

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 11, 2010

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

Contact: David Redlawsk, Ph.D.
Email: redlawsk@rutgers.edu
Phone: (732) 932-9384 ext. 285; (319) 400-1134 (cell)

**GARDEN STATE RESIDENTS SUPPORT HEALTH CARE REFORM
BUT ARE UNHAPPY WITH PROPOSED BILL BEFORE CONGRESS**

81 percent of respondents support change for a broken system that Congress should fix

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – Support for health care reform remains strong in New Jersey, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll that finds 81 percent of residents say the health care system needs to be changed. Only 17 percent believe the current system works well enough.

At the same time, given a choice between passing the current health care bill and starting over, more than two-thirds believe Congress should start crafting new legislation.

“Despite the limited progress that health care reform has made in Washington, the desire for change remains very strong in New Jersey,” said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University. “The vast majority sees the need for change, but has soured on the bill under debate in Congress.”

The poll of 953 New Jersey adults was conducted Feb. 19-22 with a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percentage points.

Change Worth taking a risk

Most New Jerseyans (70 percent) believe changing the health care system is worth whatever risk it may carry, while only 25 percent say that change is too risky. Five percent are not sure. Of those favoring change, 82 percent believe the risk is worthwhile; only 13 percent think it would be too risky to do so. Among the small group of adults who think the system works well, 75 percent say making a change would be too risky.

“There is real pressure for health care reform,” said Redlawsk. “A solid majority believes the current system needs to be fixed and it is worth the risk to pass a bill. There has been remarkably little change in opinion on the need for reform since early November, despite the debate inside and outside of Washington.”

That Rutgers-Eagleton Poll reported that 63 percent of New Jerseyans thought the health care system “could work better” and 88 percent said “change is needed.”

Change yes, current bill no

While Garden Staters are willing to risk health care reform, they feel strongly that Congress should and come up with a new bill. Only 22 percent say Congress should pass the current reform proposals, while 68 percent want the lawmakers to start over. More than half of Democrats want to begin anew, along with 60 percent of independents and 91 percent of Republicans. Only 37 percent of Democrats want passage of the current proposal. Of those favoring a fresh look at reform by Congress, 62 percent think the risk is worthwhile. Almost a third (31 percent) calls it too risky.

Two-thirds of those backing health care system reform, however, still say Congress should start on new legislation. Only 24 percent think the bill should be passed as is. A larger group (74 percent) of those who say the current health care system works well enough believes lawmakers should introduce a new bill, compared to only 18 percent favoring the proposed legislation.

“The interesting finding is despite the strong interest in change and the willingness to say change is worth the risk it brings, New Jerseyans still want Congress to start over,” Redlawsk said. “To most New Jerseyans, the current health care process has resulted in a bill they just do not believe is worth passing.”

Reform continues to be important to Garden State residents

Compared to the November Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, Garden State residents are just as likely to say health care reform is very or somewhat important to them now. The new poll finds 58 percent call health care reform very important, and 27 percent say it is somewhat important. In the November poll, 60 percent said reform was very important and 26 percent said it was somewhat important.

An overwhelming majority – 90 percent – of residents who call health care very important also believe the system must be changed. Similarly, respondents who feel health care reform is very important value the potential payoff, with 76 percent thinking the risk is worthwhile. At the same time, nearly two-thirds of this group is just as likely as others to think Congress should propose new legislation.

Question and Tables follow on the Next Page

**Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 22-25, 2010
Questions and Tables**

The questions covered in the release of March 11, 2010 are list below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. All percentages are of New Jersey adults.

Q. Now, thinking about the health care system, does it work well enough as it is, or does it need to be changed?

Works well enough as is	16%
Needs to be changed	81%
Don't Know	2%
N=	954

	<u>Party</u>			<u>Ideology</u>		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Liberal	Middle	Conserv
Works well enough as is	7%	17%	30%	6%	14%	32%
Needs to be changed	91%	81%	67%	92%	85%	64%
Don't Know	1%	2%	4%	2%	2%	4%
N=	351	285	240	159	503	205

	<u>Age</u>				<u>Gender</u>		<u>Employment</u>			
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Male	Fem	Full Time	Part Time	Retired	Not Employed
Works well enough as is	18%	14%	15%	24%	17%	17%	13%	27%	25%	12%
Needs to be changed	80%	85%	83%	73%	81%	81%	85%	71%	73%	86%
Don't Know	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%
N=	113	392	200	172	419	466	399	109	174	198

**Health Care Reform and New Jersey
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

	<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>				<u>Income</u>			
	Asian	Black	Latino	White	< 50K	50K – < 100K	100K- < 150K	150K +
Works well enough as is	15%	4%	11%	20%	15%	19%	11%	18%
Needs to be changed	83%	96%	90%	78%	82%	79%	88%	80%
Don't Know	2%	0%	0%	3%	3%	2%	1%	2%
N=	46	109	76	610	285	240	144	100

	<u>Education</u>				<u>Region</u>				
	HS or Less	Some College/ AA	4-year Degree	Grad	Urban	Suburb	Exurb	Philly Area	Shore
Works well enough as is	18%	19%	14%	14%	14%	15%	22%	12%	22%
Needs to be changed	79%	79%	85%	85%	84%	83%	78%	85%	75%
Don't Know	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	3%	3%
N=	323	238	199	123	137	281	135	170	161

	<u>Religion</u>				<u>Evangelical</u>	
	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish	Other	yes	no
Works well enough as is	19%	15%	11%	14%	16%	17%
Needs to be changed	79%	83%	87%	85%	83%	81%
Don't Know	3%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%
N=	419	277	38	125	161	718

*Health Care Reform and New Jersey
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

Q. Is it worth the risk to make changes in the health care system, or is change too risky?

Worth the risk	70%
Too risky	24%
Don't Know	5%
N=	954

<i>Current System:</i>	<i>Change in current system</i>			<i>Change is:</i>	<i>The Heath Care system</i>		
	Worth risk	Too risky	Don't Know		Works well	Needs change	Don't Know
Works well enough as is	4%	50%	18%	Worth the risk	18%	82%	16%
Needs to be changed	95%	43%	80%	Too risky	76%	13%	79%
Don't Know	1%	7%	2%	Don't Know	6%	5%	5%
N=	613	222	45	N=	146	715	19

Trend Comparison November 6-10, 2009 Rutgers-Eagleton Poll:

Which of the following statements about health care reform is closest to your opinion? [READ FIRST FOUR OPTIONS]

The system works well so we do not need to change it	7%
The system works well, but some change is needed anyway	30%
The system could work better, but change is too risky	5%
The system could work better and change is needed	58%
Don't Know	1%
N=	903

	<u>Party</u>			<u>Ideology</u>			<u>Age</u>				<u>Gender</u>	
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Liberal	Middle	Conserv	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	M	F
Worth the risk	86%	71%	45%	88%	75%	45%	74%	75%	71%	52%	73%	67%
Too Risky	9%	24%	51%	11%	20%	49%	25%	21%	24%	38%	25%	26%
Don't Know	5%	5%	5%	1%	5%	6%	1%	4%	5%	10%	2%	8%
N=	351	283	239	160	500	204	114	392	200	172	417	465

*Health Care Reform and New Jersey
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

Employment

	Full Time	Part Time	Retired	Not Empl
Worth the Risk	75%	66%	54%	76%
Too Risky	22%	28%	39%	19%
Don't Know	3%	6%	8%	6%
N=	397	109	173	197

Race/Ethnicity

Income

	Asian	Black	Latino	White	>50K	>100K	>150K	150K +	Total
Worth the risk	68%	89%	75%	65%	73%	69%	77%	70%	72%
Too Risky	32%	5%	17%	30%	21%	28%	18%	29%	24%
Don't Know	0%	6%	8%	5%	7%	3%	6%	1%	5%
N=	47	109	76	608	285	239	145	97	766

Education

Region

	HS or Less	Some College/ AA	4-year Degree	Grad	Urban	Suburb	Exurb	Philly Area	Shore
Worth the risk	64%	69%	76%	75%	71%	72%	62%	77%	63%
Too risky	31%	23%	22%	21%	23%	23%	33%	20%	31%
Don't Know	6%	8%	2%	4%	6%	5%	6%	3%	6%
N=	323	238	198	123	137	281	135	168	161

Religion

Evangelical

	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish	Other	Yes	No
Worth the risk	66%	71%	80%	78%	58%	72%
Too Risky	28%	22%	21%	22%	32%	24%
Don't Know	6%	7%	0%	0%	10%	4%
N=	419	275	39	125	161	716

*Health Care Reform and New Jersey
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

Q. If it comes down to these two choices should Congress Pass the health care bill as it is, or start over and come up with a new health care bill?

Pass the health care bill as is	23%
Start over and come up with a new health care bill	67%
Don't Know	10%
N=	954

	<u>Party ID</u>			<u>Ideology</u>		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Liberal	Middle	Conserv
Pass health care bill	38%	21%	3%	47%	21%	5%
Start over	53%	66%	91%	45%	68%	89%
Don't Know	9%	13%	6%	8%	11%	6%
N =	348	283	239	159	497	203

	Congress Should:				Congress Should:		
	Pass as is	Start over	Don't Know		Pass as is	Start over	Don't Know
<i>Current System:</i>				<i>Change is:</i>			
Works well as is	13%	18%	13%	Worth the risk	89%	63%	72%
Needs to be changed	86%	80%	83%	Too risky	10%	31%	19%
Don't Know	1%	2%	4%	Don't Know	1%	6%	9%
N=	198	594	84	N=	197	592	85

*Health Care Reform and New Jersey
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

Q. How important is the issue of health care reform to you personally? Is it:

	<u>Feb '10</u>	<u>Nov '09</u>
Very important	59%	60%
Somewhat important	27%	26%
Not too important	14%	13%
Not at all important	-	1%
Total	954	901

<i>Current system:</i>	<u>Healthcare is:</u>			<i>Change is:</i>	<u>Healthcare is:</u>		
	Very imp	Somewhat imp	Not too imp		Very imp	Somewh at imp	Not too imp
Works well as is	11%	14%	43%	Worth the risk	76%	69%	45%
Needs to be changed	87%	83%	55%	Too risky	19%	28%	46%
Don't Know	2%	3%	2%	Don't Know	5%	3%	9%
N=	518	237	129	N=	516	236	130

<i>Congress Should:</i>	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important
Pass the health care bill as is	27%	14%	20%
Start over	64%	74%	73%
Don't Know	9%	12%	8%
N=	515	233	128

	<u>Party Id</u>			<u>Ideology</u>		
	Democrat	Independent	Republican	Liberal	Middle	Conserv
Very important	70%	54%	46%	72%	59%	44%
Somewhat important, or	19%	33%	31%	19%	28%	32%
Not too important	11%	13%	22%	9%	14%	23%
Don't Know	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
N = 879	352	286	241	158	503	205

*Health Care Reform and New Jersey
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 19-22, 2010

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted from February 19-22, 2010 with a scientifically selected random sample of 953 New Jersey adults yielding 886 registered voters. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey population, including gender, age, race, education, and Hispanic ethnicity. All results are reported with these weighted data.

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 953 adults is +/-3.2 points, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.8 and 53.2 percent (50 +/- 3.2) 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.

Weighted Sample Characteristics (n=953 adults)			
40% Dem	48% Male	16% 18-29	69% White
34% Independent	52% Female	43% 30-49	13% Black
26% Republican		22% 50-64	10% Hispanic
		19% 65+	5% Asian
			3% Other/Multiple