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Poll finds New Jerseyans want property taxes cut before income taxes

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Most far overestimate how much 10 percent income tax break would net them

As he introduces his proposed 2012-13 state budget Tuesday, Gov. Chris Christie is prepared to urge the Legislature to approve his proposed 10 percent state income tax reduction, but a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll finds fully three-quarters of the voters surveyed would prefer to see a property tax cut come first.

The poll released Tuesday does show that 52 percent of voters support a tax cut.

Although the proposed income tax cut is popular across the state, an overwhelming majority of voters (76 percent) would prefer a property tax reduction. Given a choice between the two taxes, Republicans, Democrats and independents all agree that property taxes should be reduced first. Voters' opinions of the governor do not seem to affect preference for property tax reduction. Those with a favorable opinion (80 percent) and an unfavorable opinion (74 percent) strongly prefer that a property tax cut come first. Eight-in-10 of the highest earning New Jerseyans – who would benefit most from an income tax cut – prefer to see their property taxes cut before income taxes.

“Everyone likes lower taxes,” Prof. David Redlawsk, the poll’s director, said. “But property tax cuts are what New Jerseyans seem to want. While recent changes pushed by Governor Christie have placed stronger caps on property tax increases, voters still want to see those taxes actually reduced. It’s one thing nearly everyone agrees on.”

The poll also found voters significantly overestimate how much money they would actually receive from an income tax cut. A New Jersey taxpayer making \$50,000 would save a little less than \$100 per year from a 10 percent income tax cut, and those making \$100,000 would save about \$275. Voters anticipate a median savings of nearly \$750.

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“People are eager for tax relief,” Redlawsk said. “Yet for most New Jerseyans the burden they feel comes from property taxes, more than from income taxes. A majority would certainly take an income tax cut over nothing, but large numbers have no idea how much they would save from Christie’s proposal.”

While there are strong partisan differences in support for the tax cut – 72 percent of Republicans want it, while only 38 percent of Democrats offer support – everyone agrees that a property tax cut is preferred. Nearly eight-in-10 Republicans and Democrats say cut property taxes first, and 73 percent of independents agree.

Results are from a telephone poll of 914 adults conducted statewide from Feb. 9-11. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.3 percentage points.

Predictably, nearly three-quarters of Republicans favor the proposed tax cut, with 21 percent opposed. Independents support the proposal, 54 percent to 32 percent. Democrats statewide are dubious about this plan, with half opposed and 38 percent in favor.

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stevetaxlawyer@gmail.com 2. Wednesday, 29 February 2012 09:12
(Property Tax Lawyer)

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IRS Tax 1. Saturday, 25 February 2012 04:18
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