NEW JERSEYANS OVERWHELMINGLY REJECT BLUE LAWS

New Jerseyans, by a wide margin, do not support the present "blue laws" which require most retail stores to remain closed on Sundays in ten counties of the state. The latest Eagleton Poll, conducted during the last two weeks of September, found that 71 percent of those polled were in favor of allowing retail stores to be open on Sundays throughout the state while only 24 percent were opposed. Five percent were undecided.

According to the Rutgers based survey both supporters and opponents felt strongly about the issue. Of the 71 percent who favored allowing retail stores to open on Sunday, 57 percent were "strongly" in favor while 18 of the 22 percent opposed said they felt "strongly" about their position.

By margins of more than two-to-one, New Jersey residents rejected the arguments of those who support the present Sunday closing laws. Only 30 percent agreed that "allowing to open Sundays would force small storeowners out of business" while 66 percent disagreed. By a similar margin--of 68 to 30 percent--most did not agree with the argument that "Sunday is the Sabbath for many people and retail shopping should not be permitted on a religious day."

A majority of the state's residents however, clearly accepted the arguments of "blue law" opponents. By more than a two-to-one margin--68 to 31 percent--most agreed that "Having stores closed on
Sundays is a hardship on those unable to do their shopping during the week." An even larger four-to-one majority—80 to 18 percent—felt that "People should be allowed to shop on any day they want."

Residents of the ten counties which presently have Sunday closing laws - Bergen, Cumberland, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Middlesex, Monmouth, Somerset, Passaic, and Union - favored Sunday shopping by almost as large a margin as did residents of counties where there are no restrictions on Sunday shopping. In the "blue law" counties, those approving of Sunday shopping outnumbered those opposed by 68 to 26 percent. In the 11 counties presently permitting Sunday shopping, 76 percent approved of this and only 17 percent were opposed.

Stephen A. Salmore, Director of the Eagleton Poll, summed up the latest survey by noting that "these results are in line with the growing trend of public opposition to government regulation of individual behavior." He said that this trend is most evident among the young, pointing out that those under 30 approved of Sunday shopping by a 83 to 13 percent margin, while among those 60 and over the margin was a much narrower 58 to 37 percent in favor of Sunday shopping.

Democrats and Independents favored Sunday shopping by similar margins of 76 to 20 percent and 74 to 22 percent. Among Republicans the margin was a narrower 56 to 39 percent. Liberals opposed the "blue laws" by an overwhelming 82 to 16 percent; compared to a much narrower 59 to 38 percent opposing them among conservatives.

All social demographic groups in the state approved of Sunday shopping, with support highest among non-whites, large city residents, rural residents, and men. Approval levels were somewhat lower among women and suburbanites.
The latest Eagleton Poll was conducted between September 19 and October 1 when a scientifically selected sample of 1206 New Jersey residents, 18 years of age or older, were interviewed by telephone.

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The questions and figures referred to in this release are as follows. The numbers in parentheses are the number of respondents answering each question. All figures refer to the total statewide sample rather than same sub-set such as registered voters.

"As you may know it's legal for stores to be open on Sundays in some parts of the state but not in others. How do you feel about this? Do you think retail stores should or should not be allowed to be open on Sundays throughout the state? PROBE: Do you feel strongly about this?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Not Strongly</td>
<td>Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL RESPONDENTS</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age
- 18-29: 71 | 12 | 5 | 3 | 4 | (332)
- 30-59: 56 | 18 | 4 | 16 | 6 | (463)
- 60 or over: 48 | 10 | 9 | 28 | 4 | (353)

Type of Area
- Large City: 59 | 16 | 4 | 15 | 6 | (116)
- Small City/Old Suburb: 59 | 10 | 6 | 20 | 6 | (269)
- New Suburb: 54 | 15 | 8 | 18 | 5 | (658)
- Rural: 62 | 14 | 3 | 19 | 2 | (162)

Ideology
- Liberal: 65 | 17 | 4 | 12 | 2 | (236)
- In-Between: 58 | 16 | 6 | 16 | 4 | (350)
- Conservative: 43 | 16 | 10 | 28 | 5 | (218)
- Rejects Terms: 60 | 10 | 5 | 19 | 6 | (377)

Sex
- Male: 62 | 13 | 5 | 14 | 6 | (594)
- Female: 52 | 15 | 7 | 22 | 3 | (596)

Race
- White: 55 | 14 | 7 | 20 | 5 | (1046)
- Non-White: 74 | 13 | 2 | 5 | 6 | (129)

Party
- Democrat: 57 | 19 | 7 | 13 | 4 | (385)
- Independent: 61 | 13 | 4 | 18 | 4 | (553)
- Republican: 45 | 11 | 10 | 29 | 5 | (231)
"I'm going to read you a few statements some people have made about Sunday closing laws. For each please tell me whether you agree or disagree."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>(n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allowing stores to open Sundays would force small storeowners out of business.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(1206)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday is the Sabbath for many people and retail shopping should not be permitted on a religious day.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(1206)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having stores closed on Sundays is a hardship on those unable to do their shopping during the week.</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1206)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People should be allowed to shop on any day they want.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(1206)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>