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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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.

**NEW JERSEY CONGRESSIONAL RACES TIGHTENING;
REPUBLICANS MORE MOTIVATED APPROACHING FINISH LINE**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – With the midterm election only days away, New Jersey voters statewide are moving toward Republicans, as the overall generic ballot tightens, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released today. While 41 percent of registered voters say they will vote for a Democrat, with 31 percent preferring a Republican, likely voters are leaning more Republican; a generic Democrat leads by only 46 percent to 40 percent.

This is a distinct improvement for Republicans, who trailed by 11 points in a September Rutgers-Eagleton Poll among likely voters. Only 7 percent of likely voters remain undecided.

Concurrently, there is a noticeable “enthusiasm gap” between GOP backers and Democrats. About two-thirds of Republicans are at the “top of the enthusiasm scale” compared to 42 percent of Democrats and 43 percent of independents. About half of New Jersey registered voters say they are moderately or very enthusiastic about voting.

“Partisans remain with their party,” said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University. “But independent likely voters who moved toward Democrats in September are trending back to Republicans, preferring a generic Republican by a 42 percent to 35 percent margin. If independents turn out, they could tip close races, especially if Democrats stay home.”

The poll of 885 registered New Jersey voters was conducted Oct. 21-27. The registered voters sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.3 percentage points. Generic vote questions were asked of random half-samples, which have a margin of error of +/-4.6 percentage points. Results do not apply to specific districts but give a sense of the overall mood of the state.

Overall support for incumbents increasing

To test attitudes toward incumbent members of Congress, half those polled were asked if they would vote for a generic Republican versus a Democrat, while the other half were asked if they would vote for their current representative or a challenger.

While the partisan vote has tightened, voters have also become more supportive of incumbents in the final weeks of the campaign. Among registered voters, 37 percent would vote for their “current congressman,” while 26 percent would support a challenger. When faced with this choice, 16 percent say they would not vote, and 19 percent are unsure.

Likely voters also prefer their incumbent to a challenger, 44 percent to 34 percent, with 22 percent unsure. This is a large shift from September, when incumbents were favored by two points.

“We see a partisan split in the generic incumbent test,” said Redlawsk. “Likely Democratic voters statewide support incumbents by almost a 4-1 ratio, while Republicans prefer a challenger by 4-to-3. Independents also slightly prefer challengers, by a 10-to-9 margin.

Republican incumbents increasingly safer

In GOP-held districts across the state, 48 percent of likely voters say they will vote Republican, while 38 percent will vote for a Democrat. Eleven percent are undecided. This is a substantial improvement for Republican incumbents, who were losing the generic ballot test in September, 42 percent to 44 percent.

When framed in terms of “current congressman” versus a “challenger,” Republicans are doing even better: 50 percent of likely voters support their current representative, 27 percent, the challenger and 23 percent are unsure. “While we can’t speak about a specific district, we see no evidence that any of the state’s five Republican representatives is in danger next week,” Redlawsk said.

Some Democrats in trouble

Across New Jersey’s eight Democratic congressional districts, little has changed since September: 52 percent of likely voters support a Democrat, while 36 percent will vote Republican. Another 8 percent prefer a third party candidate, and 5 percent don’t know. When framed as incumbent versus challenger, likely voters favor their current congressman by only 2 points. Registered voters prefer the incumbent by nine percentage points.

“Those more likely to turn out in these districts are at least in part motivated by anti-incumbency,” said Redlawsk. “Even so, the generic party ballot suggests that most Democratic incumbents will win as usual.”

Examining the three most competitive Democratic-held seats paints a very different picture, Redlawsk observed. Across the 3rd, 6th, and 12th districts combined, a generic Democrat holds a four percentage point lead, a “tossup” when the small size of the sample is

considered. Moreover, in these districts likely voters favor a challenger over their current congressman by 15 points, 49 percent to 34 percent.

“We see very tough races for incumbents Rush Holt (12th CD), John Adler (3rd CD), and to a lesser extent, Frank Pallone (6th CD),” said Redlawsk. “Our separate 3rd District polling shows a tie, while this generic across-district polling shows things tight in all three districts. The key is turnout. Among registered voters, the generic Democrat leads by eight percentage points, but by only four points among likely voters. And when we ask about incumbents, registered voters are only slightly anti-incumbent by four points, while likely voters are ready to throw them out.”

Voters mood somewhat worse with more ready for Republicans

Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of likely voters report that the country is on the wrong track, while only 30 percent think it is going in the right direction. Republicans and independents overwhelmingly feel this way, with 89 percent of Republicans and 71 percent of independents feeling things are on the wrong track. Forty percent of Democrats feel the same.

Voters seem to be less willing to give Democrats more time to do things in Washington, with 48 percent saying Democrats should get more time and 43 percent saying it is time to turn to the GOP. Support for Democrats is down substantially from September, when 56 percent would have given them more time, and only 36 percent said it is time to elect Republicans. Independents support electing Republicans by a 46 percent to 40 percent margin.

The long campaign may finally be wearing on voters, the poll found. Only 31 percent of likely voters now say they are following news about the election very closely, compared to 42 percent in September.

Questions and Tables follow on the Next Page

**Rutgers-Eagleton Poll October 21-27, 2010
Questions and Tables**

The questions covered in the release of October 28, 2010 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Q. There will be an election for US Congress in November. Please rate your level of enthusiasm about voting in this election on a scale from zero to ten, where zero means you're not at all enthusiastic about voting and ten means you're extremely enthusiastic about voting this year. You can use any number from zero to ten, the higher the number the more enthusiastic you are.

[Registered Voters]	Oct 2010 Sep 2010	
Not enthusiastic (0-3)	13%	14%
Somewhat enthusiastic (4-7)	38%	39%
Very enthusiastic (8-10)	48%	47%
N =	863	827

[Registered Voters]	Dem	Ind	Rep
Not enthusiastic (0-3)	17%	12%	10%
Somewhat enthusiastic (4-7)	41%	45%	26%
Very enthusiastic (8-10)	42%	43%	64%
N =	273	335	231

CONGRESSIONAL BALLOT TESTS. RANDOMLY ASSIGN TO EITHER VERSION A (PARTY BALLOT) OR VERSION B (INCUMBENT/CHALLENGER BALLOT).

[VERSION A]

Q. If the election for Congress were today would you vote for the Republican, the Democrat, a third party candidate, or would you not vote?

[Registered Voters]	Oct 2010	Sep 2010	Aug 2010	Feb 2010
Republican	31%	33%	29%	31%
Democrat	41%	45%	38%	33%
Third party	9%	5%	4%	7%
Would not vote	8%	3%	4%	10%
DK	11%	14%	25%	20%
N =	431	415	353	403

[Likely Voters]	Oct 2010	Sep 2010
Republican	40%	36%
Democrat	46%	47%
Third party	6%	4%
DK	7%	12%
N =	279	334

*New Jersey Statewide Congressional – October 2010
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

[Registered Voters]	Lives in Dem CD			Lives in Rep CD		
	Oct 10	Sep 10	Aug 10	Oct 10	Sep 10	Aug 10
Republican	27%	31%	28%	38%	38%	31%
Democrat	44%	47%	41%	36%	42%	34%
Third party	10%	4%	4%	7%	7%	5%
Would not vote	9%	3%	4%	6%	4%	1%
DK	10%	15%	23%	13%	9%	29%
N =	270	246	224	158	122	122

[Likely Voters]	Lives in Dem CD		Lives in Rep CD	
	Oct 10	Sep 10	Oct 10	Sep 10
Republican	36%	48%	48%	42%
Democrat	52%	38%	38%	44%
Third party	8%	4%	4%	5%
DK	5%	11%	11%	7%
N =	174	104	176	115

	Registered Voters			Likely Voters		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep
Republican	1%	33%	80%	2%	42%	86%
Democrat	83%	26%	3%	91%	35%	4%
Third party	5%	14%	7%	4%	9%	6%
Would not vote	6%	11%	6%	0%	0%	0%
DK	5%	16%	5%	3%	15%	5%
N =	162	149	103	104	99	86

[Likely Voters]	Democratic Congressional Districts	
	Districts 3,6,12	All other Dem districts
	Republican	42%
Democrat	46%	57%
Third party	8%	7%
DK	5%	5%
N =	79	95

*New Jersey Statewide Congressional – October 2010
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

[VERSION B]

Q. If the election for Congress were today would you vote for your current Congressman, a challenger running against him, or would you not vote?

[Registered Voters]	Oct 2010	Sep 2010	Aug 2010	Feb 2010
Current Congressman	37%	32%	30%	32%
Challenger	26%	31%	28%	25%
Would not vote	16%	13%	11%	17%
DK	20%	24%	31%	27%
N =	439	407	367	457

[Likely Voters]	Oct 2010	Sep 2010
Current Congressman	44%	35%
Challenger	34%	33%
DK	22%	32%
N =	273	319

[Registered Voters]	Lives in Dem CD			Lives in Rep CD		
	Oct 10	Sep 10	Aug 10	Oct 10	Sep 10	Aug 10
Current Congressman	39%	33%	29%	35%	32%	33%
Challenger	30%	31%	30%	30%	32%	23%
Would not vote	12%	12%	11%	22%	15%	12%
DK	19%	24%	30%	22%	21%	33%
N =	284	229	233	189	154	129

[Likely Voters]	Lives in Dem CD		Lives in Rep CD	
	Oct 10	Sep 10	Oct 10	Sep 10
Current Congressman	40%	38%	50%	38%
Challenger	38%	34%	27%	39%
DK	22%	28%	23%	23%
N =	166	175	104	128

	Registered Voters			Likely Voters		
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep
Current Congressman	48%	32%	33%	63%	36%	34%
Challenger	16%	29%	39%	16%	40%	48%
Would not vote	19%	19%	9%	0%	0%	0%
DK	17%	21%	19%	21%	24%	18%
N =	145	182	100	91	107	73

*New Jersey Statewide Congressional – October 2010
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

[Likely Voters]	Democratic Cong Districts	
	Districts 3,6,12	All other Dem districts
Current Congressman	34%	46%
Challenger	49%	30%
DK	17%	24%
N =	71	94

Demographics for Generic Ballot Tests Version A and Version B

[Likely Voters]	Ideology			Education			Gender		
	Lib	Middle	Cons	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work	Male	Female
Republican	5%	41%	72%	30%	42%	58%	33%	39%	41%
Democrat	92%	41%	17%	55%	39%	36%	58%	44%	48%
Third party	2%	8%	7%	4%	12%	3%	1%	9%	4%
DK	1%	10%	4%	12%	6%	3%	7%	8%	7%
N=	59	140	73	74	100	54	51	127	153
Current Congressman	76%	39%	39%	42%	36%	47%	66%	46%	43%
Challenger	10%	36%	42%	32%	35%	40%	29%	39%	29%
DK	13%	25%	19%	27%	29%	13%	6%	16%	28%
N=	45	146	77	107	79	48	38	133	139

Vote	Employment				Race			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Republican	35%	58%	44%	39%	50%	0%	38%	24%
Democrat	51%	34%	36%	53%	33%	100%	62%	63%
Third party	9%	0%	4%	6%	7%	0%	0%	13%
DK	5%	8%	15%	2%	10%	0%	0%	0%
N=	129	25	71	54	201	42	12	22
Current Congressman	44%	45%	54%	32%	46%	38%	44%	43%
Challenger	36%	40%	34%	26%	41%	0%	25%	19%
DK	20%	14%	13%	42%	13%	62%	32%	38%
N=	107	31	77	57	195	29	16	24

Vote	Age				Income			
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	< 50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+
Republican	47%	36%	39%	43%	32%	39%	38%	50%
Democrat	41%	51%	48%	42%	54%	46%	55%	44%
Third party	10%	9%	4%	4%	8%	5%	7%	1%
DK	2%	4%	9%	12%	6%	10%	0%	5%
N=	37	87	77	78	91	64	23	42
Current Congressman	26%	47%	46%	47%	40%	50%	42%	43%
Challenger	21%	32%	37%	38%	27%	30%	49%	41%
DK	53%	22%	16%	15%	33%	20%	8%	16%
N=	31	90	66	85	69	76	36	31

Q. Given a choice, would you vote for someone who has years of experience in elected office or for an outsider with little prior experience in government?

	Reg	Likely
Experience	47%	45%
Outsider	31%	32%
DK	22%	23%
N =	848	566

[Likely Voters]	Party ID		
	Dem	Ind	Rep
Experience	67%	42%	43%
Outsider	14%	37%	36%
DK	19%	20%	20%
N =	188	186	157

[Likely Voters]	Experience	Outsider	DK
Republican	30%	63%	46%
Democrat	57%	23%	41%
Third party	7%	6%	3%
DK	6%	8%	10%
N=	158	73	39

Vote Choice	Experience	Outsider	DK
Current Congressman	58%	21%	45%
Challenger	17%	65%	26%
DK	25%	14%	29%
N=	117	80	69

Q. How closely have you followed news about the election this fall? Is it very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

	Reg Voters	Likely Voters
Very closely	26%	31%
Somewhat closely	44%	47%
Not too closely	21%	18%
Not at all closely	9%	4%
N=	881	551

*New Jersey Statewide Congressional – October 2010
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[Likely Voters]	Party ID		
	Dem	Ind	Rep
Very closely	31%	25%	39%
Somewhat closely	43%	50%	48%
Not too closely	20%	22%	10%
Not at all closely	6%	3%	2%
N=	195	196	158

[Likely Voters]	Very closely	Somewhat closely	Not too closely	Not at all closely
Vote Choice				
Republican	51%	40%	27%	0%
Democrat	41%	42%	60%	86%
Third party	7%	7%	6%	0%
DK	1%	11%	7%	14%
N=	88	129	55	7

Vote Choice	Very closely	Somewhat closely	Not too closely	Not at all closely
Current Congressman	51%	46%	40%	0%
Challenger	38%	32%	31%	43%
DK	12%	22%	29%	57%
N=	85	129	45	14

Q. Since the presidential election in 2008, would you say you have become more interested in politics, less interested, or has your level of interest stayed the same?

More interested	36%
Less interested	6%
Stayed the same	58%
DK	0%
N=	552

[Likely Voters]	Party ID		
	Dem	Ind	Rep
More interested	38%	37%	34%
Less interested	7%	7%	2%
Stayed the same	54%	57%	63%
N=	195	196	158

*New Jersey Statewide Congressional – October 2010
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

[Likely Voters]

Vote Choice	More interested	Less interested	Stayed the same
Republican	41%	23%	43%
Democrat	47%	64%	43%
Third party	7%	4%	6%
DK	6%	9%	8%
N=	105	22	155

Vote Choice	More interested	Less interested	Stayed the same
Current Congressman	41%	17%	49%
Challenger	33%	67%	31%
DK	26%	17%	20%
N=	96	12	163

Q. Should the Democrats in Washington be given more time to solve the country's problems or is it time to elect Republicans to take charge in Congress?

	Reg	Likely
Give Democrats More Time	53%	48%
Elect Republicans	36%	43%
DK	11%	8%
N =	853	541

[Likely Voters]

	Party ID		
	Dem	Ind	Rep
Give Democrats More Time	90%	40%	18%
Elect Republicans	5%	46%	65%
DK	6%	14%	16%
N =	193	186	159

[Likely Voters]

Vote Choice	Give Democrats More Time	Elect Republicans	DK
Republican	6%	84%	40%
Democrat	84%	5%	12%
Third party	6%	6%	12%
DK	4%	5%	36%
N=	139	108	25

*New Jersey Statewide Congressional – October 2010
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

[Likely Voters] Vote Choice	Give Democrats More Time	Elect Republicans	DK
Current Congressman	57%	32%	45%
Challenger	17%	52%	20%
DK	26%	16%	35%
N=	123	124	20

Q. Thinking about our country, would you say it is currently going in the right direction or has it gone off on the wrong track?

[Likely Voters]

Right Direction	30%
Wrong Track	65%
DK	4%
N=	546

[Likely Voters]	Party ID		
	Dem	Ind	Rep
Right Direction	53%	24%	10%
Wrong Track	40%	71%	89%
DK	6%	6%	1%
N=	195	191	158

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll October 23-24, 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, yielding 553 likely voters. 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. For the likely voter sub sample of 553 respondents, the margin of error is +/-4.1 points. 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