

March 1, 2011
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EDITOR'S NOTE: ATTENTION EDITORS, Rutgers-Eagleton Poll Director David Redlawsk may be contacted at 319-400-1134, 732-932-9384, ext. 285, or redlawsk@rutgers.edu. Visit <http://eagletonpoll.blogspot.com> for a link to specific questions and full tables.

DESPITE SUPPORTING PUBLIC WORKER BENEFIT CUTS, GARDEN STATERS SUPPORT WISCONSIN PROTESTS

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – While New Jersey voters generally support cutting pension and health benefits for public workers to save money, these same voters strongly back state workers who are protesting in Wisconsin, according to results of a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released today.

While more than half of voters want to see significant changes to pension and health benefits in New Jersey, 65 percent also say that workers in Wisconsin are “right to protest” against benefits cuts and changes to collective bargaining. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker has proposed to cut public worker pay and benefits and to eliminate most collective bargaining rights. A bill implementing this proposal has passed the Wisconsin Assembly and is awaiting action in the state Senate.

“The big difference between New Jersey and Wisconsin is that Governor Chris Christie is not proposing to eliminate collective bargaining for public workers,” said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University. “New Jersey voters may be drawing the line. They support Christie on benefits cuts but disapprove eliminating unions’ basic reason for being.”

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. This sample, weighted to match the demographics of adult New Jerseyans, includes 811 registered voters, with a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points for the subsample.

Cutting public worker benefits in New Jersey

As reported earlier [<http://eagletonpoll.blogspot.com>], New Jersey voters generally support proposals to cut public worker pension benefits and increase their share of health costs.

Depending on the details, Garden Staters support increasing the cost of health insurance for public workers with a plan presented as bipartisan by a 53 percent to 44 percent margin. Similar numbers (54 percent to 40 percent) support Christie's pension reform.

"While not wildly popular, and distinctly unpopular among Democrats and public workers, more New Jerseyans than not think the governor is on the right track with his proposals to reform pension and health benefits," said Redlawsk.

Support for Wisconsin workers

Despite agreeing with Christie on changes to public worker benefits here, voters are not looking for public employee unions to be destroyed in Wisconsin. Nearly two-thirds of Garden State voters support the protests. Only 28 percent say Wisconsin public workers should "accept the cuts and changes."

"While there has been no serious discussion here of eliminating collective bargaining rights for public workers, these results should give pause," said Redlawsk. "Though respondents believe that benefits for public workers have become too rich for the state to afford, they do appear to have sympathy for public employees."

Protest support runs deep in New Jersey

Support for the protestors is weakest among those pleased with Christie's proposed budget (40 percent supportive versus 52 percent not supportive). Among the plurality of voters displeased with the budget, 86 percent say Wisconsin workers are right to protest. Only 10 percent of these voters say they should accept the cuts and changes.

Not surprisingly, Democrats strongly support the protests rather than the proposed changes, 81 percent to 12 percent. Independents feel likewise, 63 percent to 29 percent. Republicans are more evenly split: 43 percent support and 47 percent do not support protests. Seventy-seven percent of voters under 30 back the workers, but only 52 percent of voters over 65 do so.

Voters in New Jersey union households strongly support the workers in Wisconsin by more than a 5-to-1 margin. The ratio is 2-to-1 in nonunion households, results Redlawsk calls surprising.

QUESTIONS AND TABLES FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE

**Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 24-26, 2011
Questions and Tables**

The questions covered in the Wisconsin release of March 1, 2011 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are Registered Voters.

Q. As you may know teachers and state workers in Wisconsin have been protesting proposed cuts to benefits and bargaining rights with large rallies at their state capitol. Do you think these workers are right to protest, or should they accept the cuts and changes that are being proposed?

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Right to Protest | 65% |
| Accept Cuts | 28% |
| Depends (Vol) | 4% |
| DK | 4% |
| N= | 806 |

| | Party ID | | | Ideology | | | Union Household | | |
|------------------|----------|-----|-----|----------|--------|------|-----------------|--------------|-----------|
| | Dem | Ind | Rep | Lib | Middle | Cons | Private Union | Public Union | Not Union |
| Right to Protest | 82% | 63% | 44% | 78% | 68% | 45% | 76% | 79% | 61% |
| Accept Cuts | 12% | 29% | 48% | 18% | 24% | 49% | 17% | 15% | 32% |
| Depends (Vol) | 3% | 3% | 6% | 2% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 4% |
| DK | 4% | 5% | 3% | 1% | 4% | 3% | 2% | 3% | 4% |
| N= | 284 | 326 | 182 | 168 | 459 | 165 | 46 | 128 | 610 |

| | Employment | | | | Race | | | | Education | | | |
|------------------|------------|-----|-----|----------|-------|-------|-------|------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | FT | PT | Ret | Not Empl | White | Black | Asian | Hisp | HS or Less | Some Coll | Coll Grad | Grad Work |
| Right to Protest | 63% | 68% | 61% | 72% | 60% | 83% | 73% | 76% | 67% | 66% | 60% | 69% |
| Accept Cuts | 30% | 22% | 31% | 22% | 32% | 12% | 19% | 18% | 25% | 26% | 30% | 27% |
| Depends (Vol) | 4% | 5% | 2% | 3% | 4% | 2% | 0% | 3% | 4% | 5% | 3% | 3% |
| DK | 3% | 5% | 6% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 8% | 2% | 4% | 3% | 6% | 1% |
| N= | 415 | 104 | 148 | 136 | 580 | 71 | 51 | 82 | 168 | 207 | 232 | 195 |

| | Age | | | | Income | | | | Gender | |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|--------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|--------|
| | 18-29 | 30-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | < 50K | <100K | 100K-150K | 150K+ | Male | Female |
| Right to Protest | 77% | 65% | 66% | 52% | 72% | 64% | 68% | 61% | 64% | 66% |
| Accept Cuts | 15% | 28% | 28% | 39% | 21% | 29% | 26% | 32% | 27% | 29% |
| Depends (Vol) | 2% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 3% | 3% | 5% | 5% | 2% |
| DK | 5% | 3% | 2% | 6% | 3% | 4% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 3% |
| N= | 132 | 336 | 200 | 137 | 199 | 248 | 124 | 135 | 396 | 410 |

*New Jersey 2012 Budget Reactions
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

Q. Now, on to some other topics. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose Governor Christie's proposed state worker pension overhaul, which would cut benefits and increase worker contributions?

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Strongly support | 28% |
| Somewhat support | 26% |
| Somewhat oppose | 17% |
| Strongly oppose | 23% |
| DK | 6% |
| N= | 808 |

| | Party ID | | | Ideology | | | Union Household | | |
|------------------|----------|-----|-----|----------|--------|---------|-----------------|--------------|-----------|
| | Dem | Ind | Rep | Lib | Middle | Conserv | Private Union | Public Union | Not Union |
| Strongly support | 12% | 35% | 41% | 19% | 24% | 46% | 23% | 17% | 31% |
| Somewhat support | 30% | 21% | 30% | 17% | 30% | 27% | 20% | 19% | 28% |
| Somewhat oppose | 21% | 18% | 9% | 23% | 17% | 11% | 25% | 21% | 16% |
| Strongly oppose | 32% | 20% | 15% | 33% | 23% | 14% | 27% | 40% | 20% |
| DK | 5% | 6% | 4% | 7% | 6% | 2% | 5% | 3% | 6% |
| N= | 282 | 326 | 186 | 170 | 459 | 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 |
| Strongly support | 29% | 23% | 30% | 28% | 33% | 4% | 31% | 15% | 22% | 28% | 30% | 32% |
| Somewhat support | 28% | 28% | 26% | 20% | 26% | 21% | 19% | 33% | 23% | 25% | 29% | 26% |
| Somewhat oppose | 17% | 22% | 10% | 20% | 15% | 20% | 31% | 29% | 19% | 19% | 17% | 14% |
| Strongly oppose | 22% | 20% | 27% | 26% | 20% | 48% | 15% | 22% | 26% | 24% | 20% | 23% |
| DK | 5% | 7% | 7% | 6% | 6% | 7% | 4% | 1% | 10% | 4% | 5% | 4% |
| N= | 416 | 106 | 147 | 136 | 583 | 71 | 51 | 82 | 167 | 207 | 235 | 195 |

| | Age | | | | Income | | | | Gender | |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|--------|------------|-------------|-------|--------|--------|
| | 18-29 | 30-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | < 50K | 50K- <100K | 100K- <150K | 150K+ | Male | Female |
| Strongly support | 15% | 26% | 36% | 35% | 21% | 28% | 28% | 35% | 33% | 24% |
| Somewhat support | 25% | 29% | 24% | 22% | 20% | 24% | 35% | 33% | 29% | 23% |
| Somewhat oppose | 26% | 20% | 11% | 11% | 20% | 22% | 13% | 10% | 14% | 20% |
| Strongly oppose | 25% | 21% | 24% | 26% | 33% | 24% | 20% | 14% | 19% | 27% |
| DK | 9% | 4% | 5% | 6% | 6% | 2% | 3% | 8% | 4% | 7% |
| N= | 134 | 336 | 199 | 137 | 200 | 247 | 127 | 135 | 396 | 413 |

[SPLIT BALLOT; RANDOMLY ASSIGN 1/3 TO EACH VERSION A, B, C]

(For details of all three versions see http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu/polls/release_03-01-11.pdf)

[VERSION C – Bi-Partisan Plan]

Q. To save the state money, Governor Chris Christie and Democratic State Senate President Steve Sweeney [ROTATE NAMES] both want public employees to pay a larger share of their health insurance costs than they do now. Although they differ on details both proposals would more than triple the cost for some workers. Do you support or oppose such proposals?

| | |
|---------|-----|
| Support | 53% |
| Oppose | 44% |
| DK | 3% |
| N= | 279 |

| | Party ID | | | Ideology | | | Union Household | | |
|---------|----------|-----|-----|----------|--------|---------|-----------------|--------------|-----------|
| | Dem | Ind | Rep | Lib | Middle | Conserv | Private Union | Public Union | Not Union |
| Support | 31% | 60% | 68% | 37% | 49% | 78% | 61% | 23% | 59% |
| Oppose | 64% | 38% | 30% | 60% | 47% | 22% | 30% | 74% | 39% |
| DK | 4% | 2% | 2% | 3% | 4% | 0% | 9% | 4% | 2% |
| N= | 90 | 123 | 61 | 57 | 152 | 64 | 26 | 48 | 205 |

| | Employment | | | | Race | | | | Education | | | |
|---------|------------|-----------|--------|----------|-------|-------|-------|------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Full Time | Part Time | Retire | Not Empl | White | Black | Asian | Hisp | HS or Less | Some Coll | Coll Grad | Grad Work |
| Support | 49% | 71% | 56% | 51% | 61% | 22% | 63% | 21% | 52% | 55% | 55% | 49% |
| Oppose | 48% | 29% | 40% | 49% | 37% | 73% | 28% | 79% | 47% | 44% | 41% | 47% |
| DK | 4% | 0% | 4% | 0% | 3% | 5% | 9% | 0% | 2% | 2% | 4% | 4% |
| N= | 154 | 33 | 51 | 40 | 197 | 20 | 17 | 37 | 57 | 75 | 73 | 71 |

| | Age | | | | Income | | | | Gender | |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-----|--------|------------|-------------|-------|--------|--------|
| | 18-29 | 30-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | < 50K | 50K- <100K | 100K- <150K | 150K+ | Male | Female |
| Support | 34% | 52% | 62% | 61% | 38% | 54% | 51% | 71% | 53% | 52% |
| Oppose | 66% | 43% | 38% | 36% | 58% | 42% | 45% | 29% | 43% | 46% |
| DK | 0% | 5% | 1% | 3% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 0% | 4% | 2% |
| N= | 46 | 123 | 61 | 49 | 72 | 85 | 39 | 48 | 137 | 142 |

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 |