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Additional releases on voter reactions to the budget and the governor's education proposals will be provided over the coming week.

**NEW JERSEYANS WARMING TO CUTS TO SERVICES,
STILL MOST PROTECTIVE OF EDUCATION**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – Despite divided opinions on Gov. Chris Christie's budget, New Jersey voters are warming to the idea of budget cutting, according to a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released today. Following last week's budget address, Garden Staters are less likely to want to protect a wide range of program areas than they were in March 2010.

Specifically, voters are 8 points less likely to say no cuts should be made to municipal aid, 10 points less likely to want to protect environmental programs and 12 points less likely to oppose cuts to colleges and universities than they were after the governor's first budget address. At the same time, voters continue to oppose increasing revenue through higher taxes and tools.

"Governor Christie talked about the 'new normal' in his budget speech. For voters, the new normal appears to be greater acceptance of budget cuts," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University. "While Democrats still resist many cuts and are more likely to support revenue increases, independents are looking more like Republicans in their support for budget cutting."

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.

Budget cuts: more protection for schools and programs for the poor

New Jersey voters are split in their reaction to the governor's budget, with 45 percent pleased and 48 percent displeased. But when asked about specific services, support varies significantly.

For the second straight year, New Jersey voters are most supportive of their schools and programs for the poor. Half say there should be no cuts at all to state aid to schools while 13

percent want school aid cut more deeply.

In his budget, Christie's proposed an increase in state aid to local school districts, though aid will remain far below pre-2010 levels. Last year, 57 percent said they wanted no cuts to school aid, while 15 percent wanted deep cuts.

Likewise, there remains significant support for programs to help less well off New Jerseyans, though support has also declined: 42 percent want no cuts in such programs, compared to 51 percent a year ago, while 16 percent want these programs cut more deeply, a 2 percent bump from 2010.

“New Jerseyans have warmed to program cuts – even to the most supported programs – to close the budget deficit,” said Redlawsk. “And while most still oppose deep cuts to education and assistance to the poor, more are willing to cut at least something.”

Two-thirds of Democrats are much more likely to oppose cuts in aid to school districts compared to 38 percent of Republicans and 42 percent of independents. More than half are against poverty assistance program cuts, versus about one-third of Republicans and independents. Last year, the latter were much closer to Democrats in their support of these programs.

Retired and unemployed voters see government programs for the poor more as much more important than those who are employed: 50 percent of retirees and 49 percent of unemployed New Jerseyans think that these programs should not be cut at all, compared to 39 percent of those employed full-time, and 34 percent of those employed part-time.

Large majorities OK other cuts

Garden Staters are significantly more willing to see cuts in other areas. Twenty-three percent oppose cuts to municipal aid, 29 percent to cuts in environmental programs, and 34 percent to cuts to public transportation funding. Another 37 percent oppose any cuts to colleges and universities. Voters especially seem more willing to see cuts to higher education than in March 2010, when nearly half said higher education should suffer “no cuts at all.” More than a quarter of voters want aid to local government and environmental programs to be cut “more deeply” for budget balancing purposes. Overall, voters are now more likely to support budget cuts in all programs presented in the poll.

GOP voters overwhelmingly favor cuts to environmental programs (80 percent) compared to independents (71 percent) and Democrats (62 percent). They favor “deeper cuts” to environmental programs to balance the state budget by a 42 percent to 13 percent margin over Democrats.

Both Democrats and Republicans agree that state aid to local government should be cut, but Republicans and independents prefer deeper reductions. One-third of each group believes state aid to local government should be cut "more deeply" than other programs, compared to one-fifth of Democrats. Democrats also are more likely to oppose any cuts to funding colleges and universities (50 percent) compared to Republicans (28 percent) and Independents (29 percent).

Retired voters are more likely to oppose cuts to public transportation spending (42 percent), while other voters, even unemployed New Jerseyans, are more likely to support transit budget cuts.

Little support for tax and toll hikes

New Jerseyans overwhelmingly are against raising taxes or tolls to balance the budget, with the exception of a sales tax on "luxury goods," supported by 75 percent of respondents. High earners (more than \$150,000 per year) are more likely to support a luxury tax than those making under \$50,000 per year by 81 percent to 64 percent.

"With consistent strong support for a tax increase on 'millionaires,' and now this, New Jerseyans seem happy to ask the rich to pay more," said Redlawsk. "It is interesting that high-income voters are even more supportive. Maybe they also recognize the need to share the pain of the state's financial troubles."

In contrast, a majority of those polled oppose raising the gas tax (70 percent), the state income tax (73 percent), adding the sales tax to clothing (61 percent), higher highway tolls (57 percent), and increased business taxes (56 percent).

Looking at specific groups, high-income voters are less likely to support tax increases than those who are retired, unemployed or earning less than \$50,000 per year.

"The take-home is a little different from last year," said Redlawsk. "After a year of hearing how bad things are, voters are more willing to accept program cuts to balance the budget. But for the most part they are still completely uninterested in paying more."

QUESTIONS AND TABLES FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE

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

Questions in this release of March 3, 2011 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are registered voters.

Q. How much have you heard or read about Governor Christies proposed state budget? Is it:

A lot	28%
Some	42%
A little	20%
Nothing at all	10%
DK	1%
N=	808

[ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO HEARD AT LEAST “A LITTLE” ABOUT THE BUDGET]

Q. Overall are you very pleased, somewhat pleased, somewhat displeased, or very displeased with the Governor’s proposed budget?

Very pleased	11%
Somewhat pleased	34%
Somewhat displeased	26%
Very displeased	22%
DK	8%
N=	719

[REMAINING QUESTIONS ASKED OF ALL RESPONDENTS]

Q. To balance the state budget, some government services will be cut deeply and some will be cut less deeply. For each of the following, tell me if it should be cut more deeply, less deeply, or not cut at all. [ROTATE LIST]

2011	State Aid to Local Gov’t	Environment Programs	Colleges and Universities	State Aid to Schools	Programs for the Poor	Public transit
Cut deeper	27%	25%	19%	13%	16%	18%
Cut less	46%	44%	42%	36%	41%	45%
Not cut at all	23%	29%	37%	50%	42%	34%
DK (Vol)	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%
N=	804	810	810	810	808	810

For Comparison, Results from Rutgers-Eagleton Poll March 31-April 3, 2010

2010	State Aid to Local Gov’t	Environment Programs	Colleges and Universities	State Aid to Schools	Programs for the Poor	Public Transit
Cut deeper	25%	24%	18%	15%	14%	15%
Cut less	39%	35%	30%	26%	32%	36%
Not cut at all	31%	39%	49%	57%	51%	45%
DK (Vol)	4%	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%
N=	951	950	950	953	951	953

*New Jersey 2012 Budget Cutting
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

Demographic Breakdowns: Percentage saying to “NOT CUT AT ALL” for each service:

	Dem	Ind	Rep	Liberal	Middle	Conserv	Male	Female
State aid to Local Gov't	26%	22%	20%	27%	24%	19%	23%	23%
Environ Programs	35%	27%	19%	40%	30%	16%	24%	33%
Colleges and Univ	50%	29%	28%	40%	40%	24%	34%	40%
State Aid to Schools	67%	42%	38%	61%	52%	32%	44%	55%
Programs for the Poor	56%	35%	32%	48%	43%	32%	41%	43%
Public transportation	41%	32%	25%	38%	34%	27%	28%	38%

Demographic Breakdowns: Percentage saying to “NOT CUT AT ALL” for each service:

	HS or less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Post Grad	Empl FT	Empl PT	Retire	Not Empl
State aid to Local Gov't	34%	22%	21%	18%	21%	14%	33%	26%
Environ Programs	29%	31%	30%	24%	30%	35%	28%	22%
Colleges and Univ	42%	40%	31%	35%	35%	46%	36%	36%
State Aid to Schools	51%	52%	47%	47%	48%	52%	48%	51%
Programs for the Poor	49%	45%	39%	35%	39%	34%	49%	49%
Public transportation	38%	36%	33%	26%	32%	25%	42%	36%

Demographic Breakdowns: Percentage saying to “NOT CUT AT ALL” for each service:

	Income				Union membership		
	< 50K	50k - <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Union	Public Union	Non-union
State aid to Local Gov't	33%	16%	23%	19%	16%	24%	24%
Environ Programs	37%	23%	19%	31%	25%	28%	29%
Colleges and Univ	46%	34%	29%	32%	32%	41%	36%
State Aid to Schools	54%	50%	47%	45%	42%	54%	49%
Programs for the Poor	54%	40%	28%	36%	47%	47%	40%
Public transportation	41%	33%	18%	33%	35%	25%	35%

Demographic Breakdowns: Percentage saying to “NOT CUT AT ALL” for each service:

	Race			
	White	Black	Asian	Latino
State Aid to Local Gov't	23%	40%	7%	19%
Environmental Programs	28%	32%	40%	26%
Colleges and Universities	32%	57%	31%	54%
State Aid to Schools	44%	73%	47%	68%
Programs for the Poor	39%	58%	49%	38%
Public transportation	33%	46%	31%	32%

*New Jersey 2012 Budget Cutting
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

Q. Some state taxes or fees might have to be raised to balance the budget. For each tell if you would support or oppose an increase. [ROTATE LIST]

	Business Taxes	Adding sales tax to clothing	Highway tolls	The Gas Tax	The State Income Tax	Adding sales tax to luxury items
Support	40%	37%	41%	28%	25%	75%
Oppose	56%	61%	57%	70%	73%	23%
Depends (vol)	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Don't Know (vol)	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
N=	809	810	811	811	810	811

Demographic Breakdowns: Percentage saying SUPPORT increase for each revenue source:

	Party ID			Ideology			Gender	
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Liberal	Middle	Conserv	Male	Female
Business Taxes	51%	39%	22%	61%	38%	23%	37%	42%
Tax on Clothing	38%	37%	36%	43%	35%	36%	37%	36%
Highway Tolls	43%	43%	37%	44%	41%	41%	45%	38%
Gasoline Tax	30%	29%	24%	37%	25%	28%	36%	20%
State Income Tax	32%	25%	13%	33%	24%	19%	31%	18%
Luxury Tax	76%	76%	69%	80%	75%	67%	74%	75%

Demographic Breakdowns: Percentage saying SUPPORT increase for each revenue source:

	Education				Employment			
	HS or less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Post Grad	Empl FT	Empl PT	Retired	Not Empl
Business Taxes	41%	38%	36%	44%	41%	33%	39%	42%
Tax on Clothing	24%	32%	43%	46%	41%	32%	27%	37%
Highway Tolls	30%	42%	43%	48%	46%	31%	37%	41%
Gasoline Tax	16%	26%	28%	39%	30%	21%	30%	24%
State Income Tax	27%	23%	20%	32%	25%	22%	21%	30%
Luxury Tax	67%	64%	84%	82%	78%	69%	71%	71%

Demographic Breakdowns: Percentage saying SUPPORT for each revenue source:

	Income				Union membership		
	< 50K	50- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Union	Public Union	Non-union
Business Taxes	37%	38%	56%	33%	46%	47%	38%
Tax on Clothing	26%	36%	49%	44%	40%	42%	35%
Highway Tolls	30%	42%	56%	47%	33%	48%	41%
Gasoline Tax	19%	25%	42%	40%	26%	34%	27%
State Income Tax	26%	22%	28%	29%	23%	26%	25%
Luxury Tax	64%	76%	83%	81%	83%	81%	72%

Demographic Breakdowns: Percentage saying SUPPORT for each revenue source:

	Race			
	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Business Taxes	40%	39%	35%	38%
Tax on Clothing	38%	26%	41%	32%
Highway Tolls	41%	26%	53%	46%
Gasoline Tax	29%	10%	42%	27%
State Income Tax	23%	30%	25%	34%
Luxury Tax	77%	60%	80%	66%

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