



For release... **Tuesday, March 30, 2010** ... 5 pp.

Contact: Peter Woolley 973.670.3239

Christie's Approval Slips But Voters Still Say Cut Spending, Cap Property Tax Increases

Gov. Chris Christie's voter approval slipped noticeably from earlier in the month, but he remains ahead, 43% approving to 32% disapproving of the job he's doing, according to the most recent poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™. The governor started March with a 52%-21% approval rating before making dramatic announcements of cuts to the state budget. Better than two-thirds of Republicans approve of the job he's doing, and independents approve by 49%-19%, while Democrats disapprove by 45%-23%. The governor runs ahead in non-public-employee households by 44%-28% and runs behind in public-employee households 37%-49%.

"It's a bad time to be governor of any state," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll. "You're damned if you cut the budget and damned if you raise taxes."

A majority of voters (62%) continue to say the state should "hold the line on spending even if many programs are reduced." That's down from 66% in March and down from 70% in January but it is still a three-to-one ratio over the 21% who say the state "should raise taxes if necessary and continue to support state programs." Voters in public - employee households agree, with three of five (60%) saying the state should hold the line on spending, while just one-in-four (25%) say raise taxes.

Asked about suspending property tax rebates to help balance the budget, 44% say it's a good idea, while 48% say it's a bad idea. And 62% say it's a good idea to change the state constitution to cap property tax increases at 2½ percent. Similarly, 62% say it's a good idea to increase income tax on households making over \$400,000 per year.

Forty percent of voters say, taking everything into account, the governor's proposed budget is "good for New Jersey" while 30% say it's bad. Voters in households with no public employees say the governor's budget is good by a margin of 4-to-3 (39%-27%); voters in public-employee households split 1-to-1 (41%-43%).

Christie also started the month with 47% of voters saying they have a favorable impression of him, and 25% saying their view was unfavorable. But after the budget speech, 38% have a favorable view and 39% have an unfavorable view. However, the one-to-one ratio of favorable-to-unfavorable opinion means he fares no worse than the New Jersey Education Association, which has severely criticized his budget proposals:

35% of New Jersey voters say they have a favorable view of the teachers' union and 35% have an unfavorable view.

Women have a favorable view of the teachers' association by 42%-27% while men are more likely to have an unfavorable view of it by a similar margin (27%-44%). Liberals (51%-16%) are more likely than conservatives (23%-53%) to have a favorable view of it, and members of public-employee households are more likely (48%-36%) than non-public-employee households (32%-35%).

The percentage of voters (33%) who say the state is moving in the right direction is unchanged over the month, while those who say it's on the wrong track are up to 55% from 49%. While a majority of Republicans (53%) say it's headed in the right direction, two-thirds of Democrats (68%) say it's on the wrong track.

A third of voters — 34% — continue to say the governor is doing a good or excellent job, down from 39% earlier in the month, and 21% say he's doing a poor job, up from 13% earlier in the month. While 17% of non-public-employee households rate his performance as poor, 36% of public-employee households rate his performance as poor.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 802 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone from March 23, 2010, through March 28, 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*

Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from Mar. 23, 2010, through Mar. 28, 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 professionally trained interviewers use 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.

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			View of NJEA			All Mar. 3	All Jan. 12
		D	I	R	Fav.	mixed	Unfav.		
Right direction	33%	18	35	53	23	23	50	32%	27%
Wrong track	55%	68	49	38	69	59	37	49%	55%
Unsure/mixed	13%	14	16	8	8	18	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)	3%	18%	20%	20%	17%	22%
<i>Republicans only</i>	1	38	29	15	8	10
<i>Independents only</i>	4	19	23	23	17	13
<i>Democrats only</i>	4	3	14	23	23	33
Previous Surveys...						
<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 (all)	71%	1%	4%	19%	3%	2%
Sheila Oliver (all)	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		All Mar. 3
		Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes	
Excellent	10%	2	11	21	11	8	8%
Good	24%	15	28	35	23	25	31%
Only fair	31%	36	30	24	33	23	26%
Poor	21%	30	13	11	17	36	13%
unsure (vol)	14%	16	18	10	16	8	21%

Approve/disapprove, Current

Question: Do you approve or disapprove of way Chris Christie is handling his job as governor?

	All	Party			Public Employee Household		View of NJEA			Mar. 3 2010	Jan. 10*
		Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes	Fav	Mixed	Unfav		
Approve	43%	23	49	69	44	37	27	33	66	52%	48%
Disapprove	32%	45	19	17	28	49	51	30	15	21%	13%
Mixed/d.k.	25%	32	32	13	28	14	23	36	18	28%	38%

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

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

	All	Dem.	ind.	Rep.
A great deal	23%	18	26	27
Some	41%	43	41	40
Just a little	23%	23	22	22
Nothing	13%	15	11	10

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

[Rotate list]	All	party			View of NJEA			gender		Public union household	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Fav	Mixed	Unfav	men	wom	no	yes
... the state should hold the line on spending even if many programs are reduced	62%	49	72	77	46	57	82	70	56	63	60
...the state should raise taxes if necessary and continue to support state programs	21%	31	11	12	33	24	7	18	24	20	25
Unsure/mixed	17%	20	17	10	21	19	11	13	20	17	15

Cut/tax, trend

Mar. 3 2010	Jan. 10 2010	2009	2006	2005
66%	70%	72%	67%	63%
21%	17%	19%	21%	26%
13%	13%	9%	11%	12%

Question: In order to either raise money or cut spending in next year's budget a number of proposals have been put on the table. For each of these proposals, tell me whether you think it's a good idea or a bad idea.

[Rotate list]	All	Dem	Ind	Rep	Public Employee household		
					no	yes	
Suspend property tax rebate checks.							
Good idea	44%	41	44	50	41	55	
Bad idea	48%	51	47	44	50	41	
Unsure/mixed	8%	8	9	6	9	4	
Change the state constitution to limit property tax increases to a maximum of two and a half percent?							
Good idea	62%	56	60	72	61	64	
Bad idea	23%	29	21	16	22	27	
Unsure/mixed	15%	15	19	12	16	9	
Increase the income tax for households making \$400,000.							
Good idea	62%	72	54	50	60	69	
Bad idea	32%	23	35	45	33	26	
Unsure/mixed	6%	4	12	5	7	4	

Question: Taking everything into account, do you think the budget Gov. Christie has proposed is good for New Jersey or bad for New Jersey?

	All	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	View of NJEA			Public Employee household	
					fav	mixed	unfav	no	yes
Good	40%	24	45	62	27	26	64	39	41
Bad	30%	46	17	13	48	29	14	27	43
Unsure/ mixed	30%	30	38	25	26	44	22	33	16

Question: And have you heard of the NJEA?

Yes	70%
No	30%

The NJEA is the public teachers' union. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the NJEA? Would that be very or somewhat?

	Very Favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/ Mixed	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
All	17%	18%	30%	16%	19%
<i>men</i>	13	14	29	19	25
<i>Women</i>	20	22	31	13	14
<i>liberals</i>	27	24	33	7	9
<i>moderates</i>	17	20	27	17	18
<i>conservatives</i>	10	13	25	23	30
<i>Non-public union household</i>	13	19	33	15	20
<i>Public union household</i>	31	17	15	19	17

#