RUTGERS
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Eagleton Institute of Politics
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
191 Ryders Lane
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901-8557

www.eagleton.rutgers.edu
eagleton@rci.rutgers.edu
732-932-9384
Fax: 732-932-6778

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 2, 2010

For more commentary from Professor Redlawsk see *http://eagletonpoll.blogspot.com*

Contact: David Redlawsk, Ph.D.
Email: redlawsk@rutgers.edu
Phone: (732) 932-9384 ext. 285; (319) 400-1134 (cell)

Questions and tables are at the end of this release

NEW JERSEY TEA PARTY REPUBLICANS SEE OBAMA AS SOCIALIST, UN-AMERICAN AND DISCONNECTED

Movement a complex mix of beliefs – most are anti-Obama, but many are more moderate

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – Seventy five percent of New Jersey Republicans with a favorable impression of the TEA Party movement think President Barack Obama is a socialist, according to a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released today. Republicans who do not favor the movement disagree, with only 38 percent calling Obama a socialist.

Similarly, while 84 percent of pro-TEA Party Republicans say Obama is disconnected from people like them and 49 percent call the Obama administration un-American, other Republicans have very different opinions: 20 percent call Obama un-American and 51 percent say he is disconnected from people like them.

"We find that Republicans who favor the TEA Party movement are driven, at least in part, by an antipathy towards Obama which is simply less prevalent among Republicans who are not favorable toward the TEA Party," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political Science at Rutgers University. The poll of 953 New Jersey adults including 886 register voters was conducted Feb. 19-22, 2010 and has a margin of error of +/-3.3 percentage points for the registered voter sample.

Registered voters in New Jersey have a less favorable impression of the TEA Party movement than other states, as shown in recent national polls. Statewide, only 27 percent of New Jersey voters have a favorable impression of the movement, while 29 percent view it unfavorably and 44 percent express no opinion either way.

Not surprisingly, there is a strong partisan split, with 48 percent of Republican or leaning Republican voters expressing a favorable impression of the TEA Party movement, while 10 percent are unfavorable, and 42 percent have no opinion.

At the same time, 30 percent of independents and 11 percent of Democrats and leaning Democrats have a favorable impression of the movement. Overall, 70 percent of those with a

favorable view of the TEA Party are Republicans, while 30 percent are independents and Democrats.

TEA Party Republicans differ from Democrats and independents favoring group

The relatively small sample of pro-TEA Party independents and Democrats diverges from the movement's Republican supporters in several ways, according to Redlawsk. While Republicans favoring the TEA Party movement are strongly negative toward Obama by an 84 percent to 8 percent margin, two-thirds of non-Republicans who favor the movement also view Obama favorably, and only 20 percent have an unfavorable impression of him. Moreover, 60 percent of the non-Republicans favoring the TEA Party do not believe that Obama is a socialist and 65 percent do not consider his administration un-American.

TEA Party supporters less extreme on issues than on Obama

TEA Party supporters agree with other New Jersey voters about New Jerseyans' lack of personal fiscal responsibility. More than 68 percent of the state's voters believe that Americans are not personally fiscally responsible. This includes 73 percent of GOP TEA Party supporters, and 65 percent of those who are not; 62 percent of non-Republican TEA Party supporters, and 69 percent of Democrats and independents who do not favor the movement.

On the government bailout of large financial institutions TEA Party Republicans look more like other Republicans, with 85 percent disagreeing that the "financial bailout was a good use of money" compared to 75 percent of Republicans without a favorable impression of the movement. Among Democrats and independents, 53 percent oppose the bailout regardless of their views of the Tea Party.

Asked to react to the statement, "Our country used to stand for something; it doesn't anymore," TEA Party supporters are more likely to agree, regardless of party preference; 62 percent of Republicans and 55 percent of Democrats and independents concur. The statement is supported by only a minority of those who do not view the TEA Party favorably: 49 percent of Republicans and 37 percent of Democrats and independents.

Republicans who favor the TEA Party are less likely to believe that "Government should do more to help middle class people," with 65 percent in agreement. Still, when action is focused on the middle class, a majority of TEA Party supporters see a role for government. All others groups of respondents were even more likely to agree, with 79 percent of Republican Tea Party detractors, 86 percent of Democrats and independents who favor the TEA Party and 89 percent of all other Democrats and independents agreeing with the statement.

"Taken together, we see that those with a favorable view of the TEA Party movement cannot be cast as a single group marching in lockstep," said Redlawsk. "In some ways

Republicans favorable towards the movement are completely different from their fellow Republicans, or from non-Republicans who also favor the movement. But in others, TEA Party supporters of all stripes differ from those without a favorable view of the group. And in still other ways, TEA Party supporters are directly in the opinion mainstream."

"Ultimately, our analysis suggests that among Republicans TEA Party supporters there is great motivation in their negativity towards Obama," said Redlawsk. "But pro-Tea Party Democrats and independents have more general concerns about the state of America today."

TEA Party Republicans less worried about their personal situation

Differences between TEA Party Republican supporters and other voters are very clear when asked how much they worry about their personal financial situation. Pro-TEA Party GOPers are much less worried than other voters about housing, health insurance, jobs and retirement. The difference is stark for housing, where just 18 percent of Republicans favoring the TEA Party worry "a lot" about the availability of good housing compared to 33 percent to 42 percent from other groups. While 45 percent of these Republicans worry "a lot" about health insurance coverage, 62 percent to 75 percent from other groups worry a lot about coverage.

That Pro-Tea Party Republicans are financially better off than counterparts from other groups, explains different levels of concern, Redlawsk said.

Demographics of TEA Party Movement

GOP TEA Party movement supporters are clustered in the $50,000 to $100,000 income range and are somewhat older than the average New Jersey voter. They are also significantly more likely to be male, white, and to consider themselves born-again Christians. Democrats and independents favoring the TEA Party are more likely to have incomes under $50,000, are much younger, and less likely to be white males.

"There appear to be two demographic bases for the TEA Party movement," said Redlawsk. "One is a higher income, older, male, Republican, anti-Obama group. The other is a lower income, younger group who are not Republicans and who like Obama. These voters are attracted to the TEA Party because of worries about their own financial situation and feelings that something is wrong in America. With more than a quarter of New Jersey voters favorable towards the TEA Party, it is possible that the movement could have real impact on politics. The question is whether it can provide what both groups want at the same time. If the focus is on impacting the Republican Party, it may lose the 30 percent who are not Republicans. But to keep that group happy may require a focus that is much broader than Republican Party politics and an intense dislike of the Obama administration."

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 19-22, 2010
Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release of March 2, 2010 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. All percentages are of New Jersey registered voters.

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. First, [next]:

[ROTATE]

	The TEA Party movement	Democrats in Congress	Republicans in Congress	President Obama
Favorable	27%	35%	25%	56%
Unfavorable	29%	42%	48%	31%
No Opinion	34%	22%	26%	12%
Don't Know	10%	1%	1%	1%
N=	885	885	885	885

Is your general impression of President Obama favorable or unfavorable?

By TEA Party Favorability and Party ID
*Note: Republicans and Democrats include "leaners"

	All Respondents	Republicans Favorable Opinion of TEA Party	Republicans Not Favorable Opinion of TEA Party	Non Republicans Favorable Opinion of TEA Party	Non Republicans Not Favorable Opinion of TEA Party
Favorable	56%	8%	29%	66%	82%
Unfavorable	31%	84%	51%	20%	6%
No Opinion	12%	7%	19%	14%	11%
Don't Know	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
N=	886	165	178	71	463

Demographics by Party and TEA Party Favorability
*Note: Republicans and Democrats include "leaners"

	Party ID			Age				Gender	
	Dem	**Rep**	**Ind**	**18-29**	**30-49**	**50-64**	**65+**	**Male**	**Fem**
Republicans TEA Party Favorable	--	48%	--	4%	18%	24%	24%	24%	15%
Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	--	52%	--	13%	23%	17%	24%	21%	20%
Non-Republicans TEA Party Favorable	11%	--	30%	23%	5%	8%	5%	7%	9%
Non-Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	89%	--	70%	60%	54%	51%	47%	48%	56%
N=	469	344	67	115	390	199	172	417	463

	Race				Income			
	Asian	**Black**	**Latino**	**White**	**< 50K**	**50K – < 100K**	**100K- < 150K**	**150K +**
Republicans TEA Party Favorable	20%	0%	12%	23%	9%	26%	19%	24%
Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	9%	4%	12%	26%	21%	23%	17%	18%
Non-Republicans TEA Party Favorable	35%	5%	11%	6%	10%	7%	6%	9%
Non-Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	37%	92%	64%	46%	61%	44%	59%	49%
N=	46	108	80	607	284	239	144	98

	Education				Employment Status			
	HS or Less	**Some College/ AA**	**4-year Degree**	**Grad School**	**Full Time**	**Part Time**	**Retired**	**Not Employed**
Republicans TEA Party Favorable	19%	19%	17%	20%	20%	19%	24%	11%
Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	21%	18%	21%	21%	18%	23%	25%	20%
Non-Republicans TEA Party Favorable	8%	11%	9%	3%	6%	9%	6%	13%
Non-Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	53%	52%	53%	55%	55%	49%	45%	56%
N=	322	238	197	123	396	110	173	197

	Religion				Evangelical		Ideology		
	Cath	**Prot**	**Jewish**	**Other**	**Yes**	**No**	**Liberal**	**Middle**	**Conserv**
Republicans TEA Party Favorable	21%	21%	13%	9%	28%	16%	0%	11%	54%
Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	21%	22%	26%	14%	19%	21%	4%	23%	29%
Non-Republicans TEA Party Favorable	8%	7%	3%	14%	8%	8%	13%	9%	34%
Non-Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	50%	50%	59%	64%	46%	55%	83%	58%	14%
N=	416	277	39	126	160	714	159	499	205

	Region				
	Urban	**Suburban**	**Exurban**	**Philly Area**	**Shore**
Republicans TEA Party Favorable	12%	19%	28%	15%	21%
Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	12%	18%	30%	21%	22%
Non-Republicans TEA Party Favorable	10%	8%	8%	9%	8%
Non-Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	66%	55%	55%	55%	49%
N=	137	280	133	169	161

Here is a list of problems facing many Americans. Please tell me how much each worries you personally. Is it a lot, a little, or not at all?

[ROTATE]

The availability of good housing:

	All Respondents	Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable
A Lot	36%	18%	33%	39%	42%
A little	32%	39%	31%	30%	30%
Not At All	32%	43%	35%	31%	27%
Don't Know	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
N=	886	166	180	71	463

Credit Card Debt:

	All Respondents	Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable
A lot	36%	26%	29%	28%	43%
A little	24%	22%	28%	32%	21%
Not at All	40%	52%	43%	39%	35%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%
N=	886	166	180	71	464

Health insurance coverage:

	All Respondents	Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable
A lot	62%	45%	62%	75%	67%
A little	20%	27%	21%	13%	17%
Not at all	18%	28%	17%	13%	16%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%
N=	886	165	179	72	463

The availability of a good job:

	All Respondents	Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable
A lot	64%	52%	63%	68%	68%
A little	18%	20%	17%	17%	17%
Not at all	18%	29%	19%	15%	15%
Don't Know	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
N=	886	165	178	72	463

Saving for retirement:

	All Respondents	Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable
A lot	60%	52%	65%	58%	61%
A little	21%	23%	17%	21%	22%
Not at all	18%	25%	17%	21%	16%
Don't Know	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%
N=	886	166	179	71	464

For each of the following, tell me if you agree or disagree with the statement. First,

[ROTATE]

Percent AGREE	All	Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Favorable	Non-Republicans TEA Party Not Favorable
The Obama Administration is un-American	18%	49%	20%	20%	5%
President Obama is a socialist	32%	75%	38%	33%	15%
The financial bailout was a good use of money	30%	10%	24%	39%	39%
Americans lack personal fiscal responsibility	68%	73%	65%	62%	69%
President Obama is disconnected from people like me	36%	84%	51%	31%	15%
Our country used to stand for something; it doesn't anymore	46%	62%	49%	55%	37%
Government should do more to help middle class people	82%	65%	79%	86%	89%

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 19-22, 2010

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted from February 19-22, 2010 with a scientifically selected random sample of 953 New Jersey adults yielding 886 registered voters. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey population, including gender, age, race, education, and Hispanic ethnicity. All results are reported with these weighted data.

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 a sample of 953 adults is +/-3.2 points, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 45.9 and 54.1 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.

Weighted Sample Characteristics
(n=953 adults)

40% Dem	48% Male	16% 18-29	69% White
34% Independent	52% Female	43% 30-49	13% Black
26% Republican		22% 55-64	10% Hispanic
		19% 65+	5% Asian
			3% Other/Multiple