

NJ voters want Christie to lower taxes

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New Jersey voters cite the state's high taxes as one of the most important issues facing new Governor-elect Chris Christie, according to a poll conducted by the University's Eagleton Institute of Politics.

Poll Director David Redlawsk said 47 percent of voters said taxes, referring to property taxes or general taxes, when asked to tell in their own words the most important issue the governor needs to address.

"There isn't anything that comes close to that other than [to] reduce unemployment or public education, and they're way down at 10 [and 6] percent," Redlawsk said.

University College senior Jeffrey Guarneri said gay rights and abortion are the biggest concerns for him, as he supports both.

He thinks taxes would always be an issue in the state.

"When you cut taxes, you cut programs and when you raise taxes, you piss people off," Guarneri said.

School of Arts and Sciences senior Alex Delgado said he is concerned with the University's budget.

"We need to stop getting cuts to Rutgers," he said.

Mae-Lin Tang, a School of Arts and Sciences junior, said she hopes Christie can fix the financial situation of the state first.

Corzine made improvements, but they were not enough, she said.

"I hope he can reel in the heavy property taxes too, because it's getting really expensive to live here," Tang said.

The poll, conducted Nov. 6 through 10 with 903 New Jersey adults, asked respondents to say how likely they feel their issue will be resolved by the new administration.

Redlawsk said there was a lot of uncertainty among respondents.

"Only 8 percent said their most important issue is likely to get done and 46 percent say somewhat likely," he said.

One in 10 people think their top issue will not be resolved at all, Redlawsk said.

"There's a certain amount of uncertainty about whether the governor — or really anyone — can deal with the problems New Jerseyans are identifying," he said.

This could result from false promises made by past administrations and the general sense that the state's problems are very significant, Redlawsk said.

"People have heard promises to cut taxes before, virtually every gubernatorial election," he said.

But the high taxes of the state show voters that not much has changed, Redlawsk said.

Since Christie is against gay marriage and is pro-life, Guarneri said he does not think the governor-elect will help either cause.

"But I don't know enough about him to make a judgment call," he said.

It is too early to tell how Christie will be in office, he said.

"We'll see what happens ... I'm hoping for the best, but I'm still not expecting much for the moment," Guarneri said.

Tang was more optimistic.

"I think he might be able to do something, a little more than what Corzine did, but it still takes time for these issues to be resolved," said Tang, as the residents of New Jersey need time to adjust and accept changes.

Delgado, who voted for Corzine and does not like Christie's policies, said he does not think Christie will improve the school's budget. He is for cutting taxes, which may not be beneficial for the University.

The poll also showed that Republicans are more positive toward the prospect of the state than Democrats, Redlawsk said. Sixty-nine percent of Republicans said the future would be better with Christie, compared to 9 percent of Democrats.

"This is a question that is heavily affected by the fact that Christie won," he said. "Republicans are more upbeat, Democrats are much less so."