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Something New Jerseyans Can Agree On: They Don't Want to Pump Their Own Gas

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (March 10, 2022) – New Jerseyans might not be able to agree on whether a popular breakfast sandwich should be called pork roll or Taylor Ham, but when it comes to pumping their own gas, the message is clear: almost three-quarters of them don't want anything to do with it, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton poll.

Despite a new bill that was introduced earlier this week by state lawmakers that would allow the option for self-service gas in New Jersey, only five percent of those polled were unsure of whether they wanted the change while an overwhelming 73 percent of residents said they prefer having their gas pumped for them and only 22 percent said the opposite.

“There is apparently one thing all New Jerseyans can agree on nowadays and that's the time-honored Jersey tradition of having your gas pumped for you,” said Ashley Koning, an assistant research professor and director of the [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling \(ECPiP\)](#) at [Rutgers University–New Brunswick](#). “But let's also remember that this single survey question does not reflect the full debate and complexities of the moment that include a global pandemic, an employment crisis, and now an oil crisis. Context plays a crucial role in public opinion. A large majority wants full service in the Garden State, but this preference does not mean automatic opposition to a self-serve option.”

Support for having gas pumped is widespread, but there are some notable demographic differences. Partisans of all stripes prefer full service, though to varying degrees: Democrats are most likely to prefer having their gas pumped for them (82 percent), followed by Independents (70 percent) and Republicans (64 percent).

While large majorities of racial and ethnic groups prefer having their gas pumped for them, white residents (30 percent) are about twice as likely Black residents (15 percent) and Hispanic residents (17 percent) to say they prefer pumping their own.

Those in the lowest income bracket are the most likely to prefer full service (83 percent); those in higher income brackets are about one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half times more likely than those in households making under \$50,000 annually to say they prefer self-service.

People who live in urban areas like Newark and Trenton are the most likely to say they prefer having their gas pumped for them – 82 percent, compared to 11 percent who prefer self-service. About a quarter of those living in every other region say they prefer to pump their own gas.

The largest disparity in gas pumping preferences is between men and women. Eighty-seven percent of women – the highest of any demographic group – prefer to have their gas pumped for them, compared to 55 percent of men; conversely, 37 percent of men prefer to pump their own gas, compared to just 11 percent of women.

“Call it a gender gas gap, if you will,” said Jessica Roman, a research associate with the [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling \(ECPIP\)](#) at [Rutgers University–New Brunswick](#). “We often talk about inclement weather and gasoline smell when it comes to some of the drawbacks of self-service, but there are also significant gender-related issues, like feelings of safety, that could be driving this wedge.”

Results are from a statewide poll of 1,044 adults contacted by live interviewers on landlines and cell phones from February 25 – March 4. The full sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points.

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ABOUT RUTGERS—NEW BRUNSWICK

Rutgers University–New Brunswick is where Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, began more than 250 years ago. Ranked among the world’s top 60 universities, Rutgers’s flagship university is a leading public research institution and a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. It is home to internationally acclaimed faculty and has 12 degree-granting schools and a Division I Athletics program. It is the Big Ten Conference’s most diverse university. Through its community of teachers, scholars, artists, scientists, and healers, Rutgers is equipped as never before to transform lives.

ABOUT THE EAGLETON CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEREST POLLING (ECPIP)

Home of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, ECPIP was established in 1971 and is the oldest and one of the most respected university-based statewide polling operations in the United States. Now celebrating its 50th year and with the publication of over 200 polls, ECPIP’s mission is to provide scientifically sound, non-partisan information about public opinion. To read more about ECPIP and view all of our press releases, published research, and data archive, please visit our website: eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. You can also visit our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

ABOUT THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

The Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling is a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. The Eagleton Institute studies how American politics and government work and change, analyzes how the democracy might improve, and promotes political participation and civic engagement. The Institute explores state and national politics

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through research, education, and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice. To learn more about Eagleton programs and expertise, visit eagleton.rutgers.edu.

QUESTIONS AND TABLES START ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in this release are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey adults; all percentages are of weighted results. Interpret groups with samples sizes under 100 with extreme caution.

Q. Do you prefer to [ROTATE: pump your own gas or have your gas pumped for you]?

Pump own gas	22%
Gas pumped for you	73%
Don't know	5%
Unweighted N=	656

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Pump own gas	14%	24%	34%	37%	11%	30%	15%	17%	19%	24%	24%	21%	20%
Gas pumped for you	82%	70%	64%	55%	87%	66%	82%	79%	74%	73%	70%	75%	78%
DK	4%	6%	2%	8%	2%	4%	3%	4%	7%	3%	7%	5%	2%
Unwt N=	221	268	136	281	358	297	95	156	67	170	179	224	73

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K-<\$100K	\$100K-<\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Pump own gas	13%	20%	33%	24%	11%	26%	23%	24%	26%	26%	19%	24%	18%
Gas pumped for you	83%	77%	65%	69%	82%	72%	70%	69%	71%	69%	77%	73%	75%
DK	4%	3%	2%	7%	7%	2%	7%	7%	3%	5%	4%	3%	7%
Unwt N=	148	173	105	141	139	225	76	108	108	100	199	188	159

Methodology

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone using live interviewers February 25 – March 4, 2022, with a scientifically selected random sample of 1,044 New Jersey adults, 18 or older. Persons without a telephone could not be included in the random selection process. 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. This poll included 255 adults reached on a landline phone and 789 adults reached on a cell phone, all acquired through random digit dialing. Distribution of phone use in this sample is:

	Individual	Household
Cell Only	51%	51%
Dual Use	25%	25%
Dual Use, Reached on LL	23%	23%
Landline Only	2%	1%

The data were weighted to be representative of the residential adult population of New Jersey. The weighting balances sample demographics to target population parameters. The sample is balanced, by form, to match parameters for sex, age, education, region, race/ethnicity and phone use. The sex, age, education, race/ethnicity and region parameters were derived from 2019 American Community Survey PUMS data. The phone use parameter was derived from estimates provided by the National Health Interview Survey Early Release Program.¹

Weighting was done in two stages. The first stage of weighting corrects for different probabilities of selection across the RDD samples associated with the number of adults in each household and each respondent's telephone usage patterns. This adjustment also accounts for the overlapping landline and cell sample frames and the relative sizes of each frame and each sample.²

The second stage of weighting balances sample demographics, by form, to match target population benchmarks. This weighting was accomplished using SPSSINC RAKE, an SPSS extension module that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using the GENLOG procedure. Weights were trimmed to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on survey estimates. 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.

A series of weight variables was computed. One weight for estimates based on the total sample (weight), plus separate weights for each of the different split samples.

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. We calculate the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate

¹ NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2017–2019; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017–2019.

² Buskirk, T. D., & Best, J. (2012). Venn Diagrams, Probability 101 and Sampling Weights Computed for Dual Frame Telephone RDD Designs. *Journal of Statistics and Mathematics*, 15, 3696-3710.

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sample design and systematic non-response.³

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 1,044 New Jersey adults is +/-3.0 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval.⁴ This means that in 95 out every 100 samples using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 3.0 percentage points away from their true values in the population. The design effect⁵ is 1.30, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 3.5 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 46.5 and 53.5 percent (50 +/- 3.5) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

Sampling error does not consider 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). Jessica Roman, MPP, 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. For more information, please contact poll@eagleton.rutgers.edu.

**Weighted Sample Characteristics
1,044 New Jersey Adults**

Male	48%	Democrat	32%	18-34	27%	HS or Less	30%	White	57%
Female	52%	Independent	44%	35-49	25%	Some College	29%	Black	12%
		Republican	24%	50-64	28%	College Grad	22%	Hispanic	19%
				65+	21%				
						Grad Work	19%	Other	12%

³ The composite design effect for a sample of size n, with each case having a weight, w, is computed as $deff = \frac{\sum w^2}{n}$.

⁴ The survey's maximum margin of error is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample – one around 50%.

⁵ Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. We calculate the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response.

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