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Tight N.J. Governor's Race in Final Days

According to the most recent poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™, Democratic incumbent Jon Corzine and Republican challenger Chris Christie continue in a close contest in the race for New Jersey governor, with Corzine holding a lead among likely voters by a statistically insignificant thread of 44% to 43%. Another 6% volunteer they will vote for independent Chris Daggett and 4% are undecided. "At this point, anyone who says their vote doesn't count is mistaken," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll. "And no one knows that better than the campaigns."

Better than 4 of 5 Democrats (83%) approve of the job President Obama is doing, but just 3 of 5 Democrats (62%) approve of the job Governor Corzine is doing, while 3 of 4 Democrats (76%) say they've made up their mind to vote for the governor, a key number unchanged from early October. Meanwhile, among likely voters, just 1 in 5 say the state is on the right track compared to 68% who say it's on the wrong track: 37% approve of the job the governor is doing, while 52% disapprove. Just 39% of voters say their opinion of the governor is favorable, against 54% who have an unfavorable opinion, including 1 in 4 Democrats (26%). "The governor is struggling against a tide of discontent," said Woolley, "and if his base weren't so large to begin with, he might be sunk."

Meanwhile, 41% of voters have a favorable view of the Republican opponent compared to 44% who have an unfavorable view. Christie leads Corzine 42%-35% on the question of "which candidate better understands the concerns of the average person," but the candidates tie on the question of which is more trustworthy, and Corzine leads easily, 48%-33%, on the question of which candidate "has the background and experience to be a good governor." Woolley added, "These measures suggest that, while voters are dissatisfied with Corzine, they're not convinced that the challenger could do better."

Chris Daggett, an independent candidate, increased his name recognition to 82% but wins few hearts or minds. Just 18% say they haven't heard of him now, compared to 50% who a month ago said they did not know him. But even now 31% say they have no opinion of him, and 28% have a favorable view of him, while 23% have an unfavorable view.

When Daggett's name is read in an interview along with Jon Corzine's and Chris Christie's names, he gets 14% of the vote, drawing slightly more Democrats than Republicans, while Christie edges Corzine in a statistical tie, 41%-39%. But when the name of another independent candidate is read—the obscure Gary Steele—Steele gets 3% of the vote, draws off slightly more Republicans than Democrats, and Corzine beats Christie 46%-41%.

One in five voters (19%) correctly identifies Daggett as the candidate endorsed by the newspaper, *The Star-Ledger*, and fewer than half of Daggett voters (41%) know the newspaper endorsed him. "Daggett holds the wild card in this election deal," said Woolley. "He doesn't attract voters' affection. He attracts voter disaffection."

More than half of voters (55%) say they think Corzine will win the election, but most Republicans aren't conceding: Half of Republicans (49%) say Christie will win and 15% say they don't know who will pull this one out.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 694 likely voters statewide was conducted by telephone from Oct. 22, 2009, through Oct. 28, 2009, and has a margin of error of +/- 4 percentage points.

Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from Oct. 22, 2009, through Oct.28, 2009, using a randomly selected sample of 694 likely voters statewide. The margin of error for a sample of 694 randomly selected respondents is +/- 4 percentage points. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers. PublicMind interviews are conducted by professionally trained interviewers use a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a land-line phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected. Results are mathematically weighted to match known demographics.

Question: Now, turning to New Jersey... In your opinion, do you think things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction or do you think the state has gotten off on the wrong track?

	All	Party			Vote preference		
		D	I	R	Corzine	Christie	Daggett
Right direction	21%	33	13	6	42	2	4
Wrong track	68%	49	81	90	38	95	90
Unsure	11%	17	6	5	21	4	6

Right track/wrong track trend

	Oct 09	Se 09	Jul 09	Apr 09	Mar 09	Jan 09	Nov 08	Oct 08	Sept 08	June 08	Apr 08	Feb 08	Jan 08	Oct 07	Se 07	Jun 07	May 07	Mar 06
Right track	23	22	21	23	25	25	24	23	23	25	26	25	28	30	38	36	42	39
Wrong track	68	68	66	64	59	65	65	67	67	64	66	65	61	59	49	50	44	47
DK	9	10	14	13	16	10	10	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	12	14	14	15

Question: Have you heard of [rotate list]? If you haven't just tell me. [If yes, ask:] Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of ...? Would that be very or somewhat?

	Haven't heard of	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	Unsure/ no opinion	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
Jon Corzine (all)	--	15%	24%	7%	17%	37%
<i>Democrats only</i>		26	40	9	15	11
<i>Independents only</i>		9	16	8	15	53
<i>Republicans only</i>		3	6	4	20	67
Previous Surveys...						
<i>Corzine 10/06/09</i>	1%	15%	22%	9%	17%	37%
<i>Democrats only</i>	--	26	34	11	15	14
<i>Independents only</i>	1	8	25	7	16	43
<i>Republicans only</i>	--	2	6	4	22	65
<i>Corzine 09/09</i>	--	12%	25%	9%	19%	35%
<i>Democrats only</i>		22	40	9	16	13
<i>Independents only</i>		6	17	14	24	40
<i>Republicans only</i>		1	7	7	22	64
<i>Corzine 07/09</i>	2%	8%	23%	13%	24%	30%
<i>Corzine 05/09</i>	1%	10%	23%	9%	18%	38%
<i>Corzine 03/09</i>	1%	10%	28%	13%	22%	26%
<i>Corzine 01/09</i>	2%	14%	28%	12%	21%	23%
<i>Corzine 11/08</i>	3%	13%	27%	14%	17%	26%

	Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	No opinion	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Chris Christie (all)	1%	17%	24%	14%	20%	24%
<i>Republicans only</i>	--	32	45	9	9	4
<i>Independents only</i>	4	17	21	22	12	24
<i>Democrats only</i>	1	5	11	15	28	40
Previous Surveys...						
<i>Christie 10/06/09</i>	2%	14%	21%	20%	21%	21%
<i>Republicans only</i>	--	28	39	17	11	4
<i>Independents only</i>	1	21	19	19	24	16
<i>Democrats only</i>	3	4	9	20	28	36
<i>Christie 09/09</i>	3%	15%	23%	25%	17%	18%
<i>Republicans only</i>	1	30	36	21	8	4
<i>Independents only</i>	1	11	23	37	17	11
<i>Democrats only</i>	5	5	14	25	22	30
<i>Christie 07/09</i>	13%	10%	24%	28%	14%	11%
<i>Christie 04/09</i>	38%	14%	17%	20%	8%	4%
<i>Christie 03/09</i>	43%	12%	18%	22%	4%	2%
<i>Christie 01/09</i>	56%	11%	12%	15%	4%	2%
<i>Christie 09/08</i>	60%	2%	3%	14%	11%	9%

	Haven't heard of	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	No opinion	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
Chris Daggett	18%	6%	22%	31%	15%	8%
<i>Democrats only</i>	22	5	23	33	13	4
<i>Independents only</i>	8	15	22	34	13	8
<i>Republicans only</i>	13	5	23	27	19	14
Previous Surveys...						
<i>Daggett 10/06/09</i>	50%	4%	12%	27%	5%	2%
<i>Democrats only</i>	54	3	10	24	7	2
<i>Independents only</i>	47	9	14	24	5	1
<i>Republicans only</i>	45	3	15	32	3	2
<i>Daggett 09/09</i>	67%	1%	8%	20%	3%	1%
<i>Democrats only</i>	68	2	7	19	4	1
<i>Independents only</i>	61	1	9	25	3	--
<i>Republicans only</i>	67	1	10	20	2	1
<i>Daggett 07/09</i>	89%	--	1%	9%	--	--

	Haven't heard of	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	No opinion	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
Gary Steele	83%	1%	2%	10%	3%	1%
Previous Surveys						
<i>Steele 10/6/09</i>	85%	--	2%	10%	2%	--

Question: On November 3rd there will be an election for governor. If the election were held today who would you vote for ... or ...? [ROTATE NAMES] [If “don’t know” ASK: “at this moment, which way do you lean?” If “other” ASK: “who would that be?”]

	All	Dem	Ind	Rep	Race		Oct. 6	Sept
					white	Afr.-Am		
Jon Corzine, the Democrat	43						42	41
Lean Corzine	1						2	1
Total Corzine	44%	76	27	9	37	72	44%	42%
Chris Christie, the Republican	42						40	45
Lean Christie	1						2	2
Total Christie	43%	13	45	83	50	16	43%	47%
Daggett (vol.)	6%	6	15	4	7	3	4%	1%
Neither/other (vol.)	2%	2	4	2	2	3	4%	4%
Don’t know (vol.)	4%	3	9	1	3	6	5%	6%

Corzine v. Christie trend

	Oct 6	Sept	July	April	March	Jan
Total Corzine	44%	42%	39%	33%	32%	40%
Total Christie	43%	47%	45%	42%	41%	33%
Don’t know/neither/Daggett/other	13%	11%	16%	25%	27%	26%

Include: Chris Daggett or another independent, Gary Steele

[Split sample at random]

Question: Now let me ask that question in a slightly different way... if the election were held today, who would you vote for in a race between... and...and...? [ROTATE NAMES] [If “don’t know” ASK: “at this moment, which way do you lean?” If “other” ASK: “who would that be?”]

N=347					N=347						
	All	D	I	R	Oct. 6		All	D	I	R	Oct. 6
Jon Corzine, the Democrat	38				38	Jon Corzine, the Democrat	45				37
Lean Corzine	1				--	Lean Corzine	1				1
Total Corzine	39%	69	22	7	38%	Total Corzine	46%	76	26	10	38%
Chris Christie, the Republican	40				34	Chris Christie, the Republican	40				36
Lean Christie	1				3	Lean Christie	1				2
Total Christie	41%	16	37	77	37%	Total Christie	41%	12	44	82	38%
Chris Daggett, the independent	14				16	Gary Steele, the independent	3				11
Lean Daggett	--				1	lean Steele	--				1
Total Daggett	14%	13	27	13	17%	Total Steele	3%	2	6	4	12%
Neither/other (vol.)	3%	1	--	2	2%	Neither/other (vol.)	6%	7	15	3	3%
Don’t know (vol.)	3%	1	14	1	6%	Don’t know (vol.)	3%	2	9	1	8%

Question: Which candidate for New Jersey governor... or ... is better described by...?															
<i>rotate names, rotate order</i>							All	Dem	Ind	Rep	men	wom	Oct	Sep	Jul
...Honest, trustworthy															
	Jon Corzine	33%	58	17	8	30	37	31%	31	24					
	Chris Christie	32%	9	34	62	40	24	28%	32	33					
	neither (vol)	23%	22	38	20	20	26	25%	20	18					
	both (vol)	3%	2	7	3	4	2	3%	2	5					
	don't know (vol)	9%	9	5	7	6	10	11%	14	20					
...Understands the concerns of the average person															
	Jon Corzine	35%	62	20	6	31	39	34%	30	28					
	Chris Christie	42%	16	46	75	50	35	36%	43	40					
	neither (vol)	14%	14	26	9	12	16	16%	15	11					
	both (vol)	2%	1	4	2	1	3	3%	3	2					
	don't know (vol)	7%	6	4	7	6	8	10%	10	18					
...Has the background and experience to be a good governor?															
	Jon Corzine	48%				41	55	45%	45	42					
	Chris Christie	33%				42	25	29%	32	29					
	neither (vol)	10%				11	9	11%	8	7					
	both (vol)	5%				4	5	4%	4	4					
	don't know (vol)	4%				3	6	11%	11	18					

Question: Do you happen to know which candidate was endorsed by the newspaper, the Star-Ledger?

	All	Party ID			Vote preference		
		D	I	R	Corzine	Christie	Daggett
Corzine	17%	16	13	19	16	19	13
Christie	5%	4	11	3	5	4	5
Daggett	19%	19	17	21	16	20	41
anyone else	--	1	--	--	1	--	--
Don't know	59%	60	60	57	61	57	41

Question: Now, regardless of which candidate you want to win, if you had to guess, who would you say is going to win the election for governor in November... or ...?

<i>Rotate names</i>	All	Dem	Ind.	Rep.	Oct. 6	Sept.	July
Jon Corzine	55%	75	38	35	49%	45%	46%
Chris Christie	30%	14	39	49	37%	41%	38%
Neither/Dagget/other	1%	--	2	1	1%	--	--
Don't Know (vol.)	14%	10	20	15	13%	15%	15%

Job rating, current

Question: How would you rate the job Jon Corzine is doing as governor... [READ]?

	All	Party			Vote preference		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Daggett
Excellent	5%	10	2	1	12	1	--
Good	25%	39	18	7	48	4	--
Only fair	33%	40	31	26	36	27	46
Poor	36%	11	48	66	3	68	54
unsure (vol)	1%	--	1	1	1	1	--

Job rating, previous measures

	2009						2008						2007					2006			
	Oc	Se	Jy	Ap	Mar	Ja	No	Oc	Se	Jun	Ap	Fe	Ja	Oc	Sep	Jun	Mar	Ja	No	Oc	Se
Excel	3	3	2	3	2	4	6	4	3	4	3	5	6	5	7	5	6	4	10	11	9
Good	26	22	24	24	28	28	28	27	28	27	29	28	29	37	37	37	39	34	40	40	33
fair	35	40	39	36	40	41	39	41	41	41	36	38	39	38	39	36	39	38	30	32	33
poor	34	33	31	35	28	25	24	25	25	24	30	27	23	17	15	14	12	17	17	14	20
DK	1	2	3	2	3	2	4	3	4	4	2	2	3	3	3	8	4	7	3	3	5

Approve/disapprove Current

Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the job Jon Corzine is doing as governor?

	All	Dem	Ind	Rep	Vote preference		
					Corzine	Christie	Daggett
Approve	37%	62	25	9	74	4	12
Disapprove	52%	25	66	84	12	91	78
Mixed/unsure	11%	13	9	7	14	5	10

Approve/disapprove, previous surveys

	2009						2008						2007					2006				
	Oc	Se	Jy	Ap	Mr	Ja	No	Oc	Sep	Jun	Ap	Fe	Ja 30 th	Ja 7 th	Oc	Se	Jun	Mar	Ja	No	Oc	Se
Approve	38	37	36	40	40	46	46	45	41	40	44	42	41	48	51	54	50	55	51	58	56	51
Disapprove	50	52	49	49	46	40	37	39	43	41	45	43	39	32	29	25	27	25	29	27	28	31
mixed/DK	11	12	15	11	13	14	17	17	16	19	11	16	20	20	20	21	23	20	19	15	16	18

US1: In your opinion, do you believe that the country is moving in the right direction or do you believe it has gotten off on the wrong track?

	All	Men	Women	Dem	Ind	Rep.
Right direction	41%	34	48	67	25	12
Wrong track	50%	59	43	23	65	82
Unsure/Refused	8%	7	10	10	10	6

Right/wrong direction trend

	Oct 9	Sep	July	Apr	Mar	Jan.	Oct. 2008
Right direction	41%	44%	49%	51%	51%	34%	13%
Wrong track	49%	46%	41%	37%	37%	52%	78%
Unsure/Refused	9%	10%	11%	11%	12%	13%	9%

US2: In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

	All	Party			Vote for Governor		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Daggett
Approve	52%	83	43	17	84	19	58
Disapprove	37%	9	42	73	9	69	34
Unsure	10%	7	15	10	7	11	8

Obama approval, previous measures

	Oct 6	Sept	June	April	March	Jan.*	Oct. 6 Party		
							Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	52%	56	61	66	66	72	81	37	19
Disapprove	35%	36	29	22	21	10	11	42	66
Unsure/Refused	12%	8	10	12	13	18	8	20	15

*January question asked how Obama was handling his transition to the presidency. Question US3 held for release

In November, there will also be a question on the ballot about the state issuing bonds. Do you always vote on bond questions or do you usually just skip them?

	all
Vote	70%
Skip	22%
Unsure/mixed (vol)	8%

The question on the ballot will be whether to authorize the state to issue 400 million dollars in bonds in order to make land purchases to conserve open, green spaces, such as parks and farmlands. Do you approve or disapprove of this proposed bond issue?

	All	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	usually vote	skip	Oct 6	usually vote	skip
Approve	52%	65	47	39	52	54	56%	57	50
Disapprove	33%	22	39	44	36	27	31%	32	32
DK	15%	12	14	17	12	19	13%	11	18

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