Favor/Oppose]

- 1 Favor
- 2 Oppose
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

Al3 In your opinion, how long does a marriage need to last in order for a spouse to receive alimony from his former husband or wife?

- 1 Any length of time
- 2 At least five years
- 3 At least ten years
- 4 At least 15 years
- 5 16 or more years
- 6 Depends (vol)
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

Sample characteristics – Registered voters

Gender

Male	49
Female	51

Age

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

Race/Ethnicity

White	68
Black/African-American	12
Latino or Hispanic	10
Asian	6
Other/refused	5

Public employee household

Yes	21
No	76
Unsure/refused	2

Party identification

Democrat/Lean Democrat	45
Independent/DK/refused	22
Republican/Lean Republican	33