



For release ... **Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2010** ... 4 pp.

Contact: Peter Woolley 973.670.3239

Voters Still Say Hold the Line on Spending

New Jersey voters continue to prefer less spending to more taxes. According to the most recent poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™, three of five voters (60%) say the state should hold the line on spending even if many programs have to be reduced. The figure is down 10 points from early 2010 and 2009 but essentially unchanged from late March, after Gov. Chris Christie made his budget speech. Just 22% say the state should raise taxes and continue to support state programs.

"What's interesting here," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll, "is that this figure holds steady in the midst of so many budget cuts. Second, there is agreement on this point among many different groups of voters."

Democrats say "hold the line on spending" by 48%-28%. Self-described liberals agree by 45-34. Public employee households agree by a 2-to-1 margin (50%-24%). Even those who disapprove of Christie's job performance tend to agree (40%-33%). Agreeing even more strongly on holding down spending are independents and Republicans, moderates and conservatives, non-public employee households, and those who approve of Chris Christie.

New Jersey voters approve of their president and the governor by similar margins: 47% percent approve of the governor's job performance, while 36% disapprove, a step up from May when he ran only slightly ahead on that measure, 44%-42%. However, on strong feelings he runs even, as 23% strongly approve and 22% strongly disapprove. Voters in public employee households disapprove of him by 54%-36%, while all other households approve by 51%-31%. Democrats disapprove of him by a margin of 2-to-1, while independents give him thumbs up by 2-to-1, and Republicans approve by 5-to-1.

At the same time, voters approve of President Barack Obama by 49%-40%, but it is Democrats who approve of the president by 5-to1 while independents split about evenly and 4 of 5 Republicans disapprove.

"The governor and the president have more in common than people realize," said Peter Woolley, "They are both new to their jobs, excellent speakers, very well-liked by their base, took over from unpopular incumbents, and promised great change."

Three of five public employee households say the state is on the wrong track. But 42% of all New Jersey voters say the state is on the right track, up seven points from May, while 48% say the state is on the wrong track, down seven points from May. By contrast, 33% say the country is headed in the right direction and 54% say it's on the wrong track, unchanged from May.

The leaders of the state Legislature, Senate President Stephen Sweeney and Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver, frequent and outspoken critics of the governor, are largely unknown to voters: 87% have not heard of or have no opinion of Sweeney; 94% haven't heard of or have no opinion of Oliver.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 801 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone from July 27, 2010, through August 2, 2010, 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 973.443.8661*

Feeling Strongly About the Governor				
Strongly approve, 23%	Somewhat approve, 24%	mixed, 17%	Somewhat dis- approve, 14%	Strongly disapprove, 22%

Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from July 27, 2010, through August 2, 2010, using a randomly selected sample of 801 registered voters statewide. The margin of error for a sample of 801 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. Results are mathematically weighted to match known demographics of gender, age, and race.

US1: In your opinion, do you believe that the country is moving in the right direction or do you believe it has gotten off on the wrong track?

	All	Men	Women	Dem	Ind	Rep.
Right direction	33%	33	33	53	20	10
Wrong track	54%	55	53	35	60	80
Unsure/Refused	13%	12	14	12	21	10

Right/wrong direction trend

	2010				2009							2008
	May	Mar 30	Mar 3	Jan	Oct 30	Oct 9	Sep	July	Apr	Mar	Jan	Oct
Right direction	34%	42	38	35	41	41	44	49	51	51	34	13
Wrong track	52%	51	52	53	50	49	46	41	37	37	52	78
Unsure/Refused	13%	8	10	12	8	9	10	11	11	12	13	9

US2: In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

	All	Men	Women	Dem	Ind	Rep.	white	Non-white	Afr.-Amer
Approve	49%	45	52	75	36	15	37	79	87
Disapprove	40%	44	37	16	40	81	52	10	3
Unsure/Refused	11%	11	11	10	24	4	11	10	9

Obama approval, previous measures

	2010				2009						
	May	Mar 30	Mar 3	Jan	Oct 30	Oct 6	Sep	Jun	Apr	Mar	Jan*
Approve	49%	54	53	48	52	52	56	61	66	66	72
Disapprove	40%	37	38	41	37	35	36	29	22	21	10
Unsure/Ref.	11%	9	9	11	10	12	8	10	12	13	18

*January 2009 question asked how Obama was handling his transition to the presidency.

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	42%	27	44	63	50	33	43	33
Wrong track	48%	64	46	25	41	54	44	60
Unsure/mixed	11%	9	11	12	9	13	12	6

Right /Wrong Direction trend

	May 25	Mar. 30	Mar. 3	Jan. 12
	35%	33%	32%	27%
	55%	55%	49%	55%
	10%	13%	20%	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/no opinion	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Chris Christie (all)	1%	21%	20%	21%	13%	23%
<i>Republicans only</i>	--	44	28	14	4	10
<i>Independents only</i>	1	22	26	27	14	10
<i>Democrats only</i>	2	7	14	21	20	36
Previous Surveys...						
<i>Christie 5/25/10</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 1/12/10</i>	3%	16%	29%	28%	14%	9%
<i>Christie 10/30/09</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%

	Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/no opinion	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Stephen Sweeney	70%	1%	6%	17%	3%	3%
May	65%	3%	8%	16%	4%	4%
March	71%	1%	4%	19%	3%	2%
Sheila Oliver	88%	1%	3%	6%	1%	1%
May	90%	2%	2%	5%	1%	--
March	90%	--	2%	7%	--	--

Job performance, current

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

	All	Party			Public Employee Household		May	Mar. 30	Mar. 3
		Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes			
Excellent	13%	5	14	28	14	11	13%	10%	8%
Good	26%	16	30	38	27	21	24%	24%	31%
Only fair	32%	38	29	23	34	25	23%	31%	26%
Poor	24%	34	17	10	19	39	33%	21%	13%
Unsure	6%	7	11	1	6	4	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		Party			Public Employee Household	
		wom	Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes	
Approve	47%	55	40	28	51	77	51	36
Disapprove	36%	28	45	55	24	14	31	54
Mixed/d.k.	17%	16	16	16	24	8	18	10

Approve/disapprove, trend

May 25	Mar. 30	Mar. 3	Jan. 10*
2010	2010	2010	2010
44%	43%	52%	48%
42%	32%	21%	13%
15%	25%	28%	38%

* Question was "...handling his transition to governor."

Question: How much have you heard or read about the state's budget for the coming year...?

	All	Public Pension Household		May 25*	Mar. 30*
		no	yes		
A great deal	25%	22	38	29%	23%
Some	37%	37	41	41%	41%
Just a little	26%	29	16	21%	23%
Nothing	11%	13	5	9%	13%

*Question wording was: How much have you heard or read about the Governor's proposed state 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			Christie		Public union household	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Con	Approve	disappr	no	yes
... the state should hold the line on spending even if many programs are reduced	60%	48	61	78	45	57	72	76	40	63	50
...the state should raise taxes if necessary and continue to support state programs	22%	28	18	14	34	23	12	13	33	21	24
Unsure/mixed	19%	24	21	8	21	20	15	11	27	16	27

Cut or tax, trend

May	Mar. 30	Mar. 3	Jan. 10	2009	2006	2005
2010	2010	2010	2010			
60%	62%	66%	70%	72%	67%	63%
23%	21%	21%	17%	19%	21%	26%
16%	17%	13%	13%	9%	11%	12%

###

Question Wording and Order

US1. In your opinion, do you believe that the country is 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]

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]

Chris Christie
Sheila Oliver
Stephen Sweeney

Haven't heard of ... [SKIP TO NEXT NAME]
Very Favorable
Somewhat favorable (and favorable DK)
DK/Unsure [VOL]
Somewhat unfavorable (and unfavorable DK)
Very unfavorable

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 about the state's budget for the coming year...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)