

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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For more commentary from Professor Redlawsk see
<http://eagletonpoll.blogspot.com>

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Questions and tables are at the end of this release

**2010 CONGRESSIONAL VOTE IN NEW JERSEY EIGHT MONTHS OUT;
MOST INCUMBENTS IN GOOD SHAPE BUT MANY VOTERS UNDECIDED**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – Despite voter dissatisfaction with Washington politics, most incumbent members of Congress in New Jersey do not appear in great danger of losing their seats, according to a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released today.

While 33 percent of registered voters say they will vote for a Democrat for Congress, and 31 percent say they will vote for a Republican, statewide results are misleading. Across the five congressional districts held by Republicans, voters plan to vote for Republicans by a 40 percent to 25 percent margin, while across the eight Democratic districts, voters intend to vote for Democrats by an even larger margin, 41 percent to 22 percent. Significantly, however, nearly 20 percent do not know how they will vote, and 10 percent say they do not plan to vote at all.

The poll of 953 New Jersey adults conducted Feb. 19-22 included 886 registered voters. The full registered voter sample has a margin of error of +/-3.3 percentage points. Vote intention questions were asked of half samples which have a margin of error of +/- 4.8 percentage points.

“The overall picture statewide seems to suggest that Republicans are at parity with Democrats in 2010, but this is misleading,” said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University. “While the statewide vote may be close, it is less likely to be so in most congressional districts. We did not poll at the district level, and in the 3rd district Democrat John Adler is likely to face a very difficult challenge. Still, at the aggregate level incumbents of both parties start the year with an advantage over potential general election challengers.”

When voters were asked about voting for their current member of Congress or for a challenger – without identifying either by party – they gave incumbents a 32 percent to 25 percent lead statewide. Across GOP-held districts, incumbents hold a 7-point lead while overall, Democratic incumbents are ahead by 16 points across their districts. At the same time, voters asked about their 2010 voting plans were much more likely to say they “don’t know” or that they do not plan to vote.

*New Jersey 2010 Congressional Election
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

“The wildcards this early in the year are not knowing how many challengers will mount strong campaigns and how undecided voters will feel in eight months.” said Redlawsk.

“Historically Rutgers-Eagleton Polls have shown large numbers of undecideds until quite late in an election year. A strong anti-Democrat or even anti-incumbent sentiment could have a base to build on, but it will also need well-funded candidates who appeal to independents.

Independents present a mixed picture

Statewide, it appears that independent voters lean towards Republicans for the 2010 election as they did in the 2009 gubernatorial election when Chris Christie outpolled Jon Corzine with independents, 60 percent to 30 percent. Independents asked about their congressional vote by party choose Republicans, 30 percent to 17 percent. But another 12 percent say they will vote for someone else, 32 percent say they don't know, and 9 percent say they will not vote. Without labeling candidates by party, independents are evenly split between incumbents and challengers, 28 percent each, while 30 percent don't know and 14 percent say they will not vote.

More importantly, independents with a preference living in Democratic districts are slightly more likely to vote for a Democrat while those in Republican districts strongly support a Republican. While based on very small samples, the independents' pro-Democratic margin in districts with Democratic incumbents is 26 percent to 22 percent. In Republican districts, independents vote Republican 30 to 14 percent. According to Redlawsk, this suggests that unless a strong anti-incumbent campaign develops, independents may be mostly drawn to the party of their incumbent congressman, but there are risks for Democrats in the current environment.

Obama voters less certain to vote Democratic in 2010

Not surprisingly, a large share of John McCain voters (75 percent) plan to vote for a Republican for Congress, while 5 percent will vote for a Democrat. But just 57 percent of Barack Obama voters say they will vote for a Democrat this time around and 8 percent choose the GOP. Only 11 percent of McCain voters say they are undecided about November's vote; twice as many Obama voters (23 percent) have no preference for Congress, and another 8 percent say they will not vote. Virtually all McCain voters claim they will vote in 2010.

Corzine voters are more likely to vote for a fellow Democrat for Congress (68 percent) than Chris Christie voters are to vote for a Republican (58 percent.) According to Redlawsk, the larger overall support for Obama in 2008 compared to Corzine's in 2009 accounts for the difference. Many Obama voters had already defected from Corzine in 2009, leaving only stronger Democratic voters remaining. Among registered voters who did not vote for governor, twice as many support a Democrat for Congress (41 percent) than a Republican (21 percent.).

Obama approval does not mean long coattails

While 57 percent of New Jersey registered voters approve of President Obama's job performance, only 51 percent say they will vote for a Democrat for Congress in 2010. Twelve

percent say they will vote for a Republican, 10 percent say they do not expect to vote and 22 percent are undecided.

Of the 37 percent who disapprove of Obama's job performance, 61 percent say they will vote for a Republican while 8 percent will vote for a Democrat despite their disapproval of Obama. Another 8 percent say they will not vote, and 15 percent are undecided.

Those approving of the president's job performance are much more likely to say they will vote for their incumbent congressman, 42 percent to 15 percent for a challenger. Another 22 percent say they will abstain and 22 percent don't know. The opposite is true of those who disapprove – 40 percent say they will vote for a challenger, compared to 19 percent for an incumbent. But one-third don't know and 8 percent will not vote.

Worried voters say they will vote for Democrats; less worried support Republicans

Fifty-one percent of registered voters who worry "a lot" about aspects of their personal financial situation say they will vote for a Democrat for Congress in 2010, while 42 percent of those who do not worry a lot plan to vote for a Republican. Across five concerns – housing, credit card debt, health insurance, jobs and saving for retirement – 16 percent of voters say none of these worry them "a lot," while 36 percent worry "a lot" about four or all five concerns. Yet this does not translate to voting for challengers against incumbents. Across all levels of worry, voters pick incumbents by 3 to 10 point margins. Those who worry most are actually more likely to say they favor an incumbent.

Looking specifically at concerns about health insurance coverage, 62 percent of registered voters worry "a lot," 20 percent worry "a little," and 18 percent worry "none at all." Democrats running for Congress have an advantage among those who worry a lot, 38 percent to 26 percent, while those who worry only a little support Republicans, 36 percent to 32 percent. Those without concerns about health care strong support a Republican candidate, 44 percent to 17 percent. Similar patterns hold for other personal financial worries.

Change in the air?

A majority of registered voters in New Jersey (52 percent) believe the change Obama promised in his campaign is happening too slowly. Only 32 percent of these voters say they will vote Democratic in 2010, while 30 percent say they will vote for the Republican for Congress. But 20 percent are undecided.

Of the 13 percent who say change is happening too quickly, 71 percent say they will vote Republican, while 12 percent plan to vote for the Democrat. Only 8 percent do not know their candidate preference and 4 percent say they will not vote.

Thirty-one percent of New Jersey voters think the pace of change in Washington is "about right." Of these, 49 percent say they will vote Democratic while 13 percent will vote Republican. Twenty-two percent don't know and 12 percent say they will not vote.

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Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

**Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 19-22, 2010
Questions and Tables**

The questions covered in the release of March 4, 2010 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. All percentages are of New Jersey registered voters.

**I'd like to ask about some people and organizations. Please tell me if your general impression of each one is favorable or unfavorable, or if you do not have an opinion. First, [next]:
[ROTATE]**

	President Obama	Democrats in Congress	Republicans in Congress
Favorable	56%	35%	25%
Unfavorable	31%	42%	48%
No Opinion	12%	22%	26%
Don't Know	1%	1%	1%
N=	885	885	885

Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Obama is handling his job?

Approve	57%
Disapprove	37%
Don't Know	7%
N=	880

Obama's campaign slogan was "change we can believe in". Now a year later, are things changing too quickly, too slowly, or at about the right speed?

Too quickly	13%
Too slowly	52%
About right	31%
Don't Know	5%
N=	869

Who did you vote for in the 2008 presidential election?

Obama	55%
McCain	31%
Someone Else	6%
Did Not Vote	9%
N=	850

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Who did you vote for in the 2008 gubernatorial election?

Christie	42%
Corzine	31%
Daggett	4%
Someone Else	3%
Did Not Vote	21%
<hr/> N=	<hr/> 864

[SPLIT SAMPLE, RANDOM ASSIGN TO VERSION A or VERSION B]

[VERSION A]

There will be an election for U.S. Congress in November. If the election were today would you vote for the Republican, the Democrat, someone else, or would you not vote?

	ALL	Dem Districts	Rep Districts	Dem	Ind	Rep	Ind/Dem District	Ind/Rep District
Republican	31%	22%	40%	2%	30%	79%	26%	31%
Democrat	33%	41%	25%	69%	17%	0%	28%	14%
Someone Else	7%	5%	7%	4%	12%	5%	6%	16%
Not Vote	10%	16%	8%	10%	9%	5%	15%	8%
Don't Know	20%	16%	20%	15%	32%	11%	26%	31%
<hr/> N=	<hr/> 403	<hr/> 155	<hr/> 173	<hr/> 157	<hr/> 127	<hr/> 102	<hr/> 47	<hr/> 64

	2008 Vote		2009 Vote		Obama Change Happening				
	Obama	McCain	Corzine	Christie	Approve Obama	Disapprove Obama	Too Slowly	Too Quickly	About Right
Republican	8%	75%	4%	58%	12%	61%	30%	71%	13%
Democrat	57%	5%	68%	8%	51%	8%	32%	12%	49%
Someone Else	4%	8%	4%	8%	5%	8%	9%	6%	3%
Not Vote	8%	1%	6%	6%	10%	8%	9%	4%	12%
Don't Know	23%	11%	19%	19%	22%	15%	20%	8%	22%
<hr/> N=	<hr/> 211	<hr/> 126	<hr/> 136	<hr/> 166	<hr/> 225	<hr/> 145	<hr/> 204	<hr/> 51	<hr/> 122

*New Jersey 2010 Congressional Election
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

	<u>Ideology</u>			<u>Age</u>				<u>Gender</u>	
	Liberal	Middle	Conserv	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Male	Fem
Republican	7%	21%	74%	10%	34%	36%	33%	40%	22%
Democrat	71%	31%	10%	56%	30%	32%	26%	27%	39%
Someone Else	3%	10%	2%	3%	9%	6%	4%	9%	4%
Not Vote	4%	15%	2%	24%	11%	4%	3%	9%	11%
Don't Know	16%	23%	13%	7%	16%	22%	34%	14%	24%
N=	76	225	95	59	161	92	89	194	209

	<u>Race</u>				<u>Income</u>			
	Asian	Black	Latino	White	< 50K	50K – < 100K	100K- < 150K	150K +
Republican	16%	4%	10%	39%	17%	47%	25%	36%
Democrat	26%	65%	51%	26%	46%	26%	37%	29%
Someone Else	5%	6%	0%	8%	9%	4%	8%	7%
Not Vote	26%	6%	18%	8%	12%	8%	8%	11%
Don't Know	26%	20%	21%	19%	16%	16%	22%	18%
N=	19	51	39	280	131	113	67	45

	<u>Education</u>				<u>Employment Status</u>			
	HS or Less	Some College/ AA	4-year Degree	Grad School	Full Time	Part Time	Retired	Not Employed
Republican	34%	27%	27%	36%	32%	33%	37%	22%
Democrat	23%	34%	44%	38%	36%	31%	26%	36%
Someone Else	9%	3%	8%	8%	9%	3%	6%	6%
Not Vote	16%	9%	8%	0%	8%	12%	1%	18%
Don't Know	18%	27%	12%	17%	15%	21%	30%	19%
N=	134	122	96	52	180	58	73	90

	<u>Religion</u>			<u>Evangelical</u>	
	Cath	Prot	Jewish	Yes	No
Republican	33%	33%	48%	33%	33%
Democrat	33%	29%	26%	32%	31%
Someone Else	6%	7%	4%	6%	7%
Not Vote	9%	11%	0%	12%	8%
Don't Know	19%	20%	22%	17%	20%
N=	173	138	23	78	248

***New Jersey 2010 Congressional Election
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	<u>Region</u>				
	Urban	Suburban	Exurban	Philly Area	Shore
Republican	20%	23%	55%	29%	32%
Democrat	48%	36%	15%	35%	32%
Someone Else	7%	9%	5%	9%	4%
Not Vote	10%	11%	2%	14%	8%
Don't Know	16%	21%	23%	11%	24%
N=	61	116	65	79	82

[VERSION B]

There will be an election for U.S. Congress in November. If the election were today would you vote for your current Congressman, a challenger running against him, or would you not vote?

	ALL	Dem Districts	Rep Districts	Dem	Ind	Rep	Ind/Dem District	Ind/Rep District
Current Cong	32%	38%	31%	40%	28%	26%	42%	26%
Challenger	25%	22%	24%	12%	28%	39%	27%	28%
Not Vote	17%	17%	17%	25%	14%	5%	10%	18%
Don't Know	27%	23%	28%	22%	30%	30%	21%	29%
N=	457	202	185	193	128	138	52	51

	2008 Vote		2009 Vote		Obama Change Happening				
	Obama	McCain	Corzine	Christie	Approve Obama	Disapprove Obama	Too Slowly	Too Quickly	About Right
Current Cong	38%	28%	48%	28%	42%	19%	32%	35%	35%
Challenger	18%	37%	15%	37%	15%	40%	30%	32%	13%
Not Vote	18%	5%	8%	8%	22%	8%	12%	7%	30%
Don't Know	26%	30%	29%	27%	22%	33%	26%	26%	22%
N=	252	132	135	191	275	171	241	57	143

	<u>Ideology</u>			<u>Age</u>				<u>Gender</u>	
	Liberal	Middle	Conserv	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Male	Fem
Current Cong	46%	31%	25%	29%	26%	42%	35%	31%	34%
Challenger	15%	20%	43%	20%	26%	20%	27%	33%	18%
Not Vote	18%	20%	6%	33%	18%	13%	10%	14%	18%
Don't Know	21%	28%	26%	18%	29%	26%	27%	22%	31%
N=	82	274	107	51	211	102	113	221	254

*New Jersey 2010 Congressional Election
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

	<u>Race</u>				<u>Income</u>			
	Asian	Black	Latino	White	< 50K	50K – < 100K	100K- < 150K	150K +
Current Cong	10%	34%	38%	33%	35%	29%	32%	28%
Challenger	26%	12%	17%	28%	18%	30%	25%	28%
Not Vote	36%	34%	19%	12%	16%	19%	13%	21%
Don't Know	29%	20%	26%	28%	31%	21%	29%	23%
N=	31	61	42	330	154	126	75	53

	<u>Education</u>				<u>Employment Status</u>			
	HS or Less	Some College/ AA	4-year Degree	Grad School	Full Time	Part Time	Retired	Not Employed
Current Cong	28%	33%	36%	39%	29%	31%	30%	41%
Challenger	21%	22%	30%	31%	31%	18%	28%	12%
Not Vote	21%	19%	13%	7%	16%	31%	12%	13%
Don't Know	31%	26%	22%	23%	24%	20%	29%	34%
N=	189	113	101	70	216	51	99	106

	<u>Religion</u>			<u>Evangelical</u>	
	Cath	Prot	Jewish	Yes	No
Current Cong	33%	30%	53%	35%	31%
Challenger	27%	23%	13%	20%	26%
Not Vote	13%	20%	7%	21%	15%
Don't Know	27%	28%	27%	24%	28%
N=	246	137	15	91	315

	<u>Region</u>				
	Urban	Suburban	Exurban	Philly Area	Shore
Current Cong	34%	35%	29%	27%	33%
Challenger	21%	22%	29%	26%	28%
Not Vote	12%	17%	19%	26%	9%
Don't Know	33%	27%	24%	21%	30%
N=	76	162	70	89	78

[END SPLIT SAMPLE]

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Here is a list of problems facing many Americans. Please tell me how much each worries you personally. Is it a lot, a little, or not at all?

[ROTATE]

	A Lot	A Little	None	N=
Health insurance coverage	62%	20%	18%	883
Availability of good housing	36%	32%	32%	880
Credit card debt	36%	24%	40%	882
Availability of a good job	64%	18%	18%	883
Saving for retirement	60%	22%	18%	883

Worries "a lot" about:

<i>2010 Vote Intention</i>	Health Insurance	Credit Card Debt	Housing	Job	Retire
Republican	26%	23%	20%	29%	32%
Democrat	38%	47%	47%	37%	36%
Someone Else	7%	8%	6%	7%	7%
Not Vote	10%	10%	11%	10%	10%
Don't Know	19%	12%	16%	17%	14%
N=	258	145	149	255	239

Worries "a lot" about:

<i>2010 Vote Intention</i>	Health Insurance	Credit Card Debt	Housing	Job	Retire
Current Cong	34%	32%	30%	32%	30%
Challenger	24%	23%	22%	22%	23%
Not Vote	14%	15%	23%	16%	18%
Don't Know	27%	30%	26%	29%	29%
N=	289	170	164	307	288

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 19-22, 2010

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted from February 19-22, 2010 with a scientifically selected random sample of 953 New Jersey adults yielding 886 registered voters. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey population, including gender, age, race, education, and Hispanic ethnicity. All results are reported with these weighted data.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error for a sample of 953 adults is +/-3.2 points, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.8 and 53.2 percent (50 +/- 3.2) had all New Jersey adults been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects.

Weighted Sample Characteristics (n=953 adults)			
40% Dem	48% Male	16% 18-29	69% White
34% Independent	52% Female	43% 30-49	13% Black
26% Republican		22% 50-64	10% Hispanic
		19% 65+	5% Asian
			3% Other/Multiple