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Voters Split on Christie, But Not on His Proposals

New Jersey voters split in their opinions of Gov. Chris Christie, with 44% approving of the way he is handling his job as governor and 42% disapproving, according to the most recent poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™. The figure of 44% approving is essentially unchanged from 43% reported on March 30. The figure of 42% disapproving is up ten percentage points from March 30. Those with mixed views declined by ten points to 15% from 25%. Meanwhile, public employee households disapprove of the governor by a margin of 58-33, and non-public employee households approve by 48-36. Overall, 23% approve "strongly" and 28% disapprove "strongly."

"The spam is hitting the fan," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll. "As the breadth and depth of the budget cuts becomes known, people have hardened in their opinions."

More than a third (37%) rate the job Christie is doing as "good" or "excellent," similar to 34% in the previous measurement. But another one-third (33%) rate his job performance as "poor," an increase of 12 points. Those rating him as "only fair" declined to 23% from 31%, and those unsure declined to 7% from 14%. Half of public employee households (50%) rate the governor's performance as "poor," compared to just one quarter of all other households (27%). And 43% of public employee households report they've heard "a great deal" about the governor's proposed budget compared to 24% of other households.

The governor's legislative nemeses are largely unknown: four of five (81%) have not heard, or have no opinion, of Senate President Stephen Sweeney and 95% have not heard, or have no opinion, of Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver. Likewise, Justice John Wallace and court nominee Anne Patterson, the subjects of Trenton controversy for the governor, are off the radar screen of most voters. However, Newark's Democratic mayor, Cory Booker, stands out with a favorable rating of 42% compared to 6% unfavorable.

Three of five voters (60%) continue to say the state should hold the line on spending even if many programs are reduced, while just a quarter (23%) say the state should raise taxes if necessary and continue to support state programs.

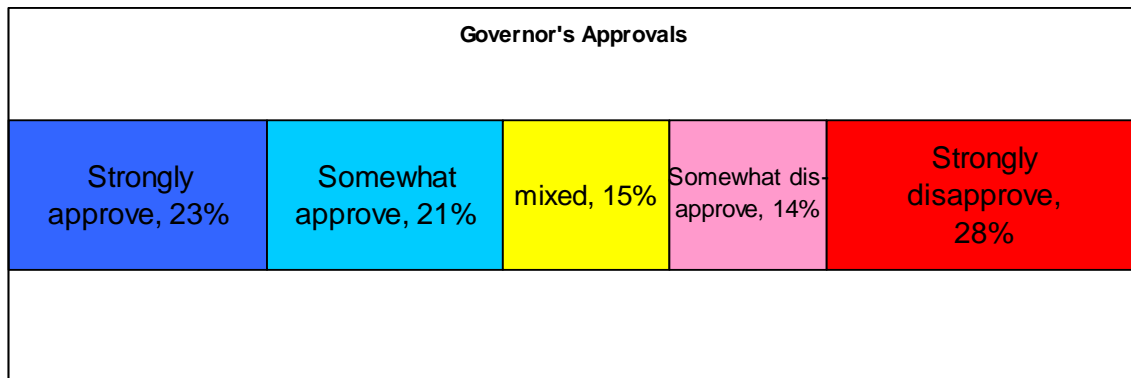
Asked about limiting public employees to accruing no more than two years vacation time, 74% say it's a good idea, while 23% say it's a bad idea. Three of five (60%) also say it's a good idea to cap public employee salary increases at 2.5 percent, though public employee households split evenly on the question (46-46). Similarly, 61% say it's a good idea to raise the retirement age for public employees to 65 years of age from 62, while 33% disagree, and public employees split again (45-51). By a two-to-one margin (64%-31%) voters say it's a good idea to ask school teachers not to take a pay increase for the coming year, and public employee households agree (57-36). And a majority (53) say it's a good idea to move school elections to November from April, while 18% disagree.

Two of five (41%) voters say, taking everything into account, the governor's proposed budget is "good for New Jersey" unchanged from late March after the governor made many of his proposals known, while about the same proportion (37%) say it's bad, up seven points from March.

The percentage of voters who say the state is moving in the right direction, 35%, is essentially unchanged, as is the percentage of voters who say the state is on the wrong track (55%).

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 654 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone from May 19, 2010, through May 23, 2010, and has a margin of error of +/- 4 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 May 19, 2010, through May 23, 2010, using a randomly selected sample of 654 registered voters statewide. The margin of error for a sample of 654 randomly selected respondents is +/- 4 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.

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		All Mar. 30	All Mar. 3	All Jan. 12
		D	I	R	men	wom			
Right direction	35%	17	40	59	42	29	33%	32%	27%
Wrong track	55%	74	48	30	48	61	55%	49%	55%
Unsure/mixed	10%	9	12	10	10	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)	3%	21%	19%	14%	12%	31%
<i>Republicans only</i>	1	44	25	13	8	10
<i>Independents only</i>	2	27	26	21	6	19
<i>Democrats only</i>	4	5	14	12	18	47
Previous Surveys...						
<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%

[ask ½ sample at random]	Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/ no opinion	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Stephen Sweeney (N=332)	65%	3%	8%	16%	4%	4%
Mar. 30	71%	1%	4%	19%	3%	2%
Sheila Oliver (N=328)	90%	2%	2%	5%	1%	--
Mar. 30	90%	--	2%	7%	--	--

[ask ½ sample at random]	Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/ no opinion	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
John Wallace (N=316)	83%	1%	5%	8%	2%	1%
Anne Patterson (N=335)	76%	1%	5%	15%	2%	1%

(N=)	Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/ no opinion	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Cory Booker	34%	22%	20%	18%	5%	1%
<i>Republicans only</i>	39	12	20	22	5	2
<i>Independents only</i>	30	24	20	15	6	5
<i>Democrats only</i>	31	29	21	15	4	--
<i>Booker 01/19/10</i>	41%	15%	23%	15%	4%	2%
<i>Booker 04/09</i>	38%	19%	20%	13%	7%	3%
<i>Booker 03/09</i>	47%	13%	19%	15%	4%	2%
<i>Booker 09/08</i>	44%	17%	15%	16%	5%	3%

Job performance, current

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

	All	Party			Public Employee Household		Mar. 30	Mar. 3
		Dem	Ind	Rep	No	Yes		
Excellent	13%	3	14	27	14	8	10%	8%
Good	24%	15	29	34	25	20	24%	31%
Only fair	23%	25	25	20	25	18	31%	26%
Poor	33%	49	22	14	27	50	21%	13%
Unsure	7%	8	11	4	9	4	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	Dem	Ind	Rep	Public Employee Household	
					No	Yes
Approve	44%	24	56	70	48	33
Disapprove	42%	62	23	19	36	58
Mixed/d.k.	15%	14	20	12	17	9

Approve/disapprove, trend

Mar. 30	Mar. 3	Jan. 10*
2010	2010	2010
43%	52%	48%
32%	21%	13%
25%	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	Public Pension Household		Mar. 30
		no	yes	
A great deal	29%	24	43	23%
Some	41%	43	39	41%
Just a little	21%	24	12	23%
Nothing	9%	9	5	13%

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			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%	44	71	83	43	60	74	87	32	63	52
...the state should raise taxes if necessary and continue to support state programs	23%	37	7	7	43	20	11	6	42	20	30
Unsure/mixed	16%	139	22	9	13	20	15	7	26	17	18

Cut/tax, trend

Mar. 30 2010	Mar. 3 2010	Jan. 10 2010	2009	2006	2005
62%	66%	70%	72%	67%	63%
21%	21%	17%	19%	21%	26%
17%	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.

<i>[Rotate list]</i>	All	Dem	Ind	Rep	Public Employee household		
					no	yes	
Not letting public employees save up more than two years of vacation time.							
Good idea	74%	69	75	83	75	71	
Bad idea	23%	27	20	15	22	25	
Unsure/mixed	4%	4	5	2	3	4	
By law, limit salary increases for public employees to a maximum of two and a half percent a year?							
Good idea	60%	55	57	69	64	46	
Bad idea	33%	37	34	26	29	46	
Unsure/mixed	7%	8	9	5	7	8	
Raise the retirement age for public employees to 65 from 62.							
Good idea	61%	56	71	69	67	45	
Bad idea	33%	41	23	25	27	51	
Unsure/mixed	5%	3	6	7	6	4	
Ask school teachers not to take a pay increase for the coming year.							
Good idea	64%	50	81	78	66	57	
Bad idea	31%	44	16	18	30	36	
Unsure/mixed	5%	7	4	3	4	7	
Move school elections from April to November							
Good idea	53%	50	59	56	53	55	
Bad idea	18%	24	13	13	16	25	
Unsure/mixed	28%	26	27	31	31	20	

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	gender		Party ID			Public Employee household		Mar. 30
		men	Wom	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	No	yes	
Good	41%	52	32	22	50	68	45	33	40%
Bad	37%	31	42	55	23	14	33	49	30%
Unsure/ mixed	22%	17	27	23	27	17	22	19	30%

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Question Wording and Order

US1, US2 Held for release.

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

Corey Booker

Sheila Oliver [Ask ½ sample at random]

Stephen Sweeney [ask ½ sample at random]

John Wallace [ask ½ sample at random]

Anne Patterson [ask ½ sample at random]

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 Governor's proposed [state](#) budget for the coming year...READ?

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)

NJ7. A number of budget 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

A. Not letting public employees save up more than two years of vacation time.

B. By law, limit salary increases for public employees to a maximum of two and a half percent a year?

C. Raise the retirement age for public employees to 65 from 62.

D. Ask school teachers not to take a pay increase for the coming year.

E. Move school elections from April to November.

NJ8. Taking everything into account, do you think the budget Gov. Corzine has proposed is good for New Jersey or bad for New Jersey?

Good

Bad

Mixed (vol)

DK (vol)