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**RUTGERS-EAGLETON POLL: ROMNEY STILL PREFERRED BY NEW JERSEY GOP;
OBAMA LOOKS STRONG AGAINST TOP REPUBLICAN CHALLENGERS**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – New Jersey Republican voters continue to make former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney their candidate of choice against President Barack Obama, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. While former House Speaker Newt Gingrich has built a following here, registered Republicans and independents leaning Republican prefer Romney by 28 percent to 20 percent over Gingrich.

Texas Congressman Ron Paul runs a distant third at 5 percent; no other candidate gets more than 3 percent. More than one-third (37 percent) have no preference.

The poll also finds that Obama holds a strong lead in head-to-head matchups with all three GOP front-runners. While Romney does best, Obama leads him by 51 percent to 32 percent. The president doubles Gingrich, 54 percent to 27 percent, while Paul loses, 50 percent to 29 percent.

“New Jersey reflects the rise of Newt Gingrich seen elsewhere, though he has not managed to dethrone Mitt Romney, who has led in every poll we’ve done,” said poll director David Redlawsk, a professor of political science at Rutgers University. “At the same time, Romney has yet to break out of the 20s in our open-ended question and more than a third have no preference at all. Gingrich is just the latest in a series of threats, which included Sarah Palin and Chris Christie early in the year, and Rick Perry and Herman Cain more recently.”

Results are from 823 registered voters drawn from a survey of 907 adult respondents conducted from Dec. 15-18. The registered voter sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points. The subsample of 260 registered Republicans and independents leaning Republican has a margin of error of +/- 6.0 percentage points.

The Republican race in New Jersey

Despite more than a dozen nationally televised GOP debates so far, and extensive news coverage of the campaign, 38 percent of Garden State Republicans are still not sure who to support. Although Romney has led in every Rutgers-Eagleton Poll this year, he has not been able to break away, even with Gov. Chris Christie’s vocal support.

Although Romney leads among Republican voters, Gingrich ties the former Mass. governor

among conservatives, at 26 percent. Moderate Republicans prefer Romney to Gingrich by 2 to 1 (28 percent to 14 percent), but are also much more likely to be unable to name any candidate. Almost half (46 percent) are unsure of their final choice compared to 30 percent of conservatives. Women are also more likely than men to be unsure: 49 percent cannot name a preferred candidate, versus 29 percent of men. Twenty-one percent of women support Romney, 15 percent Gingrich, and 8 percent name Paul. Among men, 33 percent prefer Romney, 24 percent Gingrich, and 4 percent Paul.

“While Governor Christie has had success getting New Jersey Republican to line up behind Romney, rank-and-file voters are not really there yet,” said Redlawsk. “In spite of leading throughout 2011, Romney has yet to break 30 percent support. Most Republicans seem to be casting about for alternatives, if they can name any candidate at all.”

Despite lukewarm ratings, Obama strong in head-to-heads

Perhaps benefiting from an unsettled GOP race, Obama appears to have a solid lead about 11 months before Election Day. While a November Rutgers-Eagleton Poll found only 32 percent of New Jersey voters gave Obama’s job performance an “A” or “B,” the president easily leads the top three Republican contenders. Romney does best (losing by 19 points) and Gingrich worst (down 27 points). Paul trails Obama by 21 points.

Two keys to the president’s strength are that Democrats are nearly united behind him and independents are currently swinging his way. More than eight in 10 Democrats support Obama against any of his challengers. Republican voters are less unified, except in the case of a Romney-Obama race. Paul does best among independents in losing to Obama by 13 points. Romney falls 15 points short and Gingrich trails by 24 points among independents.

“Several months ago we asked whether Obama deserves to be re-elected, and just about as many voters said no as yes,” said Redlawsk. “But faced with specific challengers, voters can focus, and they now prefer to re-elect the president. Voters are not very thrilled with Obama’s job performance, but they like him better than the Republican contenders.”

The gender gap is alive and well in New Jersey, Redlawsk noted. Obama does extremely well with women, leading Romney by 30 points, Paul by 36 points and Gingrich by 37 points. The Republicans do much better among men, where Paul trails by four points, Romney by seven points and Gingrich by 15 points.

Romney holds his own among white voters; at 41 percent, he lags Obama by one percentage point. Gingrich and Paul do noticeably worse with whites: Gingrich trails, 46 percent to 35 percent, and Paul trails, 42 percent to 35 percent. Obama continues to win about 90 percent of African-American

voters.

Republican candidates do best in the northwestern part of the state, with Romney and Gingrich both leading Obama in exurban New Jersey, while Paul draws even. Obama is strongest in north Jersey urban areas, leading all Republicans by about 40 points or more, though he leads in all parts of the state outside northwestern New Jersey.

“Obama’s strength reflects that New Jersey is still a Democratic state when it comes to presidential elections,” said Redlawsk. “Overcoming that for any Republican may be tough. Of course, the election is nearly year away, and New Jersey voters have yet to become engaged in it. Once the Republicans have a nominee, we should expect to see things tighten.”

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QUESTIONS AND TABLES BEGIN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release of December 21, 2011 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are Registered Voters (RV).

[Asked only of respondents who are Republican or lean Republican]

Q. In the Presidential election, which Republican would you prefer as the nominee to run against President Obama? Just tell me the name; if you don't know that's ok, just say so. **[Code open-ended to list]**

	ALL	Gender		Ideology	
	Republican RV	Male	Female	Consv	Moderate
Mitt Romney	28%	33%	21%	27%	29%
Newt Gingrich	20%	24%	15%	26%	14%
Ron Paul	5%	4%	8%	5%	5%
Michelle Bachman	2%	2%	1%	3%	0%
Chris Christie	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Michael Bloomberg	1%	0%	3%	3%	0%
John Huntsman	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Rick Santorum	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Other	3%	4%	1%	1%	5%
DK	38%	28%	49%	30%	46%
Unwght N	257	141	116	123	130

Trend - Candidates receiving at least 3% or more of responses

	Dec 11 RV	Oct 11 RV	Aug 11 RV	Feb 11 RV
	Rep/Lean	Rep/Lean	Rep/Lean	Rep/Lean
Mitt Romney	28%	24%	16%	13%
Newt Gingrich	20%	4%	-	-
Ron Paul	5%	3%	-	3%
Herman Cain	-	10%	-	-
Chris Christie	-	7%	6%	12%
Rick Perry	-	6%	14%	-
Michelle Bachman	-	-	5%	-
Rudy Giuliani	-	-	4%	-
Sarah Palin	-	-	-	11%
Mike Huckabee	-	-	-	6%
DK/None	38%	43%	40%	42%
Unwght N	257	244	182	255

2012 Presidential Election, December 2011
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

[Asked of all respondents]

Q. Thinking about the 2012 presidential election, if the candidates were [ROTATE ORDER: Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney] would you vote for [SAME ORDER: Obama or Romney] for president?

Obama	51%
Romney	32%
Someone Else	4%
Not Vote	2%
DK	11%
Unwght N	805

	Party ID			Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Cons	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Obama	86%	44%	10%	81%	52%	13%	58%	47%	52%	46%
Romney	3%	29%	79%	5%	27%	74%	25%	32%	34%	34%
Someone Else	1%	8%	2%	2%	5%	3%	3%	6%	4%	4%
Not Vote	0%	4%	1%	1%	3%	2%	3%	4%	1%	1%
DK	10%	15%	7%	11%	13%	7%	10%	12%	9%	14%
Unwght N	248	352	183	163	437	181	183	181	225	204

	Employment				Race			Age			
	FT	PT	Ret	Not	White	Black	Hisp	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Obama	51%	48%	43%	58%	42%	90%	65%	59%	55%	45%	45%
Romney	32%	28%	40%	24%	41%	3%	20%	26%	28%	35%	39%
Someone Else	5%	0%	3%	8%	4%	3%	4%	5%	5%	4%	2%
Not Vote	3%	2%	3%	1%	2%	0%	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%
DK	10%	22%	12%	9%	11%	3%	9%	8%	11%	14%	11%
Unwght N	374	80	229	113	624	70	61	60	174	324	235

	Income				Gender		Region			Phil/Shore	
	<50K	50K-100K	100K-150K	150K+	Male	Female	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	South	Shore
Obama	63%	51%	47%	45%	46%	55%	64%	50%	36%	58%	47%
Romney	18%	35%	38%	37%	39%	25%	23%	30%	48%	28%	30%
Someone Else	2%	3%	5%	6%	5%	4%	2%	3%	4%	5%	6%
Not Vote	3%	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%	0%	2%	3%	2%	4%
DK	14%	10%	8%	10%	8%	15%	10%	15%	9%	7%	13%
Unwght N	188	232	136	113	393	408	116	273	118	148	146

	Religion				Born
	Cath	Prot	Jewish	Other	Again
Obama	41%	55%	48%	71%	49%
Romney	41%	30%	37%	16%	38%
Someone Else	5%	6%	1%	2%	5%
Not Vote	3%	2%	0%	2%	2%
DK	12%	7%	14%	9%	6%
Unwght N	355	213	68	114	106

2012 Presidential Election, December 2011
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

Q. Thinking about the 2012 presidential election, if the candidates were [ROTATE ORDER: Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Newt Gingrich] would you vote for [SAME ORDER: Obama or Gingrich] for president?

Obama	54%
Gingrich	27%
Someone Else	5%
Not Vote	3%
DK	12%
Unwght N	805

	Party ID			Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Cons	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Obama	89%	48%	12%	85%	55%	16%	57%	51%	54%	54%
Gingrich	1%	24%	73%	3%	22%	69%	24%	26%	30%	27%
Someone Else	1%	9%	2%	1%	6%	4%	6%	6%	4%	4%
Not Vote	0%	5%	2%	1%	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%
DK	9%	15%	11%	11%	13%	10%	11%	13%	11%	13%
Unwght N	248	351	182	163	435	181	181	179	226	205

	Employment				Race			Age			
	FT	PT	Ret	Not	White	Black	Hisp	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Obama	54%	51%	46%	62%	46%	89%	65%	68%	54%	49%	48%
Gingrich	28%	22%	34%	21%	35%	2%	21%	21%	23%	31%	34%
Someone Else	5%	0%	5%	9%	5%	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%
Not Vote	2%	4%	4%	0%	3%	3%	0%	0%	3%	3%	4%
DK	11%	22%	11%	8%	11%	3%	10%	7%	14%	12%	10%
Unwght N	375	79	228	112	622	70	62	60	173	324	234

	Income				Gender			Region			
	<50K	50K-100K	100K-150K	150K+	Male	Female	Urban	Suburb	Exurb	Phil/South	Shore
Obama	67%	55%	49%	47%	49%	58%	66%	54%	36%	60%	51%
Gingrich	16%	30%	30%	30%	34%	21%	22%	26%	42%	23%	25%
Someone Else	4%	3%	6%	5%	6%	4%	2%	4%	6%	6%	7%
Not Vote	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%	6%
DK	10%	9%	13%	15%	8%	16%	9%	14%	14%	8%	12%
Unwght N	187	230	136	114	390	408	117	271	118	147	145

	Religion				Born Again
	Cath	Prot	Jewish	Other	Again
Obama	43%	59%	55%	74%	52%
Gingrich	37%	24%	32%	12%	34%
Someone Else	5%	7%	2%	2%	5%
Not Vote	3%	2%	1%	3%	4%
DK	13%	8%	10%	9%	6%
Unwght N	354	213	68	113	107

2012 Presidential Election, December 2011
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

Q. Thinking about the 2012 presidential election, if the candidates were [**ROTATE ORDER:** Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Ron Paul] would you vote for [**SAME ORDER:** Obama or Paul] for president?

Obama	50%
Paul	29%
Someone Else	5%
Not Vote	2%
DK	14%
Unwght N	806

	Party ID				Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Cons	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work	
Obama	84%	41%	14%	80%	50%	17%	54%	46%	49%	50%	
Paul	6%	28%	68%	8%	27%	61%	24%	30%	32%	30%	
Someone Else	1%	9%	3%	1%	6%	7%	5%	6%	4%	5%	
Not Vote	0%	4%	2%	1%	3%	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%	
DK	8%	18%	14%	11%	15%	13%	13%	15%	14%	13%	
Unwght N	248	351	183	164	436	181	182	180	225	206	

	Employment				Race			Age			
	FT	PT	Ret	Not	White	Black	Hisp	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Obama	50%	50%	44%	55%	42%	88%	54%	55%	54%	44%	46%
Paul	31%	23%	31%	27%	35%	4%	26%	26%	29%	32%	29%
Someone Else	7%	1%	4%	4%	6%	0%	4%	2%	5%	7%	3%
Not Vote	2%	0%	5%	3%	3%	3%	0%	2%	1%	2%	5%
DK	11%	26%	17%	11%	14%	5%	16%	15%	10%	16%	17%
Unwght N	376	78	229	113	623	70	62	60	173	323	236

	Income				Gender			Region			
	<50K	50K-100K	100K-150K	150K+	Male	Female	Urban	Suburb	Exurb	Phil/South	Shore
Obama	60%	52%	43%	50%	43%	56%	62%	48%	38%	56%	46%
Paul	21%	28%	36%	35%	39%	20%	23%	30%	38%	27%	26%
Someone Else	2%	6%	8%	3%	6%	4%	1%	5%	6%	4%	8%
Not Vote	3%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%
DK	14%	12%	12%	9%	9%	18%	9%	15%	16%	10%	18%
Unwght N	187	232	136	114	392	408	116	273	118	147	146

	Religion				Born
	Cath	Prot	Jewish	Other	Again
Obama	39%	54%	59%	68%	49%
Paul	36%	29%	23%	19%	39%
Someone Else	6%	4%	4%	4%	2%
Not Vote	3%	4%	3%	0%	4%
DK	17%	9%	11%	8%	5%
Unwght N	354	214	68	113	107

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll December 15-18 2011

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone from December 15-18, 2011 with a scientifically selected final sample of 907 New Jersey adults, which includes 823 registered voters. 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. Data for this release are weighted to represent fairly the registered voter population in New Jersey. All results are reported with these weighted data. This telephone poll includes 771 landline respondents supplemented with 136 cell phone respondents, acquired through random digit dialing.

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 823 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 53.4 and 46.6 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 Incorporated. The questionnaire was developed and all data analysis was completed in house. 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			
823 New Jersey Registered Voters			
32% Democrat	48% Male	15% 18-29	69% White
46% Independent	52% Female	36% 30-49	12% Black
22% Republican		29% 50-64	10% Hispanic
		20% 65+	9% Others