



GOVERNOR CHRISTIE'S APPROVAL REACHES A NEW LOW; MAJORITY DOUBT HIM IN BRIDGEGATE

Fairleigh Dickinson University, October 19, 2016 – Governor Christie's job approval has fallen further in the eyes of the public, according to the most recent survey of registered voters in New Jersey from Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind. And, as the public closely follows the ongoing Bridgegate trial, a majority believe sufficient evidence has emerged to contradict Christie's claim that he knew nothing about the George Washington Bridge lane closures before text messages were released publicly.

Barely a fifth (21%) of registered voters approve of the job the governor is doing, with almost three quarters (72%) saying they disapprove. These are the lowest approval and highest disapproval numbers PublicMind has registered for Governor Christie – ever. Disapproval is widespread. Even a majority of Republicans are giving the governor a negative evaluation (52%).

The governor is also upside down in his favorability rating. Sixty-five percent currently have an unfavorable view of him, with 29 percent holding a favorable opinion.

“Apparently we've not yet found the floor for the governor's approval among voters in the state. The recent gas tax increase that the governor supported no doubt caused some in his party to turn against him, even though he sought to reduce taxes in other areas in order to offset the increase at the pump,” said Krista Jenkins, professor of political science and director of PublicMind.

Disapproval for Governor Christie mirrors that for evaluations concerning the health of the state. Again, PublicMind finds the lowest “right direction” and highest “wrong track” numbers on this question during the entirety of the Christie administration. Twenty percent say the state is headed in the right direction, while 71 percent say it is headed down the wrong track.

“Concern about the state's health is both broad and deep. Republicans and Democrats alike think things have taken a turn for the worse,” said Jenkins.

Adding to the state's problems is the ongoing Bridgegate investigation and federal trial of former Christie administration officials. Seven-in-ten (70%) say they are following the trial closely, with a fifth (19%) following it very closely.

The trial has done little to shake the perception that Governor Christie knew about the lane closures before the public became aware of the now infamous “Time for some traffic problems” email from Christie aide Bridget Anne Kelly. Thirty-seven percent believe it is highly unlikely that the governor did not know what his aides were doing either before or during the lane closure episode. Virtually the same percentage reported being dubious in 2014, shortly after the story broke.

Additionally, 52 percent believe there is sufficient proof that Governor Christie knew about and did nothing to prevent the lane closures from occurring or stop them from continuing. A third (36%) believe sufficient proof does not exist. The only group whose majority sentiment gives the benefit of the doubt to the governor are Republicans. Across the board, registered voters are more apt to believe the claims of the defendants and prosecutors in the trial than the governor.

“The Bridgegate trial and its fallout is clearly hurting the governor. With both sides arguing that the governor was aware of the political retaliation plan, voters are having a hard time coming up with reasons to believe his claims of innocence,” said Jenkins.

However, the same survey finds a glimmer of hope for Governor Christie. A clear majority (57%) reject the idea that Christie should leave office, either by stepping down or through removal by impeachment. Only 39 percent believe he should leave office. These numbers are reversed from when a similar question was asked earlier this year in May. Back then, 57 percent said that if it is proven that Christie knew about and did nothing to stop or prevent the lane closures from occurring, he should resign. A third (35%) rejected such an idea.

“Invoking the word ‘impeachment’ raises his early departure to a different level. Although removal by impeachment has been discussed recently in the press, it’s clear from these numbers that the public is not ready to go there, despite growing concerns about the veracity of the governor’s claims regarding his role in the lane closure affair,” said Jenkins.

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 Fairleigh Dickinson University poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone October 12-16, 2016 among a random sample of 848 registered voters in New Jersey. Results have a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.6 percentage points, including the design effect.

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.

The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, sex, race, and education. 477 interviews were conducted on landlines and 371 were conducted on cellular telephones.

The sample was purchased from Marketing Systems Group and the research was funded by Fairleigh Dickinson University.

PublicMind recently received an “A” rating from statistician Nate Silver’s FiveThirtyEight blog. The ratings measure both accuracy and bias for all major polling services in the United States, providing an update to similar research the poll watchers conducted in 2014. PublicMind’s “A” rating puts it in the top 14 of the more than 380 polling institutes reviewed and graded from A+ through F. PublicMind was found to have a 94 percent accuracy rate for predicting election results, and is one of only two A-rated polling institutes with zero bias to their rankings.

Tables

| <i>And turning to New Jersey, do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor? [Randomize approve/disapprove]</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|-----|-----|-------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-----------------|----------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | PID | | | Gender | | Race | | Education | | Age | | |
| | All | Dem | Ind | Repub | Male | Female | White | Non-white | HS/Some college | College+ | 18-34 | 35-59 | 60+ |
| Approve | 21% | 7 | 19 | 40 | 22 | 20 | 26 | 13 | 23 | 20 | 22 | 19 | 23 |
| Disapprove | 72% | 90 | 68 | 52 | 71 | 73 | 67 | 81 | 67 | 75 | 71 | 75 | 68 |
| Neither/Neutral (vol) | 5% | 1 | 11 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 7 |
| DK/Both (vol) | 2% | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Refused (vol) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

| <i>In your opinion, do you think things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction or are they on the wrong track? [Rotate right direction/wrong track]</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-----------------|----------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | PID | | | Gender | | Race | | Education | | Age | | |
| | All | Dem | Ind | Repub | Male | Female | White | Non-white | HS/Some college | College+ | 18-34 | 35-59 | 60+ |
| Right direction | 20% | 15 | 19 | 29 | 23 | 18 | 21 | 19 | 22 | 20 | 24 | 19 | 19 |
| Wrong track | 71% | 79 | 72 | 61 | 69 | 73 | 70 | 73 | 68 | 73 | 67 | 75 | 70 |
| DK (vol) | 8% | 5 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 9 |
| Refused (vol) | 1% | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |

I'm going to read you some names. Can you tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable [rotate] opinion of each person, or if you've never heard of them? [Rotate names]

| | Haven't heard of | | | Favorable | | | Unfavorable | | | Unsure | | |
|----------------|------------------|-----|-------|-----------|-----|-------|-------------|-----|-------|--------|-----|-------|
| | 1 | | | 29% | | | 65% | | | 5% | | |
| Chris Christie | Dem | Ind | Repub | Dem | Ind | Repub | Dem | Ind | Repub | Dem | Ind | Repub |
| | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 28 | 54 | 89 | 60 | 39 | 3 | 11 |

| <i>How closely, if at all, are you following the federal trial of Governor Christie's top aides in the so-called Bridgegate scandal?</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-----------------|----------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | PID | | | Gender | | Race | | Education | | Age | | |
| | All | Dem | Ind | Repub | Male | Female | White | Non-white | HS/Some college | College+ | 18-34 | 35-59 | 60+ |
| Very closely | 19% | 22 | 14 | 17 | 21 | 16 | 19 | 18 | 15 | 22 | 12 | 18 | 25 |
| Somewhat closely | 51% | 51 | 49 | 52 | 49 | 52 | 51 | 50 | 45 | 54 | 47 | 55 | 48 |
| Not at all closely | 30% | 27 | 36 | 31 | 30 | 31 | 29 | 32 | 39 | 25 | 41 | 27 | 26 |
| DK (vol) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Refused (vol) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| <i>Based on what you have heard or read, do you believe Governor Christie was unaware that his aides ordered the lane closures on the George Washington Bridge before emails and text messages were released publicly? Would you say it's...</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-----------------|----------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | PID | | | Gender | | Race | | Education | | Age | | |
| | All | Dem | Ind | Repub | Male | Female | White | Non-white | HS/Some college | College+ | 18-34 | 35-59 | 60+ |
| Very likely | 31% | 37 | 30 | 23 | 32 | 29 | 29 | 32 | 25 | 34 | 28 | 31 | 33 |
| Somewhat likely | 14% | 9 | 17 | 18 | 13 | 15 | 15 | 13 | 16 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 13 |
| Somewhat unlikely | 12% | 7 | 12 | 17 | 11 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 14 | 10 | 15 | 11 | 11 |
| Very unlikely | 37% | 43 | 31 | 34 | 38 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 37 | 37 | 36 | 37 | 37 |
| DK (vol) | 6% | 4 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 5 |
| Refused (vol) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| <i>Based on what you have heard or read, do you believe Governor Christie was unaware that his aides ordered the lane closures on the George Washington Bridge before emails and text messages were released publicly? Would you say it's...</i> | | | |
|--|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| | October 2016 | June 2014 | January 2014 |
| Very likely | 31% | 21% | 24% |
| Somewhat likely | 14% | 11% | 12% |
| Somewhat unlikely | 12% | 23% | 21% |
| Very unlikely | 37% | 35% | 32% |
| DK/Ref (vol) | 6% | 10% | 11% |

Which of the following best describes your opinion, even if neither statement is perfect: There is not enough proof that Governor Christie was in a position to prevent or stop the lane closures; There is sufficient proof that Governor Christie knew about and did nothing to stop the lane closures.

| | All | PID | | | Gender | | Race | | Education | | Age | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|-----|-----|-------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-----------------|----------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Repub | Male | Female | White | Non-white | HS/Some college | College+ | 18-34 | 35-59 | 60+ |
| There is sufficient proof | 52% | 72 | 42 | 32 | 50 | 53 | 47 | 61 | 45 | 57 | 54 | 54 | 47 |
| There is not sufficient proof | 36% | 18 | 40 | 57 | 39 | 33 | 41 | 28 | 41 | 34 | 31 | 35 | 42 |
| DK (vol) | 11% | 10 | 16 | 10 | 9 | 13 | 11 | 10 | 14 | 9 | 14 | 10 | 11 |
| Refused (vol) | 1% | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Which of the following best describes your opinion, even if neither statement is perfect: Governor Christie should remain in office until his term expires; Governor Christie should be removed from office, either by stepping down or through removal by impeachment

| | All | PID | | | Gender | | Race | | Education | | Age | | |
|------------------|------------|-----|-----|-------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|-----------------|----------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Repub | Male | Female | White | Non-white | HS/Some college | College+ | 18-34 | 35-59 | 60+ |
| Remain in office | 57% | 38 | 58 | 81 | 59 | 55 | 64 | 42 | 62 | 54 | 46 | 59 | 64 |
| Leave office | 39% | 58 | 38 | 16 | 38 | 40 | 32 | 52 | 34 | 41 | 49 | 37 | 33 |
| DK (vol) | 4% | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| Refused (vol) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

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In your opinion, if it is proven that Governor Christie was aware of the lane closings on the George Washington Bridge, and did nothing to prevent or continue it from happening, should he [rotate] remain in office until the end of his term or resign?

| | All |
|---------------|------------|
| Remain | 35% |
| Resign | 57% |
| DK (vol) | 1% |
| Refused (vol) | 5% |

Question wording and order

US1 and US2 withheld

NJ1. *And turning to New Jersey, do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor?*
[Randomize approve/disapprove]

- 1 Approve
- 2 Disapprove
- 3 Neither (vol)
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

| | 1/10 | 3/3/10 | 3/30/10 | 5/10 | 8/10 | 10/10 | 11/10 | 1/11 | 2/11 | 4/11 | 5/11 | 9/11 | 10/11 | 1/12 |
|------------|------|--------|---------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| Approve | 48 | 52 | 43 | 44 | 47 | 51 | 49 | 53 | 51 | 51 | 44 | 54 | 51 | 53 |
| Disapprove | 31 | 21 | 32 | 42 | 36 | 37 | 39 | 36 | 39 | 41 | 44 | 36 | 36 | 37 |

| | 3/12 | 5/12 | 8/12 | 9/12 | 11/12* | 11/12** | 1/13 | 3/13 | 6/13 | 8/13 | 10/13 | 11/13 | 1/14 | 3/14 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|--------|---------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|
| Approve | 54 | 56 | 55 | 51 | 56 | 77 | 73 | 66 | 61 | 58 | 62 | 61 | 48 | 41 |
| Disapprove | 34 | 33 | 35 | 35 | 33 | 17 | 19 | 20 | 26 | 29 | 35 | 24 | 39 | 44 |

*Pre-election; **Post-election

| | 6/14 | 7/14 | 9/14 | 10/14 | 1/15 | 2/15 | 4/15 | 6/15 | 11/15 | 1/16 | 2/16 | 5/16 | 6/16 | 10/16 |
|------------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Approve | 44 | 44 | 46 | 41 | 39 | 35 | 36 | 30 | 34 | 31 | 30 | 26 | 26 | 21 |
| Disapprove | 44 | 41 | 40 | 47 | 47 | 51 | 50 | 55 | 56 | 59 | 61 | 66 | 62 | 72 |

NJ2 *In your opinion, do you think things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction or are they on the wrong track?* *[Randomize right direction/wrong track]*

- 1 Right direction
- 2 Wrong track
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

| | 1/10 | 3/3/10 | 3/30/10 | 5/10 | 8/10 | 10/10 | 11/10 | 1/11 | 2/11 | 4/11 | 5/11 | 9/11 | 10/11 | 1/12 |
|-----------------|------|--------|---------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| Right direction | 27 | 32 | 33 | 35 | 42 | 44 | 40 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 36 | 45 | 46 | 44 |
| Wrong track | 55 | 49 | 55 | 55 | 48 | 48 | 51 | 48 | 47 | 57 | 55 | 47 | 43 | 47 |

| | 3/12 | 5/12 | 8/12 | 9/12 | 11/12* | 11/12* | 1/13 | 3/13 | 6/13 | 8/13 | 11/13 | 1/14 | 3/14 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|--------|--------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|
| Right direction | 51 | 50 | 49 | 52 | 58 | 69 | 61 | 57 | 57 | 49 | 56 | 51 | 41 |
| Wrong track | 39 | 41 | 40 | 34 | 30 | 19 | 26 | 26 | 28 | 34 | 28 | 39 | 45 |

*Pre-election; **Post-election

| | 6/14 | 7/14 | 9/14 | 10/14 | 1/15 | 2/15 | 4/15 | 6/15 | 11/15 | 1/16 | 2/16 | 5/16 | 6/16 | 10/16 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Right direction | 40 | 39 | 40 | 37 | 36 | 33 | 35 | 28 | 32 | 30 | 29 | 23 | 23 | 20 |
| Wrong track | 48 | 46 | 44 | 49 | 49 | 52 | 54 | 57 | 59 | 60 | 59 | 69 | 67 | 71 |

NJ3 withheld for subsequent release

ELEC1 through ELEC7 released October 18, 2016

AMEND1 through AMEND5 withheld for subsequent release

BG1 How closely, if at all, are you following the federal trial of Governor Christie's top aides in the so-called Bridgegate scandal?

- 1 Very closely
- 2 Somewhat closely
- 3 Not at all closely
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

BG2 Based on what you have heard or read, do you believe Governor Christie was unaware that his aides ordered the lane closures on the George Washington Bridge before emails and text messages were released publicly? Would you say it's...

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Somewhat unlikely
- 4 Very unlikely
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

BG3 Which of the following best describes your opinion, even if neither statement is perfect: There is not enough proof that Governor Christie was in a position to prevent or stop the lane closures; There is sufficient proof that Governor Christie knew about and did nothing to stop the lane closures.

- 1 There IS sufficient proof
- 2 There is NOT sufficient proof
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

BG4 Which of the following best describes your opinion, even if neither statement is perfect: Governor Christie should remain in office until his term expires; Governor Christie should be removed from office, either by stepping down or through removal by impeachment

- 1 Remain in office
- 2 Leave office
- 8 DK (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

Sample characteristics (weighted)

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----|
| Gender | <i>Male</i> | 48% |
| | <i>Female</i> | 52% |
| Age | <i>18-34</i> | 25% |
| | <i>35-59</i> | 42% |
| | <i>60+</i> | 32% |
| | <i>Refused</i> | 1% |
| Race | <i>White</i> | 64% |
| | <i>African American</i> | 14% |
| | <i>Hispanic</i> | 14% |
| | <i>Asian</i> | 5% |
| | <i>Other/Refused</i> | 3% |
| Party (with leaners) | <i>Dem</i> | 43% |
| | <i>Ind/DK/Refused</i> | 20% |
| | <i>Repub</i> | 37% |