

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

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**Support for the New Jersey Open Space Bond Depends on How Question is Asked**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – New Jersey’s \$400 million dollar open space bond issue is at risk of failing according to a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released today. Among likely voters in the November 3 election, 43 percent oppose borrowing for open space while 41 percent support borrowing, a statistical dead heat. Another 16 percent are undecided.

The Rutgers-Eagleton poll results vary dramatically from another recent poll which found 55 percent of likely voters in favor, and only 32 percent opposed. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll of 583 likely voters has a margin of error of +/- 4.1 percent.

“It is rare to see such significant differences in two polls taken at nearly the same time,” said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers. “In this case, however, the difference is in the way the question was asked. When voters are cued to the idea that a bond issue means borrowing money they are far less supportive than when simply told that bonds will be issued.”

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll asked the question: “Voters will decide whether New Jersey should borrow \$400 million to preserve open space, farmland, and historic areas. Do you plan to vote for or against borrowing this money?” In comparison other polls have simply asked voters whether they support “bonding” for open space without specifying that bonding means borrowing money.

“There is no right or wrong way to ask this question,” said Redlawsk. “Voters are clearly very sensitive to the idea of borrowing money in a recession. At the same time, New Jersey voters have generally been supportive efforts to protect open space. Placed against each other, these differing results show that the outcome will depend on how voters view the question when they enter the voting booth.”

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Support for the open space referendum in the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll depends greatly on where voters live. Those living in the major urban areas of the state support the referendum, 48 percent to 35 percent, while those living in the Philadelphia area and in shore counties oppose it 51 percent to 35 percent. New Jersey residents in suburban and exurban areas are evenly balanced with 42 percent favoring and 40 percent opposed.

“Perhaps not surprisingly, those who live in the most densely populated parts of the state are generally in favor of this referendum, while those in the least populated areas are clearly opposed, at least when they are reminded that bond issues require borrowing money,” said Redlawsk.

The fate of the bond could rest at least in part on whether Jon Corzine or Chris Christie voters are more likely to get to the polls. A majority of 51 percent of Corzine voters support borrowing for open space, while only 30 percent of Christie voters do. Daggett voters are somewhat negative with 40 percent supporting the referendum and 47 percent in opposition.

“The take home message is that over the last week and a half of the campaign, the messages voters get about the open space referendum may make a big difference,” said Redlawsk. “So far the debate over the referendum has been muted. If those who support the bond issue focus on its benefits they may convince people to look beyond the borrowing and the bond will pass. Those who want to defeat the referendum may have a chance if they can focus voters on the fact that bond issues are about borrowing money. If so, this will be a close vote.”

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*Questions and Tables follow on the next page.*

**Questions and Tables**

The questions covered in this press release are below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. All percentages are of Likely Voters.

**Voters will decide whether New Jersey should borrow \$400 million to preserve open space, farmland, and historic areas. Do you plan to vote for or against borrowing this money? (If unsure: As of today, which way are you leaning?)**

	Likely Voters	Party ID				Vote Choice			
		Rep	Dem	Ind	Christie	Corzine	Daggett	Undecided	
<b>For Borrowing</b>	41%	40%	42%	40%	30%	51%	40%	44%	
<b>Against Borrowing</b>	43%	46%	38%	46%	56%	32%	47%	26%	
<b>Don't Know</b>	16%	14%	20%	14%	14%	18%	13%	30%	
<b>N</b>	579	147	224	202	202	220	115	27	

	Urban	Sub-urban	Ex-urban	Phil. Area	Shore	Liberal	Mod.	Cons.
	<b>For Borrowing</b>	48%	42%	42%	36%	33%	49%	40%
<b>Against Borrowing</b>	35%	40%	40%	47%	55%	31%	44%	50%
<b>Don't Know</b>	16%	18%	18%	17%	12%	20%	16%	15%
<b>N</b>	79	206	88	90	97	105	312	146

	Income < 30K	Income 30-49K	Income 50-74K	Income 75-99K	Income 100K+	HS or Less	Some college/ AA Degree	College Degree	Grad Work
	<b>For Borrowing</b>	31%	35%	41%	47%	46%	35%	36%	41%
<b>Against Borrowing</b>	51%	51%	44%	38%	41%	46%	46%	46%	34%
<b>Don't Know</b>	18%	13%	14%	15%	13%	19%	18%	13%	14%
<b>N</b>	73	74	118	73	145	130	146	164	139

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*Rutgers-Eagleton Poll October 15-20, 2009*

	<b>Age 18/34</b>	<b>Age 35/54</b>	<b>Age 55+</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Latino</b>
<b>For Borrowing</b>	39%	43%	40%	44%	38%	42%	35%	52%	31%
<b>Against Borrowing</b>	48%	41%	42%	44%	42%	41%	47%	35%	56%
<b>Don't Know</b>	13%	16%	18%	12%	20%	17%	19%	13%	13%
<b>N</b>	119	251	201	286	294	416	75	23	52

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted from October 15-20, 2009 with a scientifically selected random sample of 903 New Jersey adults of whom 583 were determined to be likely voters. Likely voters were defined by registration status, vote history, self reported turnout intention, and attention to the campaign. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey population, including age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity. All results are reported with this 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 903 adults is +/-3.3 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. The sampling error for the likely voter sample reported here is +/-4.1 percent. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey likely voters favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 45.9 and 54.1 percent (50 + 4.1) had all New Jersey likely voters 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.

<b>Sample Characteristics</b>			
<b>Full Sample (n=903)</b>			
36% Dem	49% Male	29% 18-34	69% White
42% Independent	51% Female	42% 35-54	11% Black
22% Republican		29% 55+	14% Hispanic
			5% Asian
			1% Other
<b>Likely Voter Sample (n=583)</b>			
39% Dem	49% Male	21% 18-34	74% White
35% Independent	51% Female	43% 35-54	13% Black
26% Republican		35% 55+	9% Hispanic
			4% Asian
			1% Other