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Uptick in Governor Murphy’s Favorability, Job Approval Is Steady Nearly One Year Into Second Term, but New Jerseyans Are Split on Where the State Is Headed

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (September 29, 2022) – Gov. Phil Murphy’s favorability rating has rebounded after taking a hit in the spring and about half of New Jerseyans continue to approve of the job he is doing as governor, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

Forty-seven percent of residents have a favorable opinion of the governor, up by double-digits since March. The number of New Jerseyans who are unfavorable toward Murphy remains relatively stable from six months ago, now at 33 percent. Fifteen percent have no opinion on him.

Murphy’s job approval rating has held relatively steady in the past year and a half, with minor movement. Fifty-four percent of New Jerseyans approve of the job Murphy is doing as governor, compared with 37 percent who disapprove; 9 percent are unsure.

“Driven by increased positivity among Democrats and independents, Governor Murphy’s numbers are now back to where they were this time last year – not at his pandemic highs, but better than when he started his first term and certainly better than six months ago,” said [Ashley Koning](#), an assistant research professor and director of the [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling](#) (ECPIP) at [Rutgers University–New Brunswick](#). “The fatigue of a gubernatorial election and a pandemic seem to have worn off as life and governing in the state return to some sense of normal.”

While two-thirds of Democrats were in the governor’s corner in March, now eight in 10 have a favorable view of him. Likewise, while a quarter had no opinion in the spring, half that number now say the same. Similarly, independents now are more favorable of Murphy by double digits and less disapproving of the job he is doing than they were in the spring. On the other hand, Republicans remain mostly stable on their negativity toward the governor.

Despite positivity for the governor's numbers, New Jerseyans are evenly divided when it comes to their outlook on the state's future: 48 percent say the state is going in the right direction, while 45 percent say it has gone off on the wrong track. Nevertheless, this is a double-digit improvement and return to the norm after taking a stumble last year.

"New Jerseyans' outlook on the Garden State has rebounded from the dip it took over the past year of the pandemic, but it is still nowhere near as positive as it was in the year post-Superstorm Sandy," said Koning. "While the numbers mark a potential return to slightly more positivity, they do not fully abandon the slump that the state's direction has been in since 2014."

Among those who say New Jersey is headed in the right direction, 50 percent believe it is because things are changing for the better, while 47 percent say it is because things are not getting worse. Among those who say New Jersey is on the wrong track, 67 percent say it is because things are changing for the worse while 32 percent say it is because things are not getting better.

"When probed further about why they feel the way they do, residents who have a negative outlook focus much more on the way the state is evolving versus those who feel positively—half of whom are content simply maintaining the status quo," said [Jessica Roman](#), a research associate at ECPIP.

Partisanship pervades perceptions of where the state is headed. Eight in 10 Democrats say the state is going in the right direction, while nine in 10 Republicans say the opposite. Independents are more split, with 51 percent saying wrong track and 39 percent saying right direction. Those with at least a college degree (53 percent) are more likely than their counterparts to have a positive outlook.

When it comes to rating other politicians in the state, U.S. Sen. Cory Booker beats out his Democratic colleague when it comes to favorability; 50 percent of New Jerseyans have a favorable opinion of him, compared with 29 percent who have an unfavorable one, 14 percent who are unsure and 7 percent do not know who he is. Likewise, 50 percent approve of the job Booker is doing as senator, while 34 percent disapprove; 16 percent are unsure.

Views are more split when it comes to U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez; 29 percent of residents are favorable toward him, 36 percent are unfavorable, 22 percent have no opinion, and 14 percent say they do not know who he is. Menendez gets a slightly better rating when it comes to the job he is doing as a senator— 38 percent approve, while 37 percent disapprove; 25 percent are unsure.

Results are from a statewide poll of 1,006 adults contacted by live interviewers on landlines and cell phones from Aug. 30 to Sept. 8. The full sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.8 percentage points.

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Broadcast interviews: Rutgers University–New Brunswick has broadcast-quality TV and radio studios available for remote live or taped interviews with Rutgers experts. For more information, contact John Cramer at john.cramer@rutgers.edu.

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ABOUT THE EAGLETON CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEREST POLLING

Home of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (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 in 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](#) page and [Twitter](#) profile.

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 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.

NJ1A. First, I'd like to ask you about some people. Please tell me if your general impression of each one is favorable or unfavorable, or if you do not have an opinion. If you do not know the person, just say so.

Note: This question was part of a split sample. Half of respondents received NJ1A and half received another question.

Phil Murphy

Favorable	47%
Unfavorable	33%
No opinion	15%
Don't know person	5%
Unweighted N=	492

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	White, Non-Hispanic	Non-White	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Favorable	79%	36%	8%	44%	50%	43%	53%	44%	41%	45%	61%
Unfavorable	5%	35%	80%	40%	26%	41%	19%	29%	41%	40%	17%
No opinion	12%	21%	9%	14%	16%	10%	23%	20%	14%	12%	14%
DK person	4%	7%	3%	2%	8%	6%	5%	7%	3%	3%	8%
Unwt N=	187	207	91	264	223	297	180	121	109	154	100

NJ Ratings 2022
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

	Income		Education	
	<\$100K	\$100K+	Some college or less	College grad or more
Favorable	46%	49%	41%	55%
Unfavorable	29%	38%	34%	31%
No opinion	18%	12%	17%	11%
DK person	7%	1%	7%	2%
Unwt N=	202	236	187	302

NJ Ratings 2022
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

Cory Booker

Favorable	50%
Unfavorable	29%
No opinion	14%
Don't know person	7%
Unweighted N=	490

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	White, Non-Hispanic	Non-White	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Favorable	84%	38%	10%	47%	52%	46%	56%	40%	50%	50%	63%
Unfavorable	2%	36%	71%	39%	20%	33%	23%	28%	31%	36%	18%
No opinion	8%	17%	17%	11%	17%	13%	14%	18%	13%	11%	14%
DK person	6%	10%	2%	2%	12%	7%	7%	14%	6%	2%	5%
Unwt N=	186	206	91	264	221	295	180	121	108	153	100

	Income		Education	
	<\$100K	\$100K+	Some college or less	College grad or more
Favorable	47%	56%	43%	60%
Unfavorable	26%	33%	30%	28%
No opinion	18%	10%	17%	10%
DK person	8%	1%	10%	2%
Unwt N=	201	235	187	300

NJ Ratings 2022
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

Bob Menendez

Favorable	29%
Unfavorable	36%
No opinion	22%
Don't know person	14%
Unweighted N=	487

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	White, Non-Hispanic	Non-White	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Favorable	48%	18%	13%	24%	33%	29%	28%	17%	21%	30%	50%
Unfavorable	19%	41%	60%	46%	26%	40%	31%	26%	42%	44%	32%
No opinion	18%	23%	22%	21%	22%	16%	26%	29%	25%	18%	10%
DK person	15%	18%	6%	9%	19%	14%	15%	28%	11%	7%	8%
Unwt N=	184	205	91	264	218	294	178	121	108	152	98

	Income		Education	
	<\$100K	\$100K+	Some college or less	College grad or more
Favorable	32%	25%	26%	33%
Unfavorable	31%	42%	36%	36%
No opinion	21%	25%	21%	23%
DK person	16%	8%	18%	8%
Unwt N=	201	235	184	300

NJ2A. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Phil Murphy is handling his job as governor?

Note: This question was part of a split sample. Half of respondents received NJ2A and half received another question.

Approve	54%
Disapprove	37%
Don't know	9%
Unweighted N=	504

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	White, Non-Hispanic	Non-White	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Approve	85%	45%	18%	49%	59%	51%	60%	58%	48%	50%	65%
Disapprove	8%	41%	80%	46%	28%	44%	26%	34%	44%	42%	23%
DK	7%	15%	2%	5%	13%	5%	14%	8%	8%	9%	12%
Unwt N=	189	210	98	271	228	306	183	122	114	159	101

	Income		Education	
	<\$100K	\$100K+	Some college or less	College grad or more
Approve	56%	53%	49%	62%
Disapprove	33%	44%	39%	33%
DK	11%	3%	12%	5%
Unwt N=	206	244	194	307

NJ3A. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Cory Booker is handling his job as a U.S. senator?

Note: This question was part of a split sample. Half of respondents received NJ3A and half received NJ3B.

Approve	50%
Disapprove	34%
Don't know	16%
Unweighted N=	502

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	White, Non-Hispanic	Non-White	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Approve	82%	40%	9%	48%	51%	44%	57%	47%	44%	51%	56%
Disapprove	4%	40%	78%	43%	26%	37%	29%	28%	39%	40%	27%
DK	14%	20%	13%	9%	24%	18%	14%	25%	16%	9%	17%
Unwt N=	187	210	98	269	228	305	182	121	114	159	100

	Income		Education	
	<\$100K	\$100K+	Some college or less	College grad or more
Approve	48%	55%	42%	61%
Disapprove	33%	36%	36%	30%
DK	19%	9%	21%	9%
Unwt N=	205	244	194	305

NJ3B. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Bob Menendez is handling his job as a U.S. senator?

Note: This question was part of a split sample. Half of respondents received NJ3A and half received NJ3B.

Approve	38%
Disapprove	37%
Don't know	25%
Unweighted N=	497

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	White, Non-Hispanic	Non-White	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Approve	67%	26%	5%	34%	43%	38%	38%	21%	40%	44%	50%
Disapprove	12%	38%	81%	47%	27%	39%	34%	35%	39%	43%	29%
DK	20%	36%	14%	19%	30%	24%	28%	44%	21%	14%	22%
Unwt N=	212	185	94	259	232	297	189	105	125	156	108

	Income		Education	
	<\$100K	\$100K+	Some college or less	College grad or more
Approve	40%	36%	33%	45%
Disapprove	31%	42%	40%	31%
DK	29%	22%	27%	23%
Unwt N=	224	219	173	323

NJ4. In general, would you say the state of New Jersey is currently going in the right direction, or has it gone off on the wrong track?

Note: This question was part of a split sample. Half of respondents received NJ4 and half received another question.

Right direction	48%
Wrong track	45%
Don't know	7%
Unweighted N=	504

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	White, Non-Hispanic	Non-White	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Right direction	81%	39%	9%	44%	51%	45%	53%	54%	34%	44%	60%
Wrong track	12%	51%	90%	53%	39%	50%	36%	38%	57%	50%	35%
DK	7%	10%	1%	4%	10%	4%	11%	8%	9%	5%	5%
Unwt N=	190	209	98	271	228	306	183	122	114	159	101

	Income		Education	
	<\$100K	\$100K+	Some college or less	College grad or more
Right direction	52%	44%	44%	53%
Wrong track	43%	49%	49%	40%
DK	5%	7%	7%	7%
Unwt N=	206	244	195	306

NJ4A. Is New Jersey going in the right direction because things are [ROTATE: changing for the better] or because things are [not getting worse]?

Note: This question was asked only of respondents who said New Jersey is currently going in the right direction.

Changing for the better	50%
Not getting worse	47%
Don't know	3%
Unweighted N=	240

NJ4B Is New Jersey off on the wrong track because things are [ROTATE: changing for the worse] or because things are [not getting better]?

Note: This question was asked only of respondents who said New Jersey has gone off on the wrong track.

Changing for the worse	67%
Not getting better	32%
Don't know	1%
Unweighted N=	224

Methodology

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone using live interviewers August 30 to September 8, 2022, with a scientifically selected random sample of 1,006 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 telephone poll included 291 adults reached on a landline phone and 715 adults reached on a cell phone, all acquired through random digit dialing; 327 of the cell phone completes were acquired through one-to-one SMS text messaging by live interviewers that led respondents to an online version of the survey. Distribution of phone use in this sample is:

Cell	39%
Text to Web	33%
Landline	29%

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 and overall, to match parameters for sex, age, education, race/ethnicity, region 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 telephone 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 final stage of weighting balances sample demographics, overall and 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 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.

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

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.

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 1,006 New Jersey adults is +/-3.1 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The design effect³ is 1.52, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 3.8 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 46.2 and 53.8 percent (50 +/- 3.8) 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. with sample from Dynata. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP). 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 Demographics
1,006 New Jersey adults 18+

Overall Margin of Error = +/- 3.8 percentage points

Please note: Totals may equal slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding.

		deff	MOE			deff	MOE
Man	48%	1.54	+/- 5.3%	White	57%	1.52	+/- 4.9%
Woman	52%	1.47	+/- 5.5%	Black	12%	1.48	+/- 11.6%
				Hispanic	19%	1.45	+/- 9.2%
18-34	27%	1.40	+/- 7.7%	Other	12%	1.51	+/- 11.8%
35-49	23%	1.41	+/- 7.5%				
50-64	29%	1.58	+/- 6.9%	<50K	22%	1.45	+/- 9.8%
65+	21%	1.64	+/- 8.7%	50K-<100K	35%	1.44	+/- 6.9%
				100K-<150K	18%	1.53	+/- 9.0%
Democrat	38%	1.51	+/- 6.0%	150K+	24%	1.44	+/- 7.0%
Independent	42%	1.52	+/- 6.1%				
Republican	20%	1.48	+/- 8.5%	Urban	17%	1.46	+/- 9.3%
				Suburb	36%	1.53	+/- 6.4%
HS or Less	30%	1.10	+/- 8.9%	Exurban	14%	1.52	+/- 10.3%
Some College	29%	1.24	+/- 7.1%	Phil/South	18%	1.55	+/- 9.2%
College Grad	24%	1.17	+/- 5.5%	Shore	17%	1.52	+/- 9.1%
Grad Work	17%	1.15	+/- 6.4%				

³ 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.