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Christie Approval Ratings Strong at End of Inaugural Year

As Chris Christie makes his first State of the State speech, a majority of New Jersey voters (53%) approve of the way he is handling his job as governor, while 36% disapprove, according to the most recent statewide poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™. His current approval is marginally better than his 49%-39% measurement taken after the November election and similar to his 51%-37% approval rating in October.

"Voters are focused on finances," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll, "theirs and the state's. Voters didn't get a tax hike at the state level as they did in past crises. The key is whether, or how much, they might get in local property tax hikes later this year or next."

In fact, Christie's favorable-to-unfavorable opinion rating of 47%-39% is better than that of most governors in the past two decades: Jim Florio weighs in at 25%-33% favorable to unfavorable; Christie Whitman breaks about even with 39%-41%; Jim McGreevey is well under water with 23%-48%; and Christie's predecessor Jon Corzine gets 36%-52%, actually an improvement from 30%-61% when he left office one year ago. Only Richard Codey shines, with 37% favorable and 11% unfavorable, better than a three-to-one ratio.

Senate President Steve Sweeney who was acting governor during the recent blizzard, benefited a little by the attention, his name recognition moving up four points and his favorable rating moving up six points from (9% to 15%). "My guess is that people who saw Sen. Sweeney on the news thought he conducted himself very well," added Woolley, "and people who already approved of the governor did not begrudge him a family trip to Disney World over the holidays or think he should have been shoveling snow instead."

However, voters on both sides of the ratings equation tend to feel strongly: 28% have a "very favorable" opinion of the governor while 27% have a "very unfavorable opinion," and 17% rate his job performance as "excellent" while 23% rate his performance as "poor," and 28% "strongly" approve of him while 22% "strongly" disapprove.

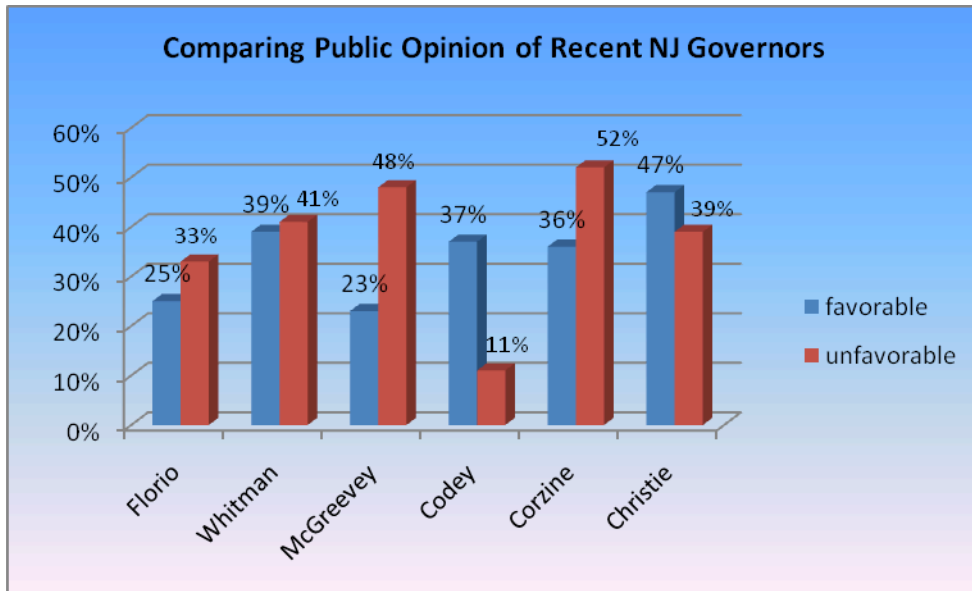
Public employee households are part of the explanation for low grades and strong feelings: 40% of voters from public employee household rate the governor's performance as "poor" compared to just 17% among other households. Two-thirds of public employee households (67%) say the state is "on the wrong track" and a majority (54%) disapprove of the governor's handling of his job.

Three of five voters (62%) continue to say the state should hold the line on spending even if many programs are reduced, while one in five (21%) say the state should raise taxes if necessary to support state programs. Among those who say "hold the line," Christie's approval rate is 67%-23%. Among those who say the state needs to raise taxes to support its programs, Christie's approval runs well behind, 29%-64%.

"Voters who are in an anti-tax and budget-cutting mood find that Christie has not disappointed them," said Woolley. "Of course, people who object to budget cuts are the ones who are deeply disappointed."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 802 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from Jan. 3, 2011, through Jan. 9, 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 Jan. 3, 2010, through Jan. 9, 2010, using a randomly selected sample of 802 registered voters statewide. The margin of error for a sample of 802 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, turning to 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	44%	29	34	67	49	39	49	30
Wrong track	48%	63	56	27	44	52	42	67
Unsure/mixed	8%	8	10	6	7	9	8	3

Right /Wrong direction past year

	Nov	Oct	Aug	May 25	Mar. 30	Mar. 3	Jan. 12
Right direction	40%	44%	42%	35%	33%	32%	27%
Wrong track	51%	48%	48%	55%	55%	49%	55%
Unsure/mixed	10%	9%	11%	10%	13%	20%	18%

Right/Wrong direction Corzine 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	Oc 07	Se 07	Jn 07	My 07	Mr 06	Jan 06
	Right track	21%	22	21	23	25	25	24	23	23	25	26	25	28	30	38	36	42	39
Wrong track	68%	68	66	64	59	65	65	67	67	64	66	65	61	59	49	50	44	47	48
DK	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
Chris Christie (all)	2%	28%	19%	11%	12%	27%
<i>Republicans only</i>	2	52	24	7	5	11
<i>Independents only</i>	2	25	11	19	12	30
<i>Democrats only</i>	3	10	18	10	19	41
Previous Surveys...						
<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%

Ns=395 to 411; MoE=+/-5%		Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/mixed	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Jim Florio	(n=401)	17%	6%	19%	24%	18%	15%
Christie Whitman	(n=411)	6%	9%	30%	15%	17%	24%
Jim McGreevey	(n=395)	9%	7%	16%	19%	24%	24%
	July 2009	2%	4%	17%	16%	22%	40%
	Aug. 2004	0%	13%	19%	14%	17%	36%
Richard Codey	(n=405)	31%	13%	24%	21%	8%	3%
	April 2009	21%	20%	26%	11%	4%	18%
Jon Corzine	(n=395)	2%	10%	26%	10%	24%	28%
	January 2010	1%	8%	22%	8%	24%	37%
Stephen Sweeney	(n=401)	58%	4%	11%	18%	5%	4%
	October 2010	62%	2%	7%	20%	5%	4%
	August 2010	70%	1%	6%	17%	3%	3%
	May 2010	65%	3%	8%	16%	4%	4%
	March 2010	71%	1%	4%	19%	3%	2%

Job rating, current

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

	All	Party			Public Employee Household		Budget remedy?	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes	Cut	Tax
Excellent	17%	5	17	32	19	10	23	6
Good	27%	18	20	41	30	15	32	13
Only fair	31%	40	33	17	31	31	29	36
Poor	23%	35	24	8	17	40	13	45
Unsure	3%	2	6	2	3	3	3	1

Job rating, trend	Nov.	Oct	Aug	May	Mar. 30	Mar. 3
Excellent	17%	19%	13%	13%	10%	8%
Good	28%	26%	26%	24%	24%	31%
Only fair	25%	26%	32%	23%	31%	26%
Poor	27%	25%	24%	33%	21%	13%
Unsure	4%	3%	6%	7%	14%	21%

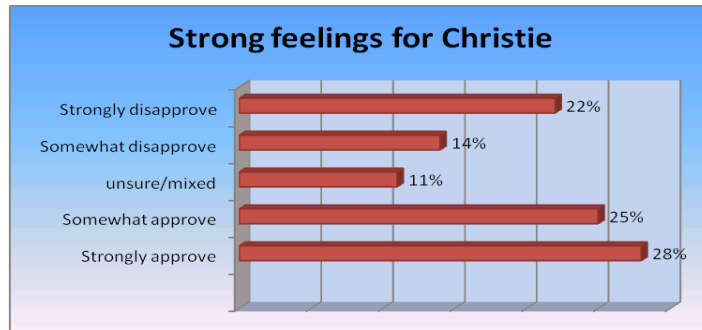
Approve/disapprove, Current

Question: Do you approve or disapprove of way Chris Christie is handling his job as governor? Would that be somewhat... or strongly....?

	All	men		wom		Party			Public Employee Household		Budget remedy?	
		men	wom	Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes	cut	tax		
Approve	53%	59	47	33	50	80	58	40	67	29		
Disapprove	36%	32	40	56	32	14	30	54	23	64		
Mixed/d.k.	11%	9	13	11	18	6	12	7	10	7		

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

	Nov 2010	Oct 2010	Aug. 2010	May 2010	Mar. 30 2010	Mar. 3 2010	Jan. 10* 2010
Approve	49%	51%	47%	44%	43%	52%	48%
Disapprove	39%	37%	36%	42%	32%	21%	13%
Mixed/d.k.	12%	13%	17%	15%	25%	28%	38%



Question: How much have you heard or read recently about the state's budget problems ...READ?

	All	Public Pension Household		Dem	ind	Rep	Nov	Oct [#]	Aug [#]	May*	Mar.*
		no	yes								
A great deal	44%	40	57	39	53	49	50%	20%	25%	29%	23%
Some	33%	36	27	34	29	34	32%	40%	37%	41%	41%
Just a little	14%	15	10	17	11	12	14%	27%	26%	21%	23%
Nothing	8%	9	6	10	8	5	4%	14%	11%	9%	13%

*Question wording was: How much have you heard or read about the Governor's proposed state budget for the coming year?
 # Question wording was: How much have you heard or read about the state's budget for the coming year...?

Question: In order to balance the budget, some people say.... Others say to balance the budget.... Which position comes closest to your view?

[Rotate statements]	All	Party			Ideology			Public union household	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Con	No	yes
... the state should hold the line on spending even if many programs are reduced	62%	50	63	78	41	64	76	66	51
... the state should raise taxes if necessary and continue to support state programs	21%	31	16	12	40	22	10	18	29
Unsure/mixed	16%	19	21	10	19	15	13	16	20

Cut or tax, trend

	Nov 2010	Oct 2010	Aug 2010	May 2010	Mar. 30 2010	Mar. 3 2010	Jan. 10 2010	2009	2006	2005
Cut	60%	60%	60%	60%	62%	66%	70%	72%	67%	63%
Tax	22%	22%	22%	23%	21%	21%	17%	19%	21%	26%
Unsure	18%	18%	19%	16%	17%	13%	13%	9%	11%	12%

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Question Wording and Order

US1-US6 [Released separately]

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]

NJ2. 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/ORDER]

Chris Christie

[ASK ANY THREE AT RANDOM]

Jon Corzine
Jim McGreevey
Christie Whitman
Richard Codey
Jim Florio
Stephen Sweeney

NJ3. How would you rate the job Chris Christie is doing as governor—excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Excellent
Good
Only fair
Or poor
DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]

NJ4. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor? [If answer, ASK "would that be somewhat [answer] or strongly [answer]?"

Strongly Approve
Somewhat approve
Somewhat disapprove
Strongly Disapprove
Neither [vol] or Neutral [vol]
DK [vol] or both [vol]

NJ5. How much have you heard or read recently about the state's budget problems...READ?

A great deal
Some
Just a little
Nothing

NJ6. In order to balance the state budget, some people say.... Others say to balance the budget.... Which position comes closest to your view?

ROTATE

- ...the state should cut spending even if many programs are reduced
- ...the state should raise taxes if necessary and continue to support state programs
- Neither/both/DK (VOL)

Sample Characteristics (%)

Gender

Male	49
Female	51

Age

18-29	12
30-44	24
45-59	33
60+	27

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

White	69
Black	15
Hispanic or Latino	9
Asian	3
Other/ref.	3

Public Employee Household?

yes	24
no	73
not sure/ref.	2

Party ID

Dem. + lean Dem.	47
ind. + unsure + ref.	14
Rep. + lean Rep.	38