

FOR RELEASE MARCH 5, 2011

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Visit <http://eagletonpoll.blogspot.com> for a link to specific questions and full tables.

NEW JERSEY VOTERS FAVOR CHRISTIE TEACHER TENURE REFORM PROPOSALS

OK with using test scores as part of teacher evaluation

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – New Jersey voters generally support key planks in Gov. Chris Christie's proposals to reform teacher tenure and pay, according to a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released today. Families with school-age children and those without support reforms that would eliminate lifetime tenure, change how teachers are evaluated and tie pay to performance. While public employee union households want no change, others strongly disagree.

"While some voters, especially those who feel negatively toward the governor are dubious about the proposals, for the most part New Jerseyans seem to embrace his ideas," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University.

The poll of 912 New Jersey adults was conducted among both landline and cell phone households Feb. 24-26, with a margin of error of +/- 3.3 percentage points. A weighted subsample of 811 registered voters is reported here, with a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points.

Strong opposition to current teacher tenure policies

After being briefed on the current K-12 teacher tenure system, 58 percent of registered voters disapprove of the tenure policies while only 40 percent approve. In a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll last October, just 28 percent approved tenure when told some believe it prevents bad teachers from being removed, rejecting the idea that it is necessary for academic freedom.

"Taken together, these results tell us that New Jerseyans are nuanced in their response to tenure," said Redlawsk. "When tenure is presented as providing due process, it gains more support than when it is described as a choice between academic freedom and protection of bad teachers. But in either case, a majority of voters doesn't like it."

Public employee union households are stronger supporters of tenure: two-thirds approve the status quo. Private union members disagree, however, with only 40 percent approving and 55 percent disapproving. Among nonunion households, 34 percent approve and 64 percent disapprove.

There are no differences between households with school-age children and those without, but partisan differences loom large, the poll found. Democrats, by a 2-to-1 margin over Republicans (53 percent to 26 percent), support current tenure policies. Independents are closer to Republicans on tenure, with only 36 percent in favor.

Personal feelings about Christie also strongly predict opposition to tenure: 21 percent of respondents who approve of the governor agree with the current tenure system versus 56 percent of those who disapprove of Christie.

“The governor’s tenure reform package is closely connected to him, since he is not only its most visible cheerleader, but has been vocal in attacking the current system,” said Redlawsk.

Comprehensive teacher evaluations including test scores welcomed

The administration’s proposed changes to tenure include evaluating teachers on such indicators as standardized test scores, classroom observations and schoolwide student performance. Six-in-10 voters call this a fair approach, while 37 percent say it is unfair.

As with tenure itself, party identification helps predict support for the policy. Republicans are 12 points more likely to say the proposal is fair, though even 55 percent of Democrats support the idea. But respondents’ impression of Christie is an even stronger predictor once again. Three-quarters of voters who like the governor say these changes in evaluation standards would be fair. But support drops precipitously among those who view Christie negatively. These voters are distinctly opposed to the plan: 44 percent see it as fair while 53 percent say it is unfair. And among public employee union households, only 36 percent see the proposal as fair.

Voters want tenure tied to teacher evaluations

New Jersey voters also support the administration’s proposal to make it harder for teachers to gain tenure and easier to lose it. Nearly two-thirds want tenure linked directly to positive or negative teacher evaluations. Again, liking Christie drives support even higher, to 81 percent, while those who dislike the governor are evenly split, 48 percent approving to 50 percent disapproving.

Concurrently, voters recognize that “one size does not fit all” when it comes to evaluations. More than eight-in-10 agree adjustments should be made for teachers who teach where “children

struggle and may not perform well” on state tests. Neither partisanship nor personal feelings about Christie change this response.

“New Jerseyans clearly accept Governor Christie’s claims that the current system is broken, and thus needs to be reformed,” said Redlawsk. “At the same time, they want these reforms to be fairly applied, recognizing that some teachers have a tougher time than others.”

Pay should be tied to scores and other indicators

Garden Staters strongly believe teachers’ pay should be tied to new standards. The towns in which they teach as well as their subjects or areas of specialization also should be considered. Sixty percent of respondents approve linking pay to evaluations, while 35 percent disapprove. Almost three-quarters of Christie supporters back the measure, while only half of those with an unfavorable impression of the governor agree.

The findings are substantially different from reactions to using only test scores to determine teacher pay. Last October’s Rutgers-Eagleton Poll found that only 32 percent of respondents would support a proposal to link teacher pay solely to student test scores.

“Last time, we found little support for basing pay directly on test scores,” said Redlawsk. “Now a more holistic approach is clearly supported, allowing tests to play a role, but not be the only basis for rewarding teachers.”

QUESTIONS AND TABLES FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 24-26, 2011

Questions and Tables

Questions in this release of March 5, 2011 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are registered voters.

Q. Currently public school teachers earn tenure after three years of teaching. Once granted tenure a teacher can only be dismissed for just cause and must be given a chance to offer a defense. Do you approve or disapprove of tenure for public school teachers?

Approve	40%
Disapprove	58%
DK	2%
N=	809

Question from the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, October 21-27, 2010; Registered Voters	
Q. Some people argue that tenure protection for public school teachers is necessary to protect academic freedom in the classroom. Others believe tenure mostly keeps bad teachers from being removed from the classroom. Do you believe teacher tenure is a necessary job protection or a barrier to eliminating bad teachers?	
Necessary job protection	22%
Barrier to Eliminating Bad Teachers	70%
DK	8%
N=	867

	Party ID			Ideology			Union Household		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Private Union	Public Union	Not Union
Approve	53%	36%	26%	52%	42%	23%	40%	67%	34%
Disapprove	44%	62%	72%	47%	56%	74%	55%	32%	64%
DK	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	5%	1%	2%
N=	284	326	185	170	461	166	64	128	612

	Employment				Race				Education			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retire	Not Empl	White	Black	Asian	Hisp	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Approve	58%	68%	55%	68%	34%	52%	55%	55%	40%	44%	33%	42%
Disapprove	40%	28%	41%	31%	63%	44%	45%	44%	57%	53%	64%	56%
DK	2%	4%	5%	1%	3%	4%	0%	1%	3%	2%	3%	2%
N=	416	107	146	136	583	71	51	82	168	207	235	194

	Age				Income				Gender	
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	< 50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female
Approve	42%	40%	41%	37%	50%	41%	41%	27%	41%	39%
Disapprove	56%	59%	58%	58%	48%	58%	56%	72%	57%	59%
DK	2%	2%	2%	6%	2%	1%	3%	1%	3%	2%
N=	135	336	200	136	199	249	127	135	396	412

*New Jersey Tenure Reform 2011
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

	Children < 18 in HH		Impression of Gov. Christie	
	Yes	No	Favorable	Unfavorable
Approve	41%	39%	21%	56%
Disapprove	57%	57%	77%	42%
DK	2%	2%	2%	2%
N=	319	486	374	353

Q. The Christie administration is proposing to change how teachers are evaluated. Evaluations would depend in part on how well students do on statewide tests, as well as on classroom observations, student work and other measures. Is this a fair or unfair way to evaluate teachers?

Fair	60%
Unfair	37%
DK	2%
N=	811

	Party ID			Ideology			Union Household		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Private Union	Public Union	Not Union
Fair	55%	62%	67%	53%	60%	69%	57%	36%	66%
Unfair	42%	36%	31%	45%	37%	30%	41%	63%	31%
DK	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%
N=	284	326	185	169	461	166	64	128	613

	Employment				Race				Education			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retire	Not Empl	White	Black	Asian	Hisp	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Fair	58%	68%	55%	68%	60%	47%	63%	71%	65%	59%	62%	56%
Unfair	40%	28%	41%	31%	37%	53%	32%	29%	33%	40%	36%	40%
DK	2%	4%	5%	1%	3%	0%	5%	0%	2%	1%	3%	4%
N=	416	107	146	136	583	71	51	82	168	208	235	194

	Age				Income				Gender	
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	< 50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female
Fair	60%	64%	56%	58%	55%	61%	63%	65%	65%	55%
Unfair	40%	33%	42%	38%	44%	38%	33%	32%	32%	42%
DK	0%	3%	2%	4%	1%	1%	5%	3%	3%	2%
N=	135	336	200	137	201	248	126	135	396	413

	Children < 18 in HH		Impression of Gov. Christie	
	Yes	No	Favorable	Unfavorable
Fair	61%	60%	75%	44%
Unfair	37%	39%	23%	53%
DK	2%	2%	2%	3%
N=	319	487	374	353

*New Jersey Tenure Reform 2011
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

Q. Under this proposal, teachers would no longer automatically get tenure, and would risk losing tenure if they receive poor evaluations. Do you approve or disapprove linking tenure to these evaluations?

Approve	64%
Disapprove	32%
DK	3%
N=	810

	Party ID			Ideology			Union		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Member	Public Member	No Union Membership
Approve	54%	69%	73%	58%	62%	79%	59%	50%	68%
Disapprove	43%	29%	23%	39%	35%	17%	36%	48%	29%
DK	4%	2%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%
N=	284	327	186	170	462	166	64	128	613

	Employment			Race					Education			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retire	Not Empl	White	Black	Asian	Hisp	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Approve	67%	58%	57%	70%	67%	45%	64%	65%	62%	66%	66%	63%
Disapprove	31%	38%	37%	26%	30%	49%	36%	35%	33%	31%	32%	34%
DK	2%	4%	6%	4%	3%	6%	0%	0%	5%	3%	2%	3%
N=	416	107	147	136	584	71	51	82	168	208	235	194

	Age				Income				Gender	
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	< 50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female
Approve	61%	71%	59%	59%	55%	67%	69%	72%	69%	60%
Disapprove	36%	28%	36%	35%	42%	31%	29%	26%	28%	36%
DK	3%	1%	5%	6%	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%	4%
N=	135	336	200	137	201	249	127	135	396	413

	Children < 18 in HH		Impression of Gov. Christie	
	Yes	No	Favorable	Unfavorable
Approve	68%	62%	81%	48%
Disapprove	30%	34%	16%	50%
DK	2%	4%	2%	2%
N=	319	486	374	353

Q. The administration also proposes to link teacher pay increases to improved student test scores. Some additional consideration would be given for teaching in high-need schools and in subjects where there are teacher shortages. Do you approve or disapprove of this proposal?

Approve	60%
Disapprove	35%
DK	4%
N=	808

Question from the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, October 21-27, 2010; Registered Voters	
Q. In your opinion, should a public school teacher's pay depend on the test scores of his or her students?	
Yes	22%
No	70%
DK	8%
N=	877

	Party ID			Ideology			Union Household		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Private Union	Public Union	Not Union
Approve	57%	61%	67%	64%	55%	71%	54%	43%	65%
Disapprove	38%	35%	30%	33%	40%	25%	39%	50%	32%
DK	5%	4%	3%	3%	5%	3%	7%	7%	4%
N=	283	325	186	168	460	166	64	128	612

	Employment				Race				Education			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retire	Not Empl	White	Black	Asian	Hisp	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Approve	64%	61%	47%	66%	59%	53%	79%	68%	60%	63%	61%	57%
Disapprove	35%	30%	44%	30%	37%	38%	19%	31%	32%	32%	36%	40%
DK	2%	9%	8%	4%	4%	9%	2%	1%	7%	5%	3%	3%
N=	415	107	145	136	582	71	51	82	167	207	235	194

	Age				Income				Gender	
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	< 50K	<100K	100K-150K	150K+	Male	Female
Approve	68%	64%	60%	45%	55%	63%	59%	72%	65%	56%
Disapprove	30%	33%	35%	46%	40%	35%	38%	27%	31%	39%
DK	2%	3%	4%	9%	5%	2%	3%	2%	3%	5%
N=	135	336	199	136	200	247	126	135	396	412

	Children < 18 in HH		Impression of Gov. Christie	
	Yes	No	Favorable	Unfavorable
Approve	61%	60%	73%	50%
Disapprove	35%	35%	25%	45%
DK	3%	5%	2%	5%
N=	319	486	374	352

Q. Some teachers work in schools where children struggle and may not perform well on statewide tests. Other teachers work in schools where children are well prepared and ready to learn. Should any new evaluation standards be applied the same way to all schools and teachers, or should there be adjustments for the specific circumstances of each school?

Uniform Standards	16%
Adjustments	81%
DK	3%
N=	811

	Party ID			Ideology			Union Household		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Private Union	Public Union	Not Union
Uniform Standards	13%	17%	20%	11%	17%	19%	16%	18%	16%
Adjustments	82%	82%	79%	86%	80%	80%	82%	80%	81%
DK	5%	1%	1%	3%	3%	1%	2%	2%	3%
N=	283	327	185	170	461	166	64	128	612

	Employment				Race				Education			
	FT	PT	Ret	Not Empl	White	Black	Asian	Hisp	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Uniform Standards	14%	18%	16%	22%	16%	11%	30%	20%	18%	24%	15%	9%
Adjustments	84%	80%	79%	76%	82%	84%	68%	80%	79%	74%	83%	88%
DK	2%	3%	5%	2%	2%	5%	2%	0%	2%	2%	3%	3%
N=	416	107	146	136	583	71	51	82	168	207	235	194

	Age				Income				Gender	
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	< 50K	50K-100K	100K-150K	150K+	Male	Female
Uniform Standards	26%	12%	18%	16%	21%	15%	16%	13%	19%	14%
Adjustments	70%	86%	81%	79%	76%	84%	83%	84%	80%	82%
DK	4%	2%	1%	5%	4%	1%	1%	3%	1%	4%
N=	135	336	200	136	200	248	127	135	396	413

	Children < 18 in HH		Impression of Gov. Christie	
	Yes	No	Favorable	Unfavorable
Uniform Standards	17%	16%	21%	14%
Adjustments	81%	81%	77%	83%
DK	2%	3%	2%	3%
N=	319	485	375	353

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 24-26, 2011
New Jersey Statewide Poll

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone from February 24-26, 2011 with a scientifically selected random sample of 912 New Jersey adults. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey population, using gender, age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity matching to US Census Bureau data. All results are reported with these weighted data. This telephone poll included 775 landline respondents and 137 cell phone respondents, acquired through random digit dialing. Data reported in this release are from a weighted sample of 811 registered voters drawn from the full sample of adults.

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 811 registered voters is +/-3.4 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey voters favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.6 and 53.4 percent (50 +/-3.4) had all New Jersey voters 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.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by Braun Research, Inc., of Princeton, New Jersey. The questionnaire was developed and all data analysis was completed in house at the Eagleton Institute of Politics Center for Public Interest Polling. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, a non-partisan academic center focused on the study and teaching of politics and the political process.

Weighted Sample Characteristics (811 New Jersey Registered Voters)			
35% Democrat	49% Male	17% 18-29	74% White
42% Independent	51% Female	41% 30-49	9% Black
23% Republican		24% 50-64	10% Hispanic
		17% 65+	6% Asian
			1% Other