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## **MEDICAID EXPANSION RECEIVES BROAD SUPPORT CHRISTIE POSITIONED WELL AMONG ELECTORATE – IMPROVES UPON FAVORABLES AMONG DEMOCRATS**

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie maintains solid support among registered voters in the Garden State, and his decision to allow the state to receive federal funds for Medicaid expansion is being met with approval by a majority as well. The most recent statewide poll of registered voters in New Jersey from Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind finds that 66 percent approve of the job Christie is doing as governor, a number that continues his trend of widespread support among New Jersey voters. Approval extends to his controversial decision to accept federal funding for the expansion of health care to the state's poor under the Affordable Care Act. Sixty-nine percent believe Christie's decision is the right one for the state.

"Although nationally the Republican governor has been criticized by some for opting New Jersey into the Affordable Care Act through Medicaid, Garden Staters of all political stripes are solidly behind his decision," said Krista Jenkins, director of PublicMind and professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University. Support for the acceptance breaks slightly along party lines with 86 percent of Democrats and 49 percent of Republicans saying they think it's a good decision for the state. "This was a much anticipated decision, and the fact that it's being received so favorably, particularly in an election year, brings additional reassurance to the governor," said Jenkins.

The governor's job performance also continues to receive bipartisan support. Although a blue state, a solid majority of Democrats (55%) and independents (61%) approve of the job Christie is doing and even more Republicans (83%) give the governor high marks. Other groups who are not considered likely suspects among his supporters include women (62%), those from union households (52%), and non-whites (56%).

A majority of voters are also pleased with the direction the state is headed. Fifty-seven percent say it's headed in the right direction and, with the exception of the usual partisan differences, perceptions are largely positive across relevant demographic categories.

"The governor's strong numbers, both in regard to his job performance and perceptions of how the state is faring, underscore the broad base of support he continues to enjoy," said Jenkins. "This is perhaps why he fares considerably better than Senator Barbara Buono in a hypothetical head-to-head." Were the gubernatorial election to be held today, Christie would be favored by almost 60

percent of registered voters (58%) while his presumptive Democratic challenger, Senator Buono, is favored by about a fifth (22%). The remainder says they would be unsure about their choice (20%).

Looking back at this time in 2009, when Democratic Governor Jon Corzine was running for reelection, the numbers were reversed. Governor Corzine was perceived more negatively than favorably, and his approval was far beneath that of Governor Christie's. "Although the state is facing a different set of challenges than it was four years ago, it's worth noting how capable the governor appears to be in transcending partisanship in a Democratic leaning state," said Jenkins.

The poll shows two additional areas of strength for the governor. First, when asked a question about how both his personality and policies factor into an individual's opinion of him, almost half (48%) say they like both. The remainder says they like him but not his policies (18%), they don't like him but like his policies (12%), or they dislike everything about him (17%). When the same question was asked in July of last year, the number who liked both him and his policies was considerably less (36%) and those who disliked him and his policies comprised a greater share of registered voters (29%). The change of heart appears to be coming largely among self-identified Democrats. In July, 49 percent of Democrats disliked the governor's personality and policies whereas today that number has dropped considerably to 26 percent. In July, 15 percent of Democrats liked everything about the governor, and today that percentage has increased to 28 percent.

"Governor Christie's behavior and decisions since the last time we asked this question have clearly resonated with Democrats in the state," said Jenkins. "Calling out Republican congressional leaders for their unwillingness to vote on Sandy aid for the state before the last session expired, and accepting federal dollars for the expansion of Medicaid are no doubt contributing to the rosier haze that surrounds the governor among Democrats," said Jenkins.

In regard to the governor's often repeated claim that his leadership has helped to turn things around in Trenton, the public largely agrees. When asked how much, if at all, the governor has changed how government runs in New Jersey, a quarter (25%) say he's brought about "a great deal" of change, and an additional 47 percent believe he's been able to affect "some" change. Perceptions do not vary across politically relevant subgroups.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University statewide poll of 702 registered voters was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from March 4<sup>th</sup> through March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and has a margin of error of +/-3.7 percentage points.

*Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>  
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 201.692.7032*

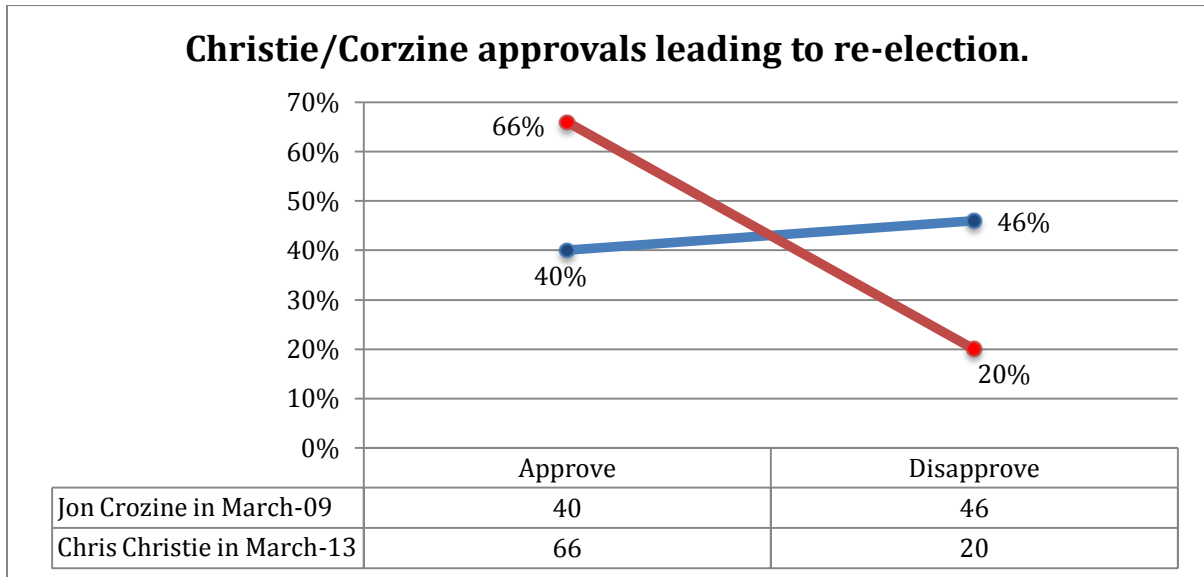
**Methodology**

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from March 4<sup>th</sup> through March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013 using a randomly selected sample of 702 registered New Jersey voters. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of plus or minus 3.7 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a land-line phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone respondents interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

**Tables/graph**



**Christie Approval****Turning to New Jersey, do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Approve	<b>66%</b>	55	61	83	71	62	60	62	65	73
Disapprove	<b>20%</b>	29	26	6	17	24	25	25	22	13
Neither	<b>9%</b>	11	9	7	8	9	7	8	9	9
Unsure	<b>5%</b>	5	3	4	4	5	8	4	4	5

Education			Public Employee		Race	
HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
71	68	63	52	70	70	56
17	20	22	32	17	17	29
5	9	10	12	8	8	9
7	4	4	4	5	4	6

**Direction of the State****In your opinion, do you think things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction or are they on the wrong track?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Right direction	<b>57%</b>	47	60	68	61	53	60	54	55	61
Wrong track	<b>26%</b>	34	27	17	24	29	22	32	27	23
Unsure	<b>17%</b>	20	13	15	15	18	19	13	19	16

Education			Public Employee		Race	
HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
61	61	53	50	59	61	48
24	20	31	32	25	24	33
16	19	16	18	15	15	19

**Gubernatorial Race****If the election for governor was held today, and the choice was Republican Chris Christie or Democrat Barbara Buono, from whom would you vote?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Chris Christie	<b>58%</b>	36	52	89	62	54	36	54	61	68
Barbara Buono	<b>22%</b>	40	18	3	21	24	37	29	19	15
Unsure	<b>20%</b>	24	30	8	17	22	27	17	20	17

Education			Public Employee		Race	
HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
61	56	57	43	63	64	41
22	26	21	37	18	17	37
17	19	21	20	19	19	22

**Like/Dislike About the Governor**

I'm going to read you four statements about Chris Christie. Please tell me which comes closest to your own views: 1) I like him, AND I like his policies; 2) I like him, BUT I don't like his policies; 3) I don't like him, BUT I like his policies; 4) I don't like him, AND I don't like his policies.

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
I like him, and his policies	48%	28	51	75	48	47	29	45	49	58
I like him, not his policies	18%	26	15	8	19	16	27	20	16	14
Don't like him, but like his policies	12%	14	12	9	13	11	21	10	12	11
Don't like him, AND don't like his policies	17%	26	17	4	14	19	16	21	18	13
Unsure	5%	6	5	4	4	6	8	4	5	5

Education			Public Employee		Race	
HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
46	48	48	33	53	54	31
21	14	19	23	17	16	24
10	18	10	12	12	11	16
14	15	19	30	12	15	21
8	6	4	2	6	4	7

**Expansion of Health Insurance through Medicaid**

As you may or may not know, the governor recently announced that the state will accept federal money in order to expand health insurance for the state's poor through Medicaid. How much have you heard or read about this decision?

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
A lot	13%	14	14	13	17	10	9	5	18	20
Some	22%	24	23	20	20	24	15	24	24	22
Just a little	29%	29	19	34	28	30	34	30	25	30
Nothing at all	35%	32	43	32	34	36	42	40	34	27
Unsure	1%	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1

Education			Public Employee		Race	
HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
10	10	17	16	13	16	9
16	21	25	20	23	21	23
31	32	27	30	28	31	24
41	37	31	33	36	32	44
2	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Medicaid cont.**

**Was the governor's recent decision to accept federal money in order to expand health insurance for the state's poor through Medicaid the right or wrong decision for New Jersey?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Right	<b>69%</b>	86	64	49	71	68	72	73	66	69
Wrong	<b>13%</b>	4	17	25	15	12	13	9	16	14
Unsure	<b>17%</b>	10	18	26	13	20	14	17	18	16
Refused	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-

Education			Public Employee		Race	
HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
66	76	68	64	72	65	83
16	8	14	18	12	15	8
18	15	18	19	15	19	9
-	1	-	-	1	1	-

**Perception of Change under Governor Christie**

**In your opinion, has Governor Christie changed how government runs in New Jersey a great deal, some, just a little, or has he not changed things at all?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Great deal	<b>25%</b>	21	20	32	25	25	11	27	24	31
Some	<b>47%</b>	44	47	50	47	48	52	49	47	43
Just a little	<b>15%</b>	19	15	11	16	14	20	13	16	15
Not at all	<b>9%</b>	12	14	4	10	8	12	11	10	4
Unsure	<b>3%</b>	3	3	3	2	5	5	-	2	7

Education			Public Employee		Race	
HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
29	24	24	27	24	25	23
45	46	49	49	47	50	43
12	16	16	13	16	15	17
9	10	9	9	9	7	14
4	5	3	2	3	3	3

**Exact Question Wording and Order**

*US1 and US2 held for later release*

*NJ1. And turning to New Jersey, do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor? [Randomize approve/disapprove]*

- 1 Approve
- 2 Disapprove
- 3 Neither [vol] or Neutral [vol]
- 8 DK [vol] or both [vol]

*NJ2. In your opinion, do you think things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction or are they on the wrong track? [Randomize right direction/wrong track]*

- 1 Right direction
- 2 Wrong track
- 8 DK/Unsure [vol]

NJ3 *If the election for governor was held today, and the choice was Republican Chris Christie or Democrat Barbara Buono, for whom would you vote? [Randomize names]*

- 1 Republican Chris Christie
- 2 Democrat Barbara Buono
- 8 DK [vol]

*NJ4 held for later release*

NJ5 *I'm going to read you four statements about Chris Christie. Please tell me which comes closest to your own views: 1) I like him, AND I like his policies; 2) I like him, BUT I don't like his policies; 3) I don't like him, BUT I like his policies; 4) I don't like him, AND I don't like his policies.*

RANDOMIZE BUT KEEP 1 AND 2, 3 AND 4 TOGETHER

- 1 I like him, AND I like his policies
- 2 I like him, BUT I don't like his policies
- 3 I don't like him, BUT I like his policies
- 4 I don't like him, AND I don't like his policies
- 8 DK [vol]

NJ6 *As you may or may not know, the governor recently announced that the state will accept federal money in order to expand health insurance for the state's poor through Medicaid. How much have you heard or read about this decision?*

- 1 A lot
- 2 Some
- 3 Just a little
- 4 Nothing at all
- 8 DK [vol]
- 9 Refused

NJ7 *Was the governor's recent decision to accept federal money in order to expand health insurance for the state's poor through Medicaid the right or wrong decision for New Jersey?[Rotate right and wrong]*

- 1 Right decision
- 2 Wrong decision
- 8 DK [vol]
- 9 Refused

NJ8 *In your opinion, has Governor Christie changed how government runs in New Jersey a great deal, some, just a little, or has he not changed things at all?*

- 1 Great deal
- 2 Some
- 3 Just a little
- 4 Not changed things at all
- 8 DK [vol]
- 9 Refused [vol]

**Sample characteristics – Registered voters****Gender**

Male	49
Female	51

**Age**

18-29	13
30-44	28
45-59	31
60+	26
Refused	2

**Race/Ethnicity**

White	69
Black/African-American	13
Latino or Hispanic	10
Asian	4
Other/refused	4

**Public employee household**

Yes	23
No	75
Unsure/refused	2

**Party identification**

Democrat/Lean Democrat	46
Independent/DK/refused	20
Republican/Lean Republican	34