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Rutgers poll: Voters back wage hike, gay marriage

By PolitickerNJ Staff | April 16th, 2013 - 5:47am

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NEW BRUNSWICK – Voters back a constitutional amendment to increase the minimum wage as well as a referendum being placed on the ballot regarding same-sex marriage.

Those are the results of a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released Tuesday.

In addition, voters show support for the Legislature remaining in control of Democrats, according to the poll.

A constitutional amendment on November's ballot would hike the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$8.25 an hour and link it to the cost of living.

The poll shows 76 percent of respondents back the idea compared to 20 percent in opposition. According to the poll, Republicans show support for the idea, despite Gov. Chris Christie's opposition.

"Voters here appear sympathetic to low-wage workers," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University. "Everyone feels the high cost of living. That likely means most recognize the difficulty of living on minimum wage. The willingness to increase the minimum cuts across all political boundaries."

New Jersey's registered voters strongly support a constitutional amendment to raise the state's minimum wage by one dollar and index it to inflation, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. The increase from \$7.25 to \$8.25 an hour will be on the November ballot and is supported by 76 percent of voters. Only 20 percent express opposition. Support is wide, and includes a majority of Republicans who plan to vote for the increase, despite Gov. Chris Christie's earlier veto of a similar measure.

"Voters here appear sympathetic to low-wage workers," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University. "Everyone feels the high cost of living. That likely means most recognize the difficulty of living on minimum wage. The willingness to increase the minimum cuts across all political boundaries."

Gay marriage as a voter question drew support in the poll as well.

By a margin of 68-25 percent, voters want the chance to decide the question.

On the issue itself, voters would support same-sex marriage 62-30 percent, with 8 percent unsure, the poll showed.

About six months from Election Day, Democratic support for the Assembly is stronger than GOP support, 38 percent to 23 percent, and for the Senate, 43 percent to 26 percent. Twenty-six percent are unsure of their Assembly vote and 22 percent are not certain about the Senate.

"Governor Christie's 30-point lead over Sen. Buono is not trickling down to preferences for the Legislature," said Redlawsk. "Statewide, voters seem quite willing to split their ballot. But we have not polled individual races, so although Democrats hold a large overall lead, some specific races are likely to be more competitive."

Results are from a poll of 923 New Jersey adults conducted statewide among both landline and cell phone households from April 3-7. The sample includes 819 registered voters reported on here, with a margin of error of +/- 3.7 percentage points.