A majority of New Jerseyans reject the need for a state income tax or any replacement tax, according to the latest Eagleton Poll. However, if they have to choose one tax program, a more graduated income tax receives the most support.

The statewide survey, conducted in mid-April, finds that 55 percent of New Jerseyans think the state "could get along just as well without the state income tax and without any other tax to take its place," while 38 percent disagree. The remaining 7 percent are undecided.

The survey indicates that all taxes are unwanted. However, when respondents were asked a series of questions pitting the current 2-2 1/2 percent income tax against several alternative levies, only a more progressive income tax is preferred by a majority over the present plan. When asked if they would "approve or disapprove of a more graduated income tax instead of the present tax," 67 percent say they approve.

Among other alternatives, 36 percent prefer a statewide property tax over the current levy, while only 28 percent opt for a sales tax increase in place of the present tax.

If New Jerseyans had to choose the one tax plan most preferred among all tax options, the more progressive income tax still tops the list, with 38 percent support. An increased sales tax is backed by 21 percent, the present income tax is supported by 16 percent, while a statewide property tax is chosen by only 10 percent.

Attention Radio Stations:
Audio is available on 5/11/77 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. from 201-545-6193 (Rutgers Feature Phone)
Eagleton Poll analyst Mark Schulman said, "Present public resistance extends to all taxes, not just the income tax. While the public is skeptical about the need for such taxes, a progressive income tax is clearly the most preferred among unwel- come options."

Schulman also noted that a graduated income tax of some kind - whether the present levy or a more progressive tax - is the first choice among a majority of re- spondents--54 percent.

A wide variety of respondents across the social and political spectrum choose the more graduated income tax over the present tax. Large majorities of liberals and conservatives, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents opt for the progressive tax. A majority in all income groups also support it, with higher income New Jerseyans somewhat less favorable than those with lower incomes.

The Eagleton Poll is conducted regularly throughout the year by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University. The latest statewide Poll was conducted between April 11 and 19, when a scientifically selected random sample of 1005 adults, 18 years and older were interviewed by telephone.

-30-

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NOTE TO REPORTERS: THIS IS PART TWO OF A TWO-PART RELEASE.
The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

"There are several alternative taxes which have been proposed to replace the present state income tax package. One of these alternative proposals is an increase in the state sales tax from its present 5% to a rate of 7%. Would you approve or disapprove of an increase in the state sales tax to 7% instead of the present state income tax package?"

Approve 28%
Disapprove 66%
Don't Know 6

"A second alternative proposal is a statewide property tax which would replace the local property tax for schools. Would you approve or disapprove of a statewide property tax which would replace the local property tax for schools instead of the present state income tax package?"

Approve 36%
Disapprove 42
Don't Know 22

"The third proposal is to change only the rates of the present tax to make it more graduated, so that wealthier people pay a higher percentage of their income and poorer people pay a lower percentage. Would you approve or disapprove of a more graduated state Income tax instead of the present tax which is from 2 to 2½ percent?"

Approve 67%
Disapprove 26
Don't Know 5

"If you had to choose among an increase in the state sales tax, a statewide property tax, a more graduated state income tax, and the present state income tax, which one would you prefer?"

Sales Tax 21%
Statewide Property Tax 10
More Graduated Income Tax 38
Present Income Tax 16
Don't Know 15

"Based on your own experience and what you've heard, do you think New Jersey could get along just as well without the state income tax and without any other tax to take its place?"

Yes 55%
No 38
Don't Know 7