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Release available at: <http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu/state-of-the-garden-state-taxes-2018>. Find all releases at <http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu>. Read more about the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll's "2018 State of the Garden State" series at <http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu/2018-state-of-the-garden-state-series/>. Follow the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/RutgersEagletonPoll> and Twitter [@EagletonPoll](https://twitter.com/EagletonPoll).

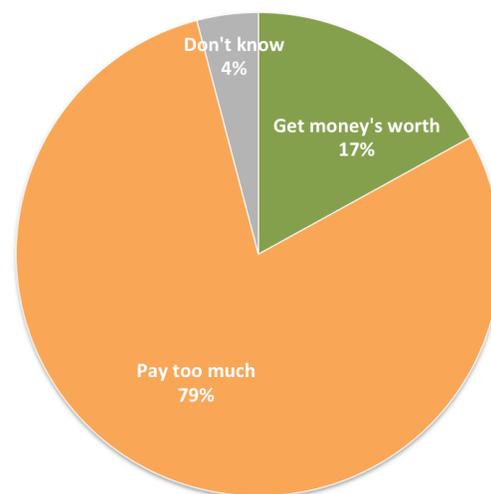
**NEW JERSEYANS FEEL HEAVILY BURDENED BY TAXES BUT WILLING TO CONSIDER MURPHY INITIATIVES**

**NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.** – What do you call the state of affairs when four out of five residents say they pay too much in taxes for what they get? New Jersey. Just 17 percent say they get their money's worth for the state and local taxes they pay. And, by a margin of 64 to 6 percent, Garden State residents say they get a worse rather than better deal than taxpayers in other states. These are some of the main findings from a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll late last year, as part of the "2018 State of the Garden State" series.

Despite feeling heavily overtaxed, and with three-quarters of the state saying their property taxes are unfair, New Jerseyans are amenable to funding some of Gov. Phil Murphy's initiatives, including those related to improving transportation systems and other infrastructure, as well as education at all levels.

The public reacts very differently to specific proposals to raise revenue. There is widespread

Figure 1 | Get Money's Worth or Pay Too Much in Taxes



support for a tax on recreational marijuana should it become legal, and for raising taxes on those earning more than \$1 million dollars annually – both proposals that Gov. Murphy put forward during his campaign. On the other hand, there is near universal opposition to expanding the state sales tax to cover purchases such as groceries and clothing.

“It is not surprising that residents are upset about what they pay in taxes, given that New Jersey is one of the highest-taxed states in the country,” said Dr. Ashley Koning, assistant research professor and director of the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. “The issue will surely play a big role in Governor Murphy’s budget address next week and presents quite a challenge for the new administration – especially given the seemingly contradictory views of residents, who are upset with their current tax situation, yet are open to small tax increases to fund some much needed projects and programs.”

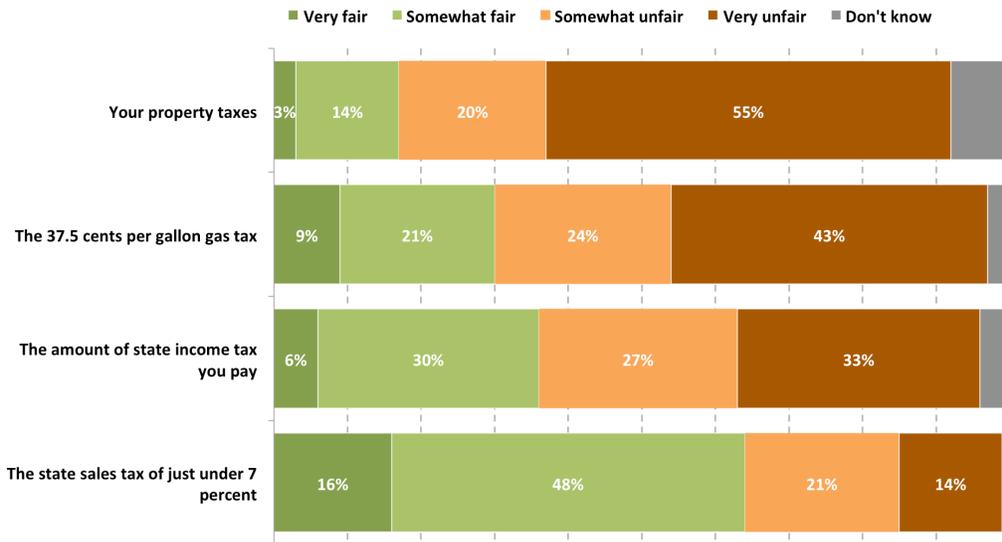
Results are from a statewide poll of 1,203 adults contacted by live callers on both landlines and cell phones from Nov. 15-27, 2017. The sample has a margin of error of +/-3.0 percentage points. Some questions reported in this release were asked of a sub-sample, resulting in 603 respondents and a margin of error of +/- 4.3 percentage points. Interviews were done in English and, when requested, Spanish.

### **Residents think most state taxes they pay are unfair, especially property taxes**

By wide margins, New Jersey residents believe most of the taxes they pay are unfair, except for the state sales tax. Property taxes, in particular, remain the third rail of New Jersey politics and the bane of homeowners’ existence. Three quarters of all residents say they are unfair, including a whopping 55 percent who call them “very unfair.”

“Given that this poll was conducted prior to changes to the new federal income tax code, limiting the deductibility of state and local taxes may further exacerbate taxpayers’ concerns about the fairness of these taxes,” said Koning.

Figure 2 | Tax Fairness



According to the New Jersey Division of Taxation, the average property tax levy in New Jersey is \$8,288. Statewide, nine counties have averages above this amount; 147 towns in the state have an average tax bill that exceeds the \$10,000 deduction limit to become effective this year under the new federal tax code.

Perhaps in reaction to the recent increase in the gas tax from 14.5 to 37.5 cents per gallon under Gov. Christie, New Jerseyans are also hostile toward the gas tax: two-thirds call it unfair, with 43 percent alone saying “very” unfair. Slightly fewer (60 percent) – but a solid majority nonetheless – describe the state income tax as unfair. Only the state sales tax – recently lowered very slightly again as a trade-off to the gas tax increase – receives a favorable rating with more than six in 10 residents (64 percent) saying the tax is a fair one.

**Residents amenable to raising taxes ... but only in certain circumstances**

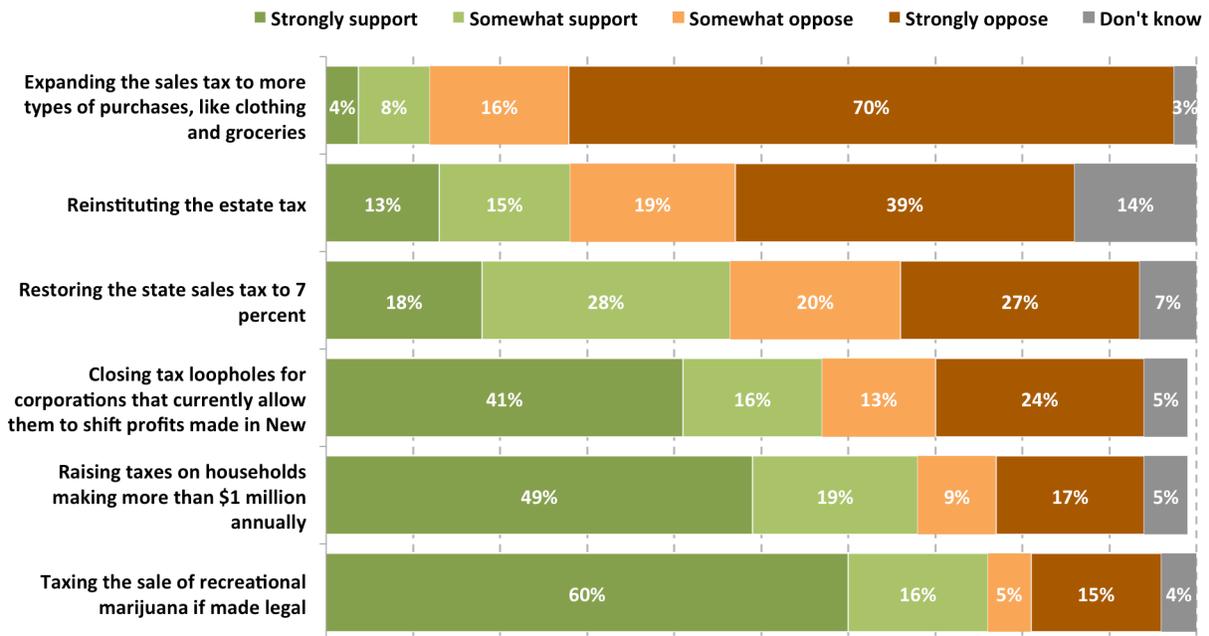
Residents were also asked their reactions to six proposals to raise or add taxes “in order to fund various programs and services offered by the state.” Two of them appear to be broadly popular: three quarters either “strongly” (60 percent) or “somewhat” (16 percent) support taxing the sale of recreational marijuana if it were to be made legal; at the time this poll was

conducted, 53 percent favored legalizing recreational marijuana, in general.

Just over two-thirds favor increasing what is known as the “millionaire’s tax” – but again, opinion here was measured prior to the Trump tax cut recently passed by Congress. Finally, most residents – by a margin of 58 to 37 percent – strongly support “closing tax loopholes for corporations that currently allow them to shift profits made in New Jersey to lower-taxed states.”

On the other hand, there is virtually no support for expanding the sales tax to include more types of purchases, such as groceries and clothing, and little support for reinstating the estate tax.

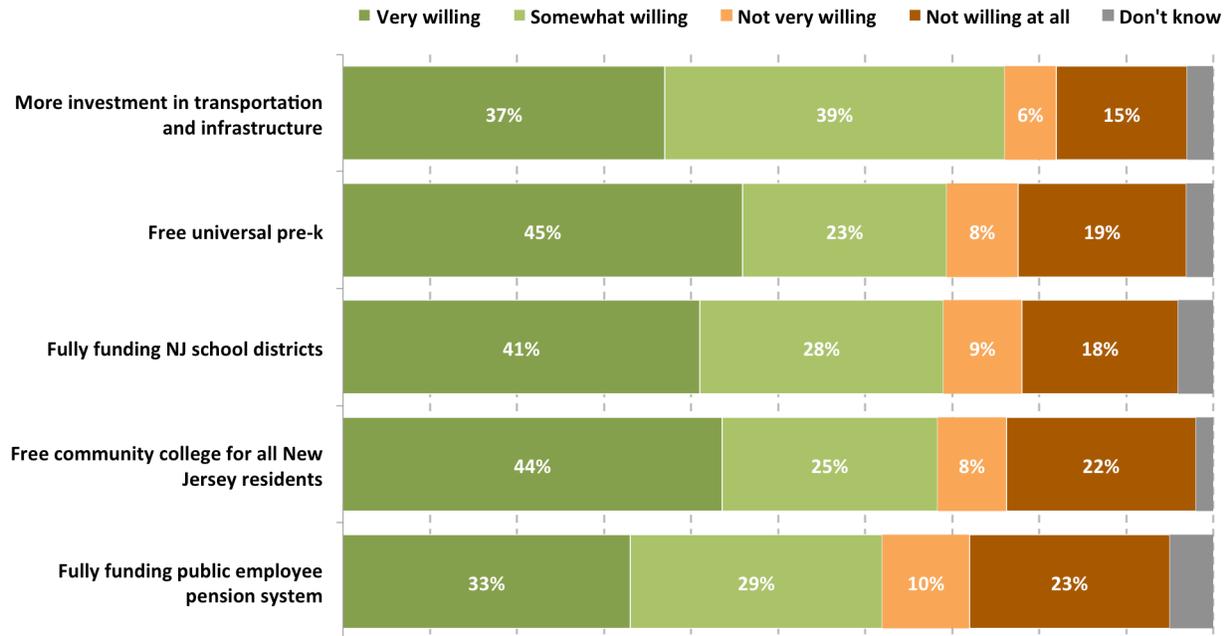
Figure 3 | Level of Support for Additional/Raised Taxes



Despite feeling overtaxed, many respondents support a number of initiatives Gov. Murphy had proposed on the campaign trail. Even when told it would mean “a small increase in the state taxes [they] pay,” at least six in 10 residents indicate they are “very” or “somewhat” willing to pay more for education and transportation and infrastructure improvements, as well as fully

funding the state pension fund. Residents are most likely to support investment in transportation and infrastructure, while they are least likely to support pension funding.

Figure 4 | Willingness to See a Small Increase in State Taxes for Murphy Initiatives



“While a majority of residents overall are willing to pay a bit more in taxes for each of these initiatives, some are less enthusiastic about it than others,” said Koning. “In particular, Republicans and those in the highest income bracket are especially less willing than their counterparts to want to pay more in many of these circumstances.”

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**QUESTIONS AND TABLES START ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE**

### Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release for March 7, 2018 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey adults; all percentages are of weighted results.

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**Q. Lets talk about taxes in the state. Overall, do you think you get your money’s worth for the state and local taxes you pay, or do you think you pay too much for what you get?**

Get moneys worth	17%
Pay too much	79%
Don’t know (vol)	4%
Unweighted N=	602

**Q. Compared to taxpayers in other states, do you think you are getting more for your money, less for your money, or about the same?**

More	6%
Less	64%
About the same	25%
Don’t know (vol)	5%
Unweighted N=	601

**Q. New Jersey has a number of taxes. Thinking about what you get for what you pay, please tell me if you think each of the following taxes is very fair, somewhat fair, somewhat unfair, or very unfair:**

**[RANDOMIZE ORDER]**

	<b>Your property taxes</b>	<b>The amount of state income tax you pay</b>	<b>The 37.5 cents per gallon gas tax</b>	<b>The state sales tax of just under 7 percent</b>
Very fair	3%	6%	9%	16%
Somewhat fair	14%	30%	21%	48%
Somewhat unfair	20%	27%	24%	21%
Very unfair	55%	33%	43%	14%
Don’t know (vol)	9%	4%	3%	2%
Unweighted N=	598	598	602	601

**Q. Some taxes may have to be raised or additional taxes may have to be created in order to fund various programs and services offered by the state. Please tell me if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each of the following:**

**[RANDOMIZE ORDER]**

**Restoring the state sales tax to 7 percent**

Strongly support	18%
Somewhat support	28%
Somewhat oppose	20%
Strongly oppose	27%
Don't know (vol)	7%
Unweighted N=	599

**Expanding the sales tax to more types of purchases, like clothing and groceries**

Strongly support	4%
Somewhat support	8%
Somewhat oppose	16%
Strongly oppose	70%
Don't know (vol)	3%
Unweighted N=	601

**Closing tax loopholes for corporations that currently allow them to shift profits made in New Jersey to lower-taxed states**

Strongly support	41%
Somewhat support	16%
Somewhat oppose	13%
Strongly oppose	24%
Don't know (vol)	5%
Unweighted N=	600

**Reinstating the estate tax**

Strongly support	13%
Somewhat support	15%
Somewhat oppose	19%
Strongly oppose	39%
Don't know (vol)	14%
Unweighted N=	599

**Raising taxes on households making more than \$1 million annually**

Strongly support	49%
Somewhat support	19%
Somewhat oppose	9%
Strongly oppose	17%
Don't know (vol)	5%
<hr/>	
Unweighted N=	601

**Taxing the sale of recreational marijuana if made legal**

Strongly support	60%
Somewhat support	16%
Somewhat oppose	5%
Strongly oppose	15%
Don't know (vol)	4%
<hr/>	
Unweighted N=	598

**Q. Please tell me whether you would be very willing, somewhat willing, not very willing, or not willing at all to see a small increase in the state taxes you pay for each of the following. First:**

**[RANDOMIZE ORDER]**

**Free community college for all New Jersey residents**

Very willing	44%
Somewhat willing	25%
Not very willing	8%
Not willing at all	22%
Don't know (vol)	2%
<hr/>	
Unweighted N=	599

**Free universal pre-kindergarten**

Very willing	45%
Somewhat willing	23%
Not very willing	8%
Not willing at all	19%
Don't know (vol)	3%
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Unweighted N=	599

**Fully funding all New Jersey school districts**

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Very willing	41%
Somewhat willing	28%
Not very willing	9%
Not willing at all	18%
Don't know (vol)	4%

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Unweighted N=	598
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**More investment in transportation and infrastructure**

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Very willing	37%
Somewhat willing	39%
Not very willing	6%
Not willing at all	15%
Don't know (vol)	3%

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Unweighted N=	599
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**Fully funding the public-employee pension system**

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Very willing	33%
Somewhat willing	29%
Not very willing	10%
Not willing at all	23%
Don't know (vol)	5%

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Unweighted N=	599
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## Methodology

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone using live callers Nov. 15-27, 2017 with a scientifically selected random sample of 1,203 New Jersey adults, 18 or older. The sample contains a subsample of 600 New Jersey adults, as reported on in this release. Respondents within a household are selected by asking randomly for the youngest adult male or female currently available. If the named gender is not available, the youngest adult of the other gender is interviewed. The poll was available in Spanish for respondents who requested it. This telephone poll included 516 landline and 687 cell phone adults, all acquired through random digit dialing. Distribution of household phone use in this sample is:

Cell Only:	31%
Dual Use, Reached on Cell:	26%
Dual Use, Reached on LL:	41%
Landline Only:	2%

The data were weighted to be representative of New Jersey adults. The weighting balanced sample demographics to population parameters. The sample is balanced, by form<sup>1</sup>, to match parameters for sex, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and phone use. The sex, age, education and race/ethnicity parameters were derived from 2015 American Community Survey PUMS data. The region parameter was derived from 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates based on total population. The phone use parameter derived from estimates provided by the National Health Interview Survey Early Release Program.<sup>234</sup> Weighting was done in two stages. The first stage of weighting corrected for different probabilities of selection associated with the number of adults in each household and each respondent's telephone usage patterns. This weighting also adjusts for the overlapping landline and cell sample frames and the relative sizes of each frame and each sample. The second stage of weighting balanced sample demographics to match target population parameters. Weights were trimmed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 97<sup>th</sup> percentile to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on the final results. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the target population.

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. Sampling error should be adjusted to recognize the effect of weighting the data to better match the population. In this poll, the simple sampling error for 1,203 New Jersey adults is +/-2.8

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the survey had a split sample design, randomly assigning half of respondents to Form A (N=603) and half to Form B (N=600). Certain sets of questions are only asked to one half of the sample or the other.

<sup>2</sup> NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2011–2015; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010–2014; and infoUSA.com consumer database, 2011–2015.

<sup>3</sup> Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, July–December 2014. National Center for Health Statistics. June 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, July–December 2016. National Center for Health Statistics. May 2017.

percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The design effect is 1.14, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 3.0 percentage points. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 47 and 53 percent (50 +/- 3.0) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

The simple sampling error for the subsamples of 603 New Jersey adults is +/-4.0 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The design effect is 1.14, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 4.3 percentage points. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 45.7 and 54.3 percent (50 +/- 4.3) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a 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.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by Braun Research, Inc. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP). Dr. Cliff Zukin, Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Public Policy and Senior Survey Advisor to ECPIP, assisted with this questionnaire and analysis. William Young assisted with analysis and preparation of this report. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, a non-partisan academic center for the study of politics and the political process. Full questionnaires are available on request, and can also be accessed through our archives at [eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu](http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu). For more information, please contact [poll@eagleton.rutgers.edu](mailto:poll@eagleton.rutgers.edu).

**Weighted Full Sample Characteristics  
1,203 New Jersey Adults**

<b>Male</b>	49%	<b>Democrat</b>	39%	<b>18-34</b>	27%	<b>HS or Less</b>	34%	<b>White</b>	59%
<b>Female</b>	51%	<b>Independent</b>	43%	<b>35-49</b>	24%	<b>Some College</b>	30%	<b>Black</b>	12%
		<b>Republican</b>	18%	<b>50-64</b>	30%	<b>College Grad</b>	22%	<b>Hispanic</b>	18%
				<b>65+</b>	20%	<b>Grad Work</b>	14%	<b>Other</b>	10%

**Weighted Subsample Characteristics  
603 New Jersey Adults**

<b>Male</b>	49%	<b>Democrat</b>	40%	<b>18-34</b>	28%	<b>HS or Less</b>	35%	<b>White</b>	59%
<b>Female</b>	51%	<b>Independent</b>	42%	<b>35-49</b>	25%	<b>Some College</b>	29%	<b>Black</b>	11%
		<b>Republican</b>	18%	<b>50-64</b>	28%	<b>College Grad</b>	23%	<b>Hispanic</b>	18%
				<b>65+</b>	19%	<b>Grad Work</b>	14%	<b>Other</b>	12%