

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2012

EDITOR'S NOTE: ATTENTION POLITICAL, ASSIGNMENT EDITORS, Professor David Redlawsk may be contacted at 319-400-1134, 732-932-9384, ext. 285, or redlawsk@rutgers.edu until 11 p.m. Visit <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~redlawsk/EP/Tables2012/EmbargoRelease.html> for questions and tables during embargo. Visit <http://eagletonpollblog.wordpress.com> for additional commentary.

**RUTGERS-EAGLETON POLL: OBAMA CONTINUES TO RISE IN NEW JERSEY;
CHRISTIE RATINGS RELATIVELY UNCHANGED**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – President Obama’s popularity and job performance grade continue to improve in New Jersey, extending a trend that began in October, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. Sixty percent of respondents now view the president favorably, an increase of 10 points since an October 2011 Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. The president’s favorability rating among New Jerseyans is at its highest point in more than 18 months. Only 33 percent of voters say they hold an unfavorable impression of him.

New Jerseyans also give the president higher grades on job performance. Nearly half (48 percent) give him an A or B, compared to 38 percent in October. Negative grades (D or F) have remained static at 30 percent, unchanged from 31 percent four months ago. Those in the middle, giving Obama a C, have declined by 10 points to 22 percent.

“We have seen a continual increase in positive ratings for the president since he bottomed out in New Jersey in August,” said poll Director David Redlawsk, a professor of political science at Rutgers University. “And while voters continue to like him personally better than they like the job he is doing, that gap has been closing.”

In contrast, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie’s favorability and job performance numbers remain virtually unchanged. Forty-seven percent rate the governor favorably, virtually no change over the past two years. Forty-three percent grade the governor A or B, and 32 percent assign a D or F. Both numbers are essentially unchanged from October 2011, though improved since August last year. Another 24 percent give him a C.

“Governor Christie’s favorability ratings in our polls have stayed within a very small range, between 44 percent and 49 percent, since he was inaugurated,” said Redlawsk. “His job performance grade bounces around a bit more, depending on how voters view the particular issues of the day. But where voters prefer Obama personally to his job performance, the two measures are closely tied in the case of the governor.”

Results are from a poll of 914 adults conducted statewide among both landline and cell phone households from Feb. 9-11. The full sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.3 percentage points.

Rating Obama: independents now very favorable,

One key to Obama's rising fortunes in the state is that independent voters are now strongly positive in their personal assessments of the president, with 55 percent reporting a favorable impression, up 14 percent since last October, while 37 percent are unfavorable, down from 47 percent. Even Republicans have shown a softening: 17 percent now view the president with favor, double the October number. Even so, 76 percent remain negative.

"Independent and moderate voters are the key to winning re-election in New Jersey," said Redlawsk. "If Obama's numbers continue to tick up among these groups, he will be in good shape in November. It appears that his latest moves to be more assertive against the Republican Congress and to take on his opponents more directly may be paying off, at least here."

Obama's job performance grade is also up across all voters: 16 percent say he deserves an A (up six points from October), and 32 percent give him a B (up from 28 percent).

Among the 60 percent of voters who rate the president favorably, 25 percent say he should get an A for his job performance, 50 percent say he deserves a B, and 21 percent say a C reflects his performance most accurately. This is an improvement over the past few months when even those who liked the president rated him less positively on his job performance. Last October, 50 percent of registered voters had a favorable impression of Obama, yet only 19 percent gave his job performance an A while 48 percent graded it B. Thirty percent of those who liked him said his stewardship merited only a C four months ago.

"The important point here is that not only is the president's favorability and job performance grade improved, but those who like him are now much more likely to like the job he is doing," said Redlawsk.

Rating Christie: Not much change

While Obama is on the uptick in New Jersey, Christie's favorability and job performance ratings remain relatively unchanged from October. Looking further back, Christie was viewed favorably by 45 percent of voters in February 2010; today that number is 47 percent. Likewise, job performance numbers have changed little overall, with 16 percent giving him an A and 27 percent a B. On the other side, 14 percent give the governor a D and 18 percent fail him. About one-quarter of voters are right in the middle, grading his job performance as a C.

"When it comes to job performance, Obama and Christie are viewed pretty much the same by

voters,” said Redlawsk. “But compared with the President, Christie’s job performance and personal likeability remain much more closely linked.”

Comparing job performance as rated by one’s own supporters, Christie does slightly better than Obama. The governor’s performance is given an A or B by 80 percent of his supporters, compared to the 75 percent of Obama supporters who give him these high marks. In this measure, Obama is catching up to Christie, since the gap was larger a few months ago.

At the same time, Christie no longer outperforms Obama among independents. Unaffiliated registered voters rate the governor’s performance favorably: 41 percent grade him A or B and 32 percent D or F. But among independents, Obama earns an A or B from 47 percent and a D or F from 24 percent.

Redlawsk summed up the findings this way: “The movement we see since our last assessment is chiefly in Obama’s improving fortunes in the Garden State.”

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QUESTIONS AND TABLES BEGIN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release of February 17, 2012 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are Registered Voters (RV).

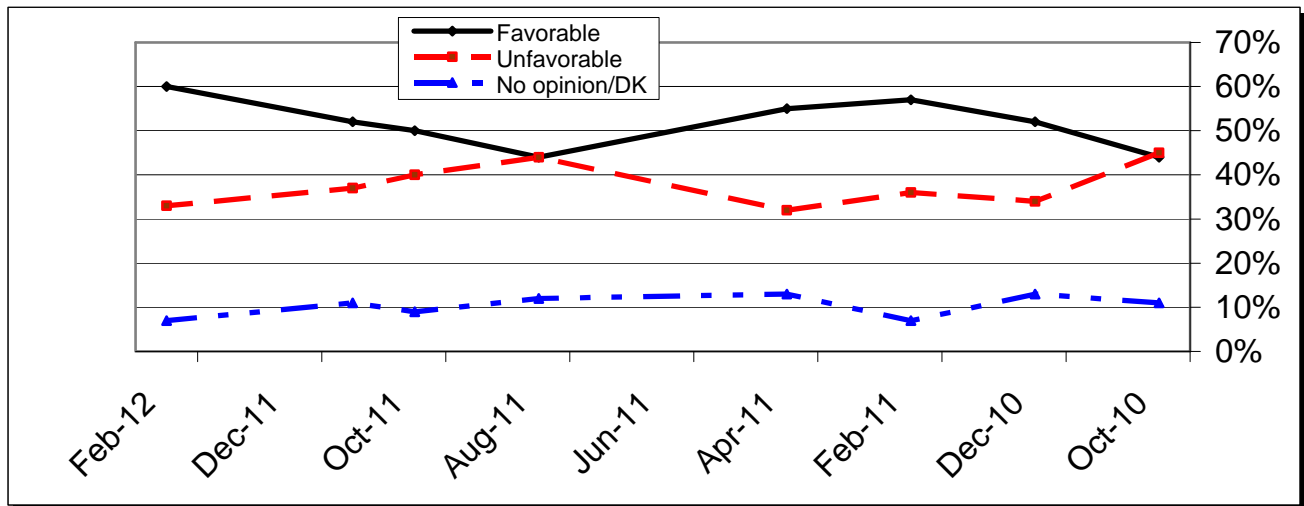
Q. I'd like to ask about some people and organizations. Please tell me if your general impression of each one is favorable or unfavorable, or if you do not have an opinion. [ROTATE]

	Pres. Obama RV	Gov. Christie RV
Favorable	60%	47%
Unfavorable	33%	42%
No opn/DK	7%	11%
Unwgt N=	912	910

President Barack Obama Trend

	Feb 12 RV	Nov 11 RV	Oct 11 RV	Aug 11 RV	Apr 11 RV	Feb 11 RV	Dec 10 Adults	Oct 10 RV	Sep 10 RV
Favorable	60%	52%	50%	44%	55%	57%	52%	44%	57%
Unfavorable	33%	37%	40%	44%	32%	36%	34%	45%	34%
DK/No opin	7%	11%	9%	12%	13%	7%	13%	11%	9%
Unwgt N=	912	753	804	609	769	810	904	548	909

Registered Voters



Registered Voters

	Party ID			Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Cons	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Fav	90%	55%	17%	90%	61%	22%	55%	61%	59%	64%
Unfav	5%	37%	76%	8%	29%	73%	35%	35%	33%	29%
DK/No Opin	6%	8%	8%	2%	10%	5%	11%	5%	8%	7%
Unwgt N=	318	402	183	187	511	190	201	247	244	215

**Obama Christie February 2012
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

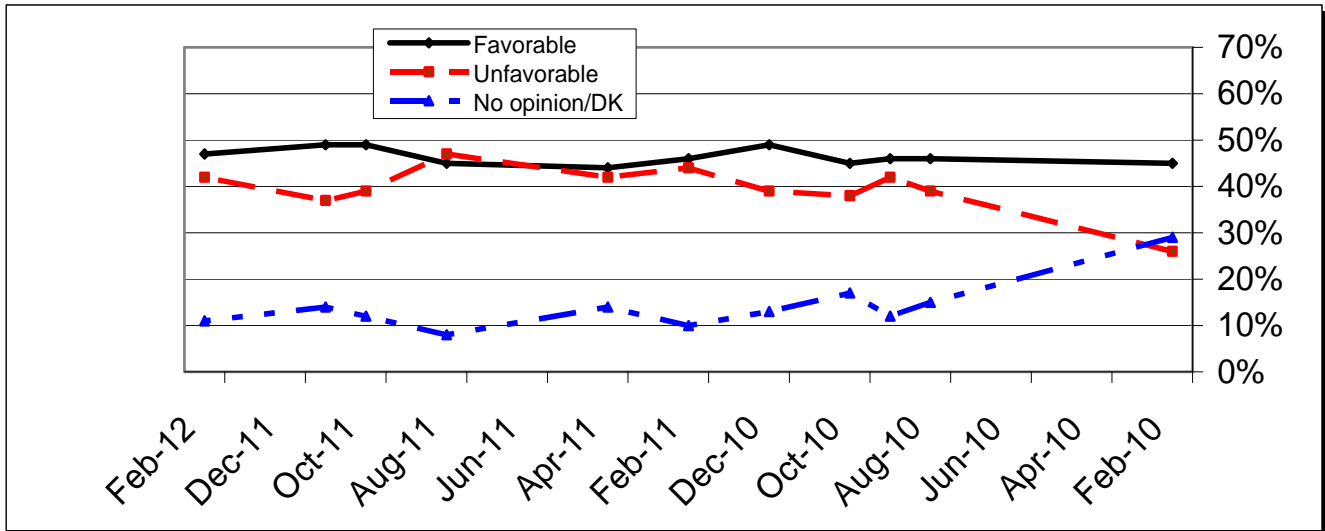
	Employment				Race		Age			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Fav	62%	65%	55%	59%	50%	93%	75%	58%	60%	54%
Unfav	31%	27%	38%	33%	42%	6%	19%	33%	33%	39%
DK/No Opin	7%	8%	7%	8%	8%	1%	6%	9%	7%	6%
Unwgt N=	397	82	290	141	717	85	54	223	348	279

	Income				Gender		Union Household		
	<50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female	Private	Public	Not Union
Fav	65%	60%	60%	55%	56%	64%	71%	61%	58%
Unfav	29%	35%	34%	38%	37%	29%	23%	34%	35%
DK/No Opin	6%	5%	6%	7%	7%	7%	6%	5%	8%
Unwgt N=	244	265	132	102	430	482	120	54	720

Governor Chris Christie Trend

	Feb 12 RV	Nov 11 RV	Oct 11 RV	Aug 11 RV	Apr 11 RV	Feb 11 RV	Dec 10 Voters	Oct 10 RV	Sept 10 RV	Aug 10 RV	Feb 10 RV
Favorable	47%	49%	49%	45%	44%	46%	49%	45%	46%	46%	45%
Unfavorable	42%	37%	39%	47%	42%	44%	39%	38%	42%	39%	26%
No Opn/DK	11%	14%	12%	8%	14%	10%	13%	17%	12%	15%	29%
Unwgt N=	910	752	803	613	769	810	665	879	911	751	881

Registered Voters



**Obama Christie February 2012
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

Registered Voters

	Party ID			Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Cons	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Fav	22%	52%	81%	24%	45%	78%	51%	43%	48%	46%
Unfav	63%	37%	14%	63%	43%	17%	40%	44%	38%	47%
DK/No Opin	15%	11%	5%	13%	12%	5%	9%	12%	13%	8%
Unwgt N=	316	401	183	186	510	190	200	247	243	215

	Employment				Race		Age			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Fav	47%	42%	52%	42%	54%	16%	34%	44%	51%	52%
Unfav	44%	44%	37%	45%	36%	77%	45%	47%	42%	35%
No Opin	10%	14%	11%	13%	10%	7%	21%	9%	7%	12%
Unwgt N=	397	82	288	141	717	83	54	223	347	278

	Income				Gender		Union Household		
	<50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female	Private	Public	Not Union
Fav	36%	51%	48%	56%	53%	41%	25%	36%	52%
Unfav	49%	39%	45%	37%	38%	46%	70%	53%	36%
No Opin	15%	9%	7%	7%	9%	13%	4%	10%	12%
Unwgt N=	243	266	131	102	427	483	120	55	717

[Order of Obama/Christie Job Performance questions was rotated]

Q. Please rate how Barack Obama is handling his job as President, using a grading scale from A to F, You can give him any full letter grade, A, B, C, D, or F.

	<i>Trend...</i>					
	Feb 12 RV	Nov 11 RV	Oct 11 RV	Aug 11 RV	Apr 11 RV	Feb 11 RV
A	16%	9%	10%	8%	14%	11%
B	32%	28%	28%	25%	32%	32%
C	22%	31%	30%	30%	27%	30%
D	13%	15%	14%	18%	16%	14%
F	17%	17%	17%	19%	20%	12%
DK	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
N=	912	753	801	612	390	416

Registered Voters

	Party ID			Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Cons	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
A	28%	9%	6%	25%	15%	5%	24%	19%	9%	12%
B	46%	31%	8%	55%	32%	8%	23%	23%	39%	41%
C	17%	27%	21%	12%	29%	14%	16%	25%	20%	27%
D	4%	16%	23%	5%	13%	24%	14%	13%	15%	10%
F	2%	17%	41%	3%	11%	49%	23%	17%	17%	10%
DK	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
N=	319	401	183	187	510	191	202	247	243	215

**Obama Christie February 2012
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

	Employment				Race		Age			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
A	17%	9%	15%	18%	9%	37%	16%	16%	12%	19%
B	33%	41%	28%	30%	28%	47%	47%	34%	29%	25%
C	23%	23%	18%	26%	24%	12%	18%	23%	27%	17%
D	12%	12%	16%	12%	16%	1%	10%	14%	14%	13%
F	15%	14%	24%	12%	21%	2%	7%	12%	19%	25%
DK	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%	1%
N=	397	82	290	141	718	85	54	223	348	279

	Income				Gender		Union Household		
	<50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female	Private	Public	Not Union
A	20%	15%	10%	9%	11%	20%	15%	18%	16%
B	30%	30%	43%	30%	32%	32%	42%	24%	30%
C	23%	22%	18%	31%	23%	22%	25%	25%	21%
D	9%	15%	13%	12%	14%	12%	6%	11%	14%
F	16%	17%	16%	18%	20%	14%	11%	21%	17%
DK	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%
N=	245	265	132	101	430	482	121	55	718

Q. Please rate how Chris Christie is handling his job as governor, using a grading scale from A to F, You can give him any full letter grade, A, B, C, D, or F.

	<i>Trend...</i>					
	Feb 12 RV	Nov 11 RV	Oct 11 RV	Aug 11 RV	Apr 11 RV	Feb 11 RV
A	16%	18%	14%	13%	14%	14%
B	27%	28%	30%	25%	32%	24%
C	24%	21%	27%	18%	20%	26%
D	14%	17%	14%	24%	14%	15%
F	18%	13%	14%	19%	21%	19%
DK	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%	2%
N=	914	752	799	612	390	416

Registered Voters

	Party ID			Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Cons	HS or Less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
A	4%	16%	37%	6%	13%	34%	22%	12%	14%	16%
B	18%	31%	36%	20%	28%	31%	23%	30%	29%	24%
C	26%	25%	16%	28%	24%	18%	18%	24%	24%	28%
D	19%	13%	4%	17%	14%	10%	18%	12%	14%	13%
F	29%	13%	7%	27%	18%	6%	18%	18%	17%	18%
DK	3%	2%	0%	3%	2%	1%	1%	5%	2%	1%
N=	319	402	183	187	512	191	202	247	245	215

**Obama Christie February 2012
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

	Employment				Race		Age			
	Full Time	Part Time	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
A	13%	12%	24%	11%	20%	2%	7%	10%	17%	26%
B	29%	28%	21%	30%	28%	16%	25%	33%	27%	20%
C	24%	22%	24%	23%	24%	28%	24%	25%	22%	24%
D	14%	14%	14%	15%	13%	24%	13%	14%	15%	13%
F	19%	21%	15%	17%	15%	28%	21%	16%	19%	15%
DK	2%	4%	1%	4%	1%	2%	10%	1%	0%	1%
N=	398	82	291	141	718	85	54	224	348	280

	Income				Gender		Union Household		
	<50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female	Private	Public	Not Union
A	14%	14%	15%	18%	17%	14%	6%	12%	17%
B	22%	31%	32%	31%	30%	24%	13%	22%	30%
C	19%	26%	29%	26%	22%	25%	24%	29%	23%
D	21%	9%	11%	9%	13%	15%	16%	14%	13%
F	21%	19%	12%	15%	16%	19%	41%	22%	14%
DK	3%	0%	1%	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	3%
N=	245	266	132	102	431	483	121	55	720

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 9-11, 2012

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone from February 9-11, 2012 with a scientifically selected random sample of 914 New Jersey registered voters. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey population, using gender, age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity matching to 2010 US Census Bureau data. All results are reported with these weighted data. This telephone poll included 734 landline respondents supplemented with 180 cell phone respondents, acquired through random digit dialing.

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 914 adults is +/-3.3 percentage points, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey voters favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.7 and 53.3 percent (50 +/-3.3) had all New Jersey adults 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.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by Braun Research, Incorporated. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, a non-partisan academic center focused on the study and teaching of politics and the political process.

**Weighted Sample Characteristics
914 New Jersey Registered Voters**

37% Democrat	47% Male	14% 18-29	71% White
43% Independent	53% Female	32% 30-49	15% Black
20% Republican		39% 50-64	7% Hispanic
		24% 65+	6% Asian/Other/Multi