

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 10, 2010

For more commentary from Professor Redlawsk see
<http://eagletonpoll.blogspot.com>

EDITOR'S NOTE: ATTENTION POLITICAL 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 more questions and tables.

VOTERS SAY NEW JERSEY SHOULD SPEND MORE ON EDUCATION

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – Though harboring mixed feelings about key aspects of Gov. Chris Christie's proposed education reform plan, a clear majority of New Jerseyans say the state is underfunding education, according to a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released today. Almost six-in-10 (59 percent) registered voters say not enough is being spent on schooling; 15 percent believes too much is being spent, while 21 percent thinks expenditures are adequate.

At the same time, Garden Staters are decidedly mixed on two of the governor's key reform proposals. A large majority of registered voters (70 percent) say tenure for school teachers is mostly a barrier to removing bad teachers, but 63 percent opposes basing teacher pay on pupil test results.

"The spending results are consistent with our earlier polling," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers. "New Jerseyans generally support their schools and want to see them better funded, even while they want the state to cut back on funding in other areas. While they question tenure, they do not necessarily support the governor's plans or his spending cuts."

The poll results are from a random sample of 885 registered voters interviewed statewide Oct. 21-27. The margin of error for the full sample is +/-3.3 percentage points.

Partisans split on funding

Almost twice as many Democrats as Republicans (74 percent to 38 percent) say state funding for education is inadequate. A majority of independents (55 percent) feel the same. Sixty-five percent of parents with children under 18 believe that New Jersey does not spend enough on its schools compared to 54 percent of adults living in households without children.

Public mixed on Christie's ideas

In September, Gov. Christie unveiled his plan for education reforms that included eliminating tenure, basing pay on pupil performance and testing teacher proficiency in reading

and math. New Jerseyans are split on his ideas: 63 percent oppose basing a teacher's salary on test scores while 32 percent support the concept of merit pay. Respondents are likely to favor tenure reform, since 70 percent think tenure is a "barrier to eliminating bad teachers," while only 22 percent believe teacher tenure is necessary for job protection. An overwhelming 90 percent of registered voters say teachers should be tested for their reading and math proficiency.

Virtually all (95 percent) parents of minor children support teacher testing, while 59 percent oppose merit-based pay and 73 percent see tenure as a barrier to removing bad teachers. "Those in households with children under 18 are a little less likely to oppose merit pay and somewhat more likely to see tenure as a barrier," said Redlawsk. "Those closest to the system see its problems more directly, but still do not support key parts of the Christie plan."

Republicans and Democrats agree: don't base pay on test scores

Sixty-eight percent of Democrats, 64 percent of Republicans and 57 percent of independents oppose linking teacher salaries to pupil test scores. At the same time, even a strong majority (60 percent) of Democrats see tenure as a barrier to removing bad teachers, rather than an important job protection. Even more Republicans (80 percent) and independents (75 percent) agree. Just 29 percent of Democrats, 15 percent of Republicans and 17 percent of independents see tenure as an important job protection.

Support for teacher testing in math and reading also crosses party lines: 86 percent of Democrats, 92 percent of Republicans, and 94 percent of independents think teachers should be required to pass reading and math tests to be certified.

"While Democrats and Republicans may differ on state spending for education, there is remarkable agreement across parties on other issues," Redlawsk said. "The governor's idea for merit pay gets little support across the board, but members of both parties agree with testing teachers and are dubious about tenure."

Diverse thoughts about problems in education

Asked to name New Jersey education's most pressing problem in their own words – before hearing other questions on the subject – registered voters come up with many ideas, Redlawsk observed. About 20 percent says budget issues, while 15 percent names teacher-related issues, including high salaries and benefits, and teacher proficiency. In this group a small percentage (2%) says teacher shortages.

Another 8 percent call the New Jersey Education Association (or "teachers' union") the

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Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

most important problem, 5 percent say “bureaucracy” and 4 percent focus on class size. Only 3 percent cite teacher tenure as the most important problem.

One in four parents (26 percent) sees budgets as the biggest problem in education, with another 17 percent citing teacher-related issues. Just 8 percent of parents call the NJEA the biggest problem in education.

Democrats and Republicans view the biggest problem differently: 25 percent of Democrats cite budget issues while only 16 percent of Republicans agree, along with 20 percent of independents. Twenty percent of Democrats, 14 percent of Republicans, and 11 percent of independents cite teachers as the biggest problem facing education in New Jersey. Republicans are much more likely to name the NJEA as the problem, by a 13 percent to 3 percent margin over Democrats; 11 percent of independents think the NJEA is the biggest problem facing education in the state today.

Questions and Tables Follow on the Next Page

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Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll October 21-27, 2010

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release of November 10, 2010 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. All percentages are of New Jersey registered voters.

Q. Please rate how Governor Christie is handling his job as Governor. Is it excellent, good, fair, or poor?

Excellent	16%	Excellent/Good	45%
Good	29%	Fair/Poor	52%
Fair	24%	DK/No opinion	3%
Poor	28%	N=	876
DK/No opinion	3%		
N=	876		

	Party ID		
	Dem	Ind	Rep
Excellent	6%	15%	34%
Good	18%	33%	41%
Fair	27%	27%	14%
Poor	47%	22%	9%
DK/No opinion	2%	3%	1%
N=	308	335	203

Q. I'm going to read you a list of items. Please tell me if you think New Jersey is spending too much, not enough, or just the right amount of money on the following items. First/Next:

[ROTATE ITEMS]

Education

Too much	15%
Not enough	59%
Right amount	21%
DK	5%
N=	879

	Party ID			Ideology			Children under 18 at home	
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Yes	No
Too much	5%	18%	28%	8%	13%	28%	13%	17%
Not enough	74%	55%	38%	73%	60%	43%	65%	54%
Right amount	17%	20%	30%	14%	22%	26%	18%	24%
DK	4%	8%	3%	4%	6%	4%	5%	5%
N=	308	336	204	154	501	203	347	524

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	Education				Age			
	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Too Much	11%	15%	19%	18%	2%	12%	22%	20%
Not Enough	61%	61%	52%	57%	76%	61%	53%	50%
Right Amount	23%	18%	24%	21%	14%	22%	22%	24%
DK	5%	6%	5%	5%	7%	4%	4%	6%
N=	282	285	180	130	136	315	209	216

	Income				Race			
	under 50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Too Much	11%	11%	22%	18%	18%	0%	20%	8%
Not Enough	69%	57%	55%	50%	50%	94%	43%	83%
Right Amount	15%	24%	19%	27%	26%	4%	21%	8%
DK	5%	7%	4%	5%	6%	3%	16%	0%
N=	264	209	101	103	593	108	56	82

	Christie Job Performance					Union Household		Public Labor Union Household	
	Excel	Good	Fair	Poor	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
					Opinion				
Too Much	42%	19%	8%	3%	0%	12%	16%	13%	9%
Not Enough	16%	44%	70%	86%	79%	54%	61%	62%	40%
Right Amount	39%	29%	19%	5%	8%	27%	19%	20%	40%
DK	34%	8%	2%	6%	12%	8%	4%	5%	10%
N=	142	254	207	248	24	224	649	133	79

Transit

Too much	12%
Not enough	32%
Right amount	41%
DK	16%
N=	880

	Party ID			Ideology		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv
Too much	8%	15%	12%	3%	13%	16%
Not enough	39%	26%	30%	47%	29%	28%
Right amount	42%	41%	39%	39%	42%	38%
DK	12%	18%	18%	11%	15%	18%
N=	308	337	203	154	501	201

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	Education				Age			
	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Too Much	16%	9%	14%	10%	15%	14%	6%	10%
Not Enough	34%	30%	25%	14%	22%	42%	47%	14%
Right Amount	35%	46%	44%	58%	47%	34%	28%	58%
DK	16%	15%	18%	18%	16%	10%	20%	18%
N=	283	286	179	137	316	212	215	137

	Income				Race			
	under 50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Too Much	13%	14%	10%	12%	10%	11%	23%	17%
Not Enough	38%	27%	30%	39%	34%	33%	20%	21%
Right Amount	35%	43%	52%	32%	40%	45%	32%	49%
DK	14%	16%	9%	17%	16%	10%	25%	13%
N=	263	210	101	102	593	108	56	82

	Christie Job Performance					Union Household		Public Labor Union Household	
	Excel	Good	Fair	Poor	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
					Opinion				
Too Much	17%	11%	13%	10%	4%	11%	12%	11%	14%
Not Enough	21%	29%	32%	39%	54%	30%	33%	35%	22%
Right Amount	45%	41%	44%	38%	12%	44%	39%	45%	44%
DK	17%	19%	12%	14%	29%	15%	16%	10%	20%
N=	141	254	207	249	24	222	651	132	79

Public safety

Too much	10%
Not enough	32%
Right amount	47%
DK	11%
N=	879

	Party ID				Ideology	
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv
Too much	7%	13%	7%	11%	9%	9%
Not enough	37%	30%	27%	21%	34%	30%
Right amount	43%	47%	58%	50%	46%	54%
DK	13%	10%	8%	18%	11%	7%
N=	310	336	203	155	499	202

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	Education				Age			
	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Too Much	8%	9%	12%	18%	6%	10%	12%	8%
Not Enough	40%	33%	27%	57%	46%	27%	32%	30%
Right Amount	41%	48%	47%	21%	38%	54%	48%	42%
DK	11%	11%	14%	5%	10%	8%	9%	19%
N=	280	286	180	130	137	314	210	216

	Income				Race			
	under 50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Too Much	8%	11%	10%	12%	10%	4%	14%	7%
Not Enough	42%	28%	24%	22%	26%	64%	30%	36%
Right Amount	37%	53%	58%	61%	51%	25%	52%	46%
DK	14%	8%	8%	5%	12%	7%	4%	11%
N=	263	207	100	102	592	108	56	83

	Christie Job Performance					Union Household		Public Labor Union Household	
	Excel	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	Yes	No	Yes	No
Too Much	13%	11%	10%	7%	0%	10%	10%	11%	9%
Not Enough	19%	24%	35%	44%	35%	30%	33%	36%	18%
Right Amount	59%	54%	46%	37%	22%	52%	45%	48%	62%
DK	9%	11%	9%	12%	44%	8%	12%	5%	11%
N=	141	253	207	248	23	222	651	131	79

Q. And now, on to another topic. In one or two words, what is the biggest problem with education in New Jersey? [OPEN-ENDED]

Budget/Finances	20%
Teachers	15%
NJEA/Teachers Union	8%
Administration and bureaucracy	5%
Class size	4%
Parents	3%
Spending	3%
Tenure	3%
Quality	3%
Governor Christie	2%
Students	2%
Pensions	1%
Accountability	1%
Other/DK	29%
N =	885

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	Party ID			Children < 18 at home	
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Yes	No
Budget/Finances	25%	20%	16%	26%	17%
Teachers	20%	11%	14%	17%	14%
NJEA/Teachers Union	3%	11%	13%	8%	9%
Administration and bureaucracy	4%	5%	6%	4%	5%
Class size	3%	5%	1%	5%	3%
Parents	3%	2%	4%	3%	3%
Spending	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%
Tenure	1%	4%	6%	3%	3%
Quality	6%	2%	3%	1%	5%
Governor Christie	4%	2%	1%	2%	3%
Students	1%	1%	4%	2%	2%
Pensions	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Accountability	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%
Other/DK	28%	31%	28%	25%	33%
N =	309	338	202	349	526

Q. In your opinion, should a public school teacher's pay depend on the test scores of his or her students?

Yes	32%
No	63%
DK	5%
N=	877

	Party ID			Ideology			Children under 18 at home	
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Yes	No
Yes	26%	37%	33%	25%	33%	33%	39%	27%
No	68%	57%	64%	70%	62%	59%	59%	66%
DK	6%	6%	4%	4%	5%	8%	3%	7%
N=	309	337	201	154	501	198	346	524

	Education				Age			
	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Yes	32%	33%	34%	27%	32%	37%	28%	29%
No	64%	59%	63%	70%	65%	57%	67%	65%
DK	5%	8%	4%	2%	3%	6%	5%	6%
N=	281	285	179	129	137	314	210	216

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	Income				Race			
	< 50K	50K- <100 K	100K- <150K	150K +	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Yes	30%	30%	32%	36%	32%	23%	40%	42%
No	66%	65%	61%	58%	63%	71%	58%	50%
DK	4%	5%	7%	6%	6%	6%	2%	8%
N=	263	209	100	103	592	108	57	82

	Gov. Christie's Job Performance				No opinion	Union household		Public Labor Union Household	
	Excel	Good	Fair	Poor		Yes	No	Yes	No
Yes	37%	34%	37%	24%	13%	29%	33%	32%	27%
No	57%	58%	59%	72%	78%	65%	62%	67%	64%
DK	6%	8%	4%	4%	9%	6%	5%	2%	9%
N=	138	255	206	249	23	223	648	132	78

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			Children under 18 at home	
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Yes	No	
Job Protection	29%	17%	15%	29%	20%	20%	19%	24%	
Barrier	60%	75%	80%	59%	72%	75%	73%	68%	
DK	11%	7%	6%	12%	8%	4%	8%	9%	
N=	303	334	201	151	493	201	345	514	

	Education				Age			
	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Job Protection	19%	21%	24%	25%	24%	20%	22%	21%
Barrier	71%	72%	72%	62%	71%	74%	70%	65%
DK	10%	7%	4%	13%	5%	6%	9%	14%
N=	279	282	177	126	137	308	208	212

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	Income				Race			
	< 50K	50K- 100K	100K- 150K	150K +	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Job Protection	21%	26%	15%	16%	18%	28%	30%	27%
Barrier	69%	66%	79%	78%	74%	64%	62%	66%
DK	10%	8%	6%	6%	8%	8%	7%	7%
N=	261	207	100	100	582	108	56	82

	Gov. Christie's Job Performance				No opinion	Union household		Public Labor Union Household	
	Excel	Good	Fair	Poor		Yes	No	Yes	No
Job Protection	7%	17%	24%	30%	29%	27%	20%	32%	23%
Barrier	86%	74%	69%	61%	46%	66%	72%	63%	67%
DK	6%	9%	7%	8%	25%	7%	9%	6%	10%
N=	138	250	203	246	24	218	642	127	79

Q. Do you think that teachers should be required to pass reading and math tests in order to be certified to teach no matter what field they teach in?

Yes	90%
No	8%
DK	2%
N =	879

	Party ID				Ideology			Children under 18 at home	
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	Yes	No	
Yes	86%	94%	92%	88%	92%	87%	95%	86%	
No	14%	4%	4%	12%	6%	8%	4%	10%	
DK	0%	2%	4%	0%	1%	5%	1%	3%	
N=	308	338	203	155	498	201	349	523	

	Education				Age			
	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Yes	87%	93%	91%	88%	94%	91%	90%	84%
No	9%	7%	8%	8%	5%	8%	8%	11%
DK	4%	0%	2%	4%	1%	1%	2%	6%
N=	282	285	180	130	138	314	211	217

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Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

	Income				Race			
	< 50K	50K- <100 K	100K- <150K	150K +	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Yes	88%	90%	91%	95%	90%	90%	93%	87%
No	10%	9%	7%	5%	7%	10%	5%	13%
DK	2%	1%	2%	%	3%	0%	2%	0%
N=	263	209	101	103	594	108	57	82

	Gov. Christie's Job Performance				No opinion	Union household		Public Labor Union Household	
	Excel	Good	Fair	Poor		Yes	No	Yes	No
Yes	92%	91%	91%	87%	75%	89%	90%	89%	89%
No	5%	5%	7%	12%	25%	10%	7%	10%	11%
DK	2%	4^	2%	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%	0%
N=	140	254	207	249	24	224	649	133	79

**Rutgers-Eagleton Poll October 21-27, 2010
New Jersey Statewide Poll**

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted from October 21-27, 2010 with a scientifically selected random sample of 885 registered voters from throughout the state of New Jersey. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the population, including gender, age, race, education, and Hispanic ethnicity. All results are reported with these weighted data. This telephone poll included 798 landline respondents acquired through random digit dialing, and 87 interviews of randomly selected cell phone households.

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 a sample of 885 registered voters is +/-3.3 points, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey registered voters favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent confident that the true figure would be between 46.7 and 53.3 percent (50 +/- 3.3) had all New Jersey registered 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.

Data were collected by staff and students working with the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and were analyzed by staff of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

Weighted Sample Characteristics (N=885 Registered Voters)			
36% Dem	48% Male	16% 18-29	68% White
40% Independent	52% Female	36% 30-49	13% Black
24% Republican		24% 50-64	9% Hispanic
		25% 65+	7% Asian
			3% Other