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Questions and tables are available at the end of this release

RUTGERS-EAGLETON POLL FINDS NEW JERSEYANS SUPPORT LEGALIZING GAY MARRIAGE

A Majority would not Challenge a Legislative Bill Legalizing Gay Marriage

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – Supporters of gay marriage may find New Jersey more hospitable than many other states, according to a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released today. By a 46 percent to 42 percent margin, adults in New Jerseyans favor legalizing same-sex nuptials, with 12 percent unsure.

The survey also shows that if the state Legislature passes a bill legalizing gay marriage, 52 percent would accept the decision, while 40 percent would support a constitutional amendment banning the practice.

"Residents of New Jersey are more supportive of gay marriage than opposed to it, and more importantly a majority would accept a legislative decision legalizing same-sex marriages," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University. "While this tests opinion outside the intensity of a campaign to ban gay marriage as occurred in California, there is more of a 'live and let live' attitude in New Jersey than in many other states that have dealt with this issue."

The poll of 903 New Jersey adults was fielded November 6-10 and has a margin of error of +/-3.3 percentage points. Half the respondents also had been interviewed before the Nov. 3 elections. The gay marriage questions were asked only after Election Day.

Support for Gay Marriage in New Jersey

Women are more likely than men to support gay marriage here, 51 percent to 42 percent, and younger residents (under 40) are more supportive than their older counterparts, by 53 percent to 43 percent. About half the Latino (52 percent) and white (49 percent) respondents favor same-sex marriage, but only 29 percent of blacks feel the same way. The results mirror national trends, Redlawsk said.

"Support for legalizing gay marriage in New Jersey follows the patterns of other states and nationally," said Redlawsk. "For many younger people, the idea of gay marriage causes a shrug rather than a negative reaction. On the other hand, there is strong opposition to legalizing gay marriage in the African-American community nationally, something we also see in New Jersey."

Gay Marriage not an Important Issue for Most New Jerseyans

Clearly, residents don't give gay marriage a high priority among issues facing the state: only 2 percent say it is the most important issue, while 15 percent say it is one of a few very important issues. Another 37 percent call the issue "somewhat important," while 44 percent say it is "not at all important."

"The holds across the board," said Redlawsk. "Even African-Americans, who are strongly in opposition, do not consider gay marriage an important issue, with 53 percent of blacks saying it is not at all important. While there is some opposition to legalizing gay marriage, most think there are more important issues for the state to address."

Supporters of gay marriage are much more likely to call the issue "very important" with 22 percent of supporters feeling strongly, while only 24 percent think the issue is not important. In comparison, 61 percent of those who oppose gay marriage say the issue is not important.

Responding to a Bill Legalizing Gay Marriage

In response to hypothetical legislative approval of gay marriage, residents were asked to choose from three options: support a state constitutional amendment to ban both gay marriages and civil unions; support an amendment to ban gay marriages only; accept gay marriages. A majority (52 percent) would accept legalization, three times as many who would favor banning both practices and more than twice the number who would ban gay marriages only.

"If the legislature passes a bill on gay marriage, our results suggest that most New Jersey residents will accept the decision," said Redlawsk. "There will be a strong reaction from opponents, but for the most part, opponents actually see this as a less important issue than do supporters. And interestingly, about half the undecided respondents would accept legalizing gay marriage, while only 18 percent would support some kind of ban, suggesting that they are not a likely source of opposition to a gay marriage bill."

Knowing Someone Who is Gay or Lesbian Increases Support

Many New Jerseyans have gay or lesbian friends (56 percent), family (32 percent), or co-workers (30 percent). Those with a gay co-worker are 9 points more likely to support gay marriage than those who do not, while those with a gay family member are 19 points more supportive and those with a gay close friend are 17 points more supportive of gay marriage. Those who know gays or lesbians are also more likely to consider the issue of gay marriage to be important than those who do not.

"Social scientists hypothesize that having contact with people who are different from ourselves can result in greater sympathy for and understanding of other people," said Redlawsk. "This is clearly the case in New Jersey. Knowing a gay person results in much greater support for gay marriage probably because having such contact results in seeing past whatever differences we imagine there are between people."

QUESTIONS AND TABLES BEGIN ON THE NEXT PAGE

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll November 6-10, 2009
Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release of November 18, 2009 are list below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. All percentages are of New Jersey adults.

Some people say gay marriage should be legal in New Jersey. Others oppose legalizing gay marriage. What is your position? Do you: [READ first two options]
N=888

	ALL
Support gay marriage	46%
Oppose gay marriage	40%
Support civil unions and oppose gay marriage (VOL)	2%
Don't Know (Vol)	12%

	DEM	IND	REP	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	ASIAN
Support Gay Marriage	59%	45%	25%	49%	29%	52%	38%
Oppose Gay Marriage	28%	42%	59%	38%	51%	36%	49%
Support Union/Opp GM	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	0%	0%
Don't Know	12%	11%	13%	11%	18%	12%	13%

	M	F	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Support Gay Marriage	42%	51%	51%	55%	46%	44%	41%
Oppose Gay Marriage	44%	35%	40%	32%	35%	41%	47%
Support Union/Opp GM	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%	2%	3%
Don't Know	12%	12%	8%	13%	17%	13%	9%

Same-sex civil unions are currently legal in New Jersey. Now, the legislature is considering legalizing gay marriage. If the legislature does this, how should New Jersey citizens respond? They should: [ROTATE OPTIONS 1-3 and READ]
N=884

	ALL
Accept the decision and allow gay marriage in New Jersey	52%
Amend the state Constitution to ban gay marriage but still allow civil unions	23%
Amend the state Constitution to ban both gay marriage and civil unions	17%
Don't Know (Vol)	8%

Response to Legislature	DEM	IND	REP	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	ASIAN
Accept Decision	68%	49%	29%	53%	45%	58%	52%
Ban Gay Marriage Only	15%	25%	34%	25%	18%	21%	10%
Ban GM & Civ Union	11%	18%	27%	15%	27%	18%	21%
Don't Know	7%	8%	10%	7%	11%	3%	17%

Response to Legislature	M	F	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Accept Decision	48%	57%	53%	63%	53%	53%	44%
Ban Gay Marriage Only	23%	23%	14%	14%	23%	24%	31%
Ban GM & Civ Union	20%	14%	30%	14%	12%	18%	17%
Don't Know	9%	6%	3%	9%	12%	5%	7%

	Support for Gay Marriage		
Response to Legislature	Support	Oppose	Don't Know
Accept Decision	91%	9%	49%
Ban Gay Marriage Only	4%	48%	14%
Ban GM & Civ Union	3%	38%	4%
Don't Know	2%	5%	34%

Of the issues facing New Jersey, how important is gay marriage? Is it the most important issue, one of a few very important issues, somewhat important, or not at all important?
N=902

	ALL
Most important	2%
One of a few very Important	15%
Somewhat Important	37%
Not at all important	44%
Don't Know	1%

Issue Importance	DEM	IND	REP	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO	ASIAN
Most Important	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	1%	0%
Very Important	21%	12%	11%	14%	9%	23%	22%
Somewhat Important	40%	37%	30%	38%	33%	38%	28%
Not at all Important	35%	48%	57%	45%	53%	32%	50%
Don't Know	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%	6%	0%

Issue Importance	M	F	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Most Important	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	2%	3%
Very Important	14%	17%	8%	33%	13%	12%	10%
Somewhat Important	32%	42%	53%	26%	37%	39%	37%
Not at all Important	53%	37%	39%	36%	47%	46%	49%
Don't Know	0%	2%	0%	3%	2%	0%	1%

	Support for Gay Marriage			Response to Legislature		
Issue Importance	**Support**	**Oppose**	**Don't Know**	**Ban GM & CU**	**Ban GM**	**Accept**
Most Important	1%	3%	0%	5%	2%	1%
Very Important	22%	11%	7%	15%	9%	20%
Somewhat Important	52%	25%	19%	24%	30%	48%
Not at all Important	24%	61%	67%	55%	60%	30%
Don't Know	1%	0%	7%	1%	0%	2%

Do any of the following apply to you?
You work with someone you know is gay or lesbian
N=900

Yes	30%
No	67%
Don't Know	3%

You have someone in your family who is gay or lesbian
N=896

Yes	32%
No	67%
Don't Know	1%

You have a friend or close acquaintance who is gay or lesbian
N=900

Yes	56%
No	43%
Don't Know	1%

	Work With		Family Member		Friend	
Position on Gay Marriage	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Support Gay Marriage	53%	44%	59%	40%	54%	37%
Oppose Gay Marriage	32%	43%	31%	44%	34%	48%
Support Union/Opp GM	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Don't Know	12%	11%	9%	13%	11%	14%

	Work With		Family Member		Friend	
Response to Legislature	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Accept Decision	58%	50%	63%	48%	59%	44%
Ban Gay Marriage Only	26%	21%	19%	25%	24%	21%
Ban GM & Civ Union	10%	20%	14%	19%	12%	24%
Don't Know	6%	8%	5%	9%	5%	10%

	Work With		Family Member		Friend	
Issue Importance	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Most Important	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Very Important	20%	14%	22%	12%	18%	12%
Somewhat Important	38%	37%	40%	37%	42%	32%
Not at all Important	40%	46%	36%	48%	38%	53%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%	1%

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted from November 6-10, 2009 with a scientifically selected random sample of 903 New Jersey adults. 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.

This Poll included two samples. One was a random sample of 452 New Jersey adults, selected via random digit dialing of landline telephones in the state. The second sample was collected through call backs to a randomly selected 451 respondents from the 903 respondents in the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll of October 15-20, 2009. The original sample was randomly selected via random digit dialing of landlines in New Jersey. The two samples are combined for this report and weighted to reflect the demographics of the State of New Jersey as described above.

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 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=903)

37% Dem	48% Male	31% 18-34	68% White
40% Independent	52% Female	40% 35-54	11% Black
22% Republican		29% 55+	13% Hispanic
			6% Asian
			2% Other