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**RUTGERS-EAGLETON POLL: NEW JERSEY VOTERS SUPPORT
GOV. CHRISTIE'S CALL FOR GAY MARRIAGE REFERENDUM**

Majority supports gay marriage but issue not that important to most

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – Even with a majority of New Jersey voters supporting the legalization of gay marriage, more than half also back Gov. Chris Christie's call for a November referendum on the question, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. At the same time, most say gay marriage is not one of their top issues.

As reported by the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll yesterday, 54 percent of Garden State voters favor legalizing same-sex marriage. At the same time, 53 percent of voters support Christie's call for a vote on the issue while 40 percent support Newark Mayor Cory Booker's position that gay marriage is a civil rights issue that should not be decided upon by voters. Even among those who support gay marriage, a majority wants a referendum.

While the Democratic-led Legislature has made gay marriage a top priority, fewer than 25 percent of voters say gay marriage is the most important or one of a very few important issues facing New Jersey today. "It's surprising that so many of those who support same-sex marriage are also in favor of a referendum," said Rutgers-Eagleton Poll Director David Redlawsk, a professor of political science at Rutgers. "It may be that given several polls showing majority support among voters, supporters of same-sex marriage think it would win in November. But in the face of a likely intensive campaign from opponents, this could be wishful thinking."

Results are from a poll of 914 registered voters conducted statewide among both landline and cell phone households from Feb. 9-11. The full sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.3 percentage points.

Clear support for referendum across most demographic groups

While 54 percent of registered voters support legalizing gay marriage, voters also want to be able to weigh in on the issue – 53 percent of all voters support Christie's proposal to have a referendum. This majority support for a ballot question persists across most demographic groups as well as among those

who support legalization. Among gay marriage supporters, half also favor Christie's call for a referendum, while 44 percent oppose it. Among those who oppose gay marriage, 60 percent support the referendum.

The referendum issue was raised in the context of the governor's call for a ballot question and Booker's stance that same-sex marriage is about civil rights and not for voters to decide. Given the framing, it is notable that voters with a favorable impression of Booker are evenly split on the call for a referendum, 47 percent for and 48 percent against. Voters with a favorable opinion of Christie clearly support a referendum, 66 percent to 29 percent.

"Despite strong favorable ratings, Mayor Booker's position is in the minority," said Redlawsk. "While those with an unfavorable impression of him strongly support a referendum, it is interesting that those who like the mayor are evenly split. The messenger may be liked, but the message is not resonating with most voters."

Groups with majorities opposed to a referendum include Democrats (54 percent), those with more than a college degree (53 percent) and black voters (52 percent). Democratic voters and black voters likely oppose the referendum in part because Christie is calling for it, but also due to efforts to make a strong connection between gay marriage and civil rights, and the historical controversy surrounding putting civil rights issues on the ballot. The connection to civil rights may resonate especially with black voters despite the fact that a majority of black voters actually oppose legalizing gay marriage.

In addition, just over half of the highest income voters, just under half of liberals and half of those in a public union household also oppose the referendum

Gay marriage not a top priority for voters

As a marriage bill makes its way through the New Jersey Legislature, 40 percent of voters say gay marriage is not at all important in the context of other issues facing the state. Just over one-third believe the issue is "somewhat important" and only 22 percent call gay marriage the most important (3 percent) or "one of a few very important issues" (19 percent) that need to be addressed. This result appears across all demographic groups, with most in each group believing the issue is not important at all with only a few groups having a majority who believe it is somewhat important.

Among gay marriage supporters, about one-third think the issue is at least very important. Almost half (46 percent) think it is somewhat important and about a quarter (22 percent) think it is not important at all. A large majority of opponents (62 percent) believe the issue unimportant.

Thirty percent of Democrats, 36 percent of liberals, and 39 percent of those under 30 believe gay marriage is at least one of a few very important issues in New Jersey. Twenty-eight percent of Born Again Christians feel the same, even though they are overwhelmingly against legalization. On the other hand, Republicans and conservatives – two other groups fiercely opposed to gay marriage – are much more likely to believe the issue is not important at all.

“Supporters of same-sex marriage may have a better opportunity than in most states, if the issue were to go to referendum,” said Redlawsk. “In most places where it has been on the ballot, opponents have been the ones who were intensely concerned and mobilized by the campaign. In New Jersey, most opponents of same-sex marriage appear to not care as much about it as supporters, at least for the moment. But a strong opposition campaign could change that.”

Only about 41 percent of those who think gay marriage is very important support letting the voters decide. But more than half who believe the issue is only somewhat important or not important at all also support Christie’s proposal.

Support for gay marriage increases for many demographic groups

Support for legalizing same-sex marriage in New Jersey has increased across various demographic groups. Joining Democrats (63 percent) and liberals (81 percent) as supporters, a majority of independents (56 percent) and moderates (55 percent) are in favor of gay marriage. Voters of all age groups – except for those over 65 – are in support as well: 77 percent of those under 30, 57 percent of those 30-to-49-years-old, and 55 percent of those 50- to-64. For the first time, a clear majority of Catholics (52 percent) and males (52 percent) support same-sex marriage. Women (57 percent) and those of higher socioeconomic status – higher education (59 percent for college graduates and 68 percent for those who have completed graduate work) and higher income (more than half of voters in each of two highest income brackets) – continue to support legalization.

However, gay marriage still faces strong opposition from those groups who typically oppose it. Republican (58 percent) and conservative (69 percent) voters are still greatly opposed. Half of Protestants, 70 percent of evangelical Christians, and over half of those voters 65 years and older also show majorities opposed to legalization. Half of black voters are opposed as well.

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QUESTIONS AND TABLES BEGIN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release of February 14, 2012 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are Registered Voters (RV).

Q. On another topic, some people say gay marriage should be legal. Others oppose legalizing gay marriage. What is your position? Do you:

Support Gay Marriage	54%
Oppose Gay Marriage	35%
Support CU/Oppose GM (vol)	4%
DK	7%
Unwght N=	885

GAY MARRIAGE TREND

	FEB 2012 (RV)	DEC 2011 (Adults)*	OCT 2011 (RV)	AUG 2011 (RV)	NOV 2009 (ALL)
Support Gay Marriage	54%	53%	51%	52%	46%
Oppose Gay Marriage	35%	34%	37%	28%	40%
Support CU/Oppose GM (vol)	4%	-	4%	4%	2%
DK	7%	14%	8%	16%	12%
Unwght N=	885	229	451	576	888

* Dec 2011 asked about "same-sex marriage" and did not have a voluntary "civil unions" option

	Party ID			Ideology				Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Cons	HS or less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work	
Support GM	63%	56%	35%	81%	55%	24%	39%	49%	59%	68%	
Oppose GM	29%	30%	56%	13%	33%	65%	49%	40%	30%	23%	
Sup CU/Opp GM (vol)	3%	5%	2%	0%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	
DK	5%	9%	7%	6%	8%	7%	7%	8%	8%	5%	
Unwght N=	310	392	173	184	495	186	196	241	238	205	

	Employment				Race		Age			
	FT	PT	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Support GM	60%	63%	41%	53%	56%	43%	77%	57%	55%	37%
Oppose GM	31%	23%	46%	37%	32%	44%	16%	32%	36%	48%
Sup CU/Opp GM (vol)	2%	8%	6%	1%	4%	6%	2%	2%	4%	7%
DK	7%	7%	6%	9%	8%	7%	6%	8%	6%	8%
Unwght N=	379	80	285	139	698	81	54	214	338	271

	Income				Gender		Religion		
	< 50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish
Support GM	47%	53%	61%	67%	52%	57%	52%	43%	68%
Oppose GM	44%	36%	28%	30%	36%	33%	36%	45%	27%
Sup CU/Opp GM (vol)	4%	4%	3%	2%	4%	4%	4%	5%	0%
DK	5%	7%	9%	1%	8%	6%	8%	7%	5%
Unwght N=	241	258	129	97	418	467	384	231	66

Marriage Referendum Support, February 2012
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

	Born Again		Union Household			Gov. Christie Impression		
	Yes	No	Public	Private	No Union	Fav	Unfav	No Opin
Support GM	23%	55%	66%	39%	53%	44%	64%	62%
Oppose GM	66%	31%	24%	45%	37%	45%	26%	27%
Sup CU/Opp GM (vol)	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%
DK	6%	9%	6%	12%	7%	7%	7%	9%
Unwght N=	122	518	118	55	694	441	341	95

	Tea Party Impression			Occupy Wall St Imp			Mayor Booker Impression		
	Fav	Unfav	No Opin	Fav	Unfav	No Opin	Fav	Unfav	No Opin
Support GM	32%	70%	44%	72%	47%	51%	57%	53%	48%
Oppose GM	56%	22%	41%	19%	42%	36%	34%	33%	37%
Sup CU/Opp GM (vol)	3%	3%	6%	2%	4%	5%	4%	5%	3%
DK	9%	6%	9%	7%	7%	8%	5%	10%	11%
Unwght N=	222	445	187	256	345	196	423	104	271

Q The Democratic leadership in the New Jersey legislature has made legalizing gay marriage a top priority. For you personally, is this issue the most important one facing New Jersey right now, one of a few very important issues, only somewhat important, or not important at all?

Most Important	3%
Very Important	19%
Somewhat Important	36%
Not Important	41%
DK	1%
Unwght N=	911

	Party ID			Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Cons	HS or less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Most Important	4%	2%	5%	6%	2%	3%	5%	1%	5%	2%
Very Important	26%	17%	10%	30%	17%	10%	15%	21%	18%	21%
Somewhat Important	37%	40%	29%	42%	37%	30%	28%	35%	40%	42%
Not Important	32%	42%	55%	20%	43%	56%	50%	42%	37%	35%
DK	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%
Unwght N=	319	399	183	186	512	191	202	247	244	214

	Employment				Race		Age			
	FT	PT	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Most Important	2%	3%	2%	8%	3%	2%	5%	3%	4%	2%
Very Important	18%	26%	18%	16%	20%	16%	34%	16%	18%	15%
Somewhat Important	36%	48%	38%	29%	38%	29%	40%	34%	35%	39%
Not Important	43%	23%	40%	46%	39%	52%	21%	47%	42%	42%
DK	0%	0%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Unwght N=	397	81	291	140	718	85	54	224	347	279

Marriage Referendum Support, February 2012
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

	Income				Gender		Religion		
	< 50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish
Most Important	7%	2%	1%	2%	3%	3%	3%	5%	1%
Very Important	17%	17%	18%	23%	16%	21%	16%	17%	23%
Somewhat Important	34%	37%	38%	42%	35%	38%	38%	34%	41%
Not Important	42%	43%	41%	33%	45%	37%	41%	44%	33%
DK	1%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	245	266	132	102	429	482	397	236	68

	Born Again		Union Household			Christie Impression		
	Yes	No	Public	Private	No Union	Fav	Unfav	No Opin
Most Important	8%	3%	0%	1%	4%	2%	5%	3%
Very Important	20%	15%	29%	23%	16%	13%	26%	17%
Somewhat Important	19%	40%	35%	33%	37%	36%	33%	50%
Not Important	52%	41%	35%	43%	42%	48%	36%	29%
DK	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Unwght N=	125	532	121	55	717	457	347	99

	Tea Party Impression			Occupy Wall St Imp			Booker Impression		
	Fav	Unfav	No Opin	Fav	Unfav	No Opin	Fav	Unfav	No Opin
Most Important	4%	3%	3%	5%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%
Very Important	11%	26%	12%	28%	12%	19%	20%	12%	17%
Somewhat Important	32%	41%	31%	35%	39%	36%	37%	36%	36%
Not Important	52%	28%	54%	32%	46%	41%	38%	50%	43%
DK	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Unwght N=	225	457	195	260	356	205	435	92	282

	Support/Oppose GM				Support/Oppose Referendum		
	Support	Oppose	CU (vol)	DK	Support	Oppose	DK
Most Important	4%	4%	0%	0%	4%	3%	0%
Very Important	28%	11%	3%	3%	14%	24%	23%
Somewhat Important	46%	22%	48%	27%	39%	35%	28%
Not Important	22%	62%	48%	66%	43%	37%	48%
DK	0%	1%	0%	5%	0%	1%	2%
Unwght N=	451	325	38	70	475	366	64

Q Governor Christie has proposed letting voters decide for or against gay marriage in November. Newark Mayor Cory Booker opposes this, saying civil rights issues should not be decided by voters. What about you? Do you support or oppose letting voters decide on legalizing gay marriage?

Support Ref 53%
Oppose Ref 40%
DK 7%

Unwght N= 907

Marriage Referendum Support, February 2012
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

	Party ID				Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Cons	HS or less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work	
Support Ref	38%	60%	68%	41%	53%	68%	52%	59%	59%	42%	
Oppose Ref	54%	33%	27%	48%	40%	30%	37%	37%	34%	53%	
DK	8%	6%	6%	11%	7%	3%	11%	4%	7%	5%	
Unwght N=	319	396	182	187	509	189	201	246	243	213	

	Employment				Race		Age			
	FT	PT	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Support Ref	53%	54%	52%	56%	55%	35%	58%	56%	53%	48%
Oppose Ref	41%	37%	40%	39%	38%	52%	29%	40%	43%	42%
DK	6%	9%	9%	5%	6%	13%	13%	4%	4%	10%
Unwght N=	394	81	289	141	715	85	54	224	345	277

	Income				Gender		Religion		
	< 50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish
Support Ref	49%	57%	61%	47%	57%	50%	57%	51%	48%
Oppose Ref	41%	39%	37%	51%	37%	42%	37%	42%	48%
DK	10%	4%	2%	3%	6%	7%	6%	7%	4%
Unwght N=	244	265	131	101	426	481	395	234	68

	Born Again		Union Household			Christie Impression		
	Yes	No	Public	Private	No Union	Fav	Unfav	No Opin
Support Ref	60%	54%	47%	53%	54%	66%	40%	52%
Oppose Ref	37%	39%	50%	40%	39%	29%	53%	38%
DK	3%	7%	3%	7%	7%	6%	7%	9%
Unwght N=	124	531	120	55	715	455	346	98

	Tea Party Impression			Occupy Wall St Imp			Booker Impression		
	Fav	Unfav	No Opin	Fav	Unfav	No Opin	Fav	Unfav	No Opin
Support Ref	71%	45%	56%	44%	64%	50%	47%	61%	59%
Oppose Ref	24%	49%	35%	49%	32%	39%	48%	34%	31%
DK	5%	6%	9%	8%	4%	10%	6%	4%	10%
Unwght N=	224	456	193	261	354	202	436	90	280

	Support/Oppose GM				Importance of GM			
	Support	Oppose	CU (vol)	DK	Most Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Support Ref	50%	60%	62%	43%	63%	41%	56%	56%
Oppose Ref	44%	36%	25%	29%	37%	51%	39%	36%
DK	6%	4%	12%	29%	0%	8%	5%	8%
Unwght N=	449	324	38	70	28	164	328	375

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 9-11, 2012

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone from February 9-11, 2012 with a scientifically selected random sample of 914 New Jersey registered voters. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey population, using gender, age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity matching to 2010 US Census Bureau data. All results are reported with these weighted data. This telephone poll included 734 landline respondents supplemented with 180 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 914 adults is +/-3.3 percentage points, 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 46.7 and 53.3 percent (50 +/-3.3) 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.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by Braun Research, Incorporated. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were 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
914 New Jersey Registered Voters**

37% Democrat	47% Male	14% 18-29	71% White
43% Independent	53% Female	32% 30-49	15% Black
20% Republican		39% 50-64	7% Hispanic
		24% 65+	6% Asian/Other/Multi