

# NJ Voters Support Minimum Wage Increase Proposal

staff report



NEW BRUNSWICK – More than three-quarters of New Jersey registered voters are in favor of a constitutional amendment to raise the state’s minimum wage, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. Only 18 percent say they will vote against the measure to increase the minimum wage to \$8.25 per hour. Even a large majority of Republicans plan to vote for the increase, despite Republican Gov. Chris Christie’s veto of similar legislation.

“Support for a higher minimum wage indexed for inflation has been overwhelming since the question was placed on the ballot,” said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University. “Voters are very sympathetic to the idea that the lowest wage workers need an increase.”

Garden Staters also want a chance to vote on same-sex marriage: 67 percent want the question on the ballot, while 25 percent do not. If given the opportunity, 59 percent would vote to legalize same-sex marriage, while 30 percent would vote no, and 11 percent are unsure.

The Legislature has not placed same-sex marriage on the ballot so far, and it is unclear if it will. “But Democrats have every incentive to do so, given strong support for the proposition among their base,” said Redlawsk. “The question would certainly energize key Democratic constituencies.”

Recent polling shows Christie leading state Sen. Barbara Buono by 32 points in the governor’s race, but voters appear ready to stick with Democrats in the Legislature. A statewide ballot test shows voters prefer generic Democrats over Republicans by 16 points. These results are similar to the last Rutgers-Eagleton Poll in April. However, favorable impressions of the Democrat-controlled state Legislature are down by double digits: 30 percent report a favorable impression, as compared to 41 percent in April. Unfavorable impressions are up six points, to 26 percent.

“While Democrats worry about low turnout due to both the U.S. Senate special election three weeks earlier and the lack of enthusiasm so far for Buono, the preference for Democrats in the Legislature remains strong,” noted Redlawsk. “As always with statewide generic ballot tests, some individual races are likely to be much closer. These questions do not get at specific races.”

Results are from a poll of 888 New Jersey adults conducted statewide among both landline and cell phone households from June 3-9 with a margin of error of +/- 3.3 percentage points. The subsample of 763 registered voters reported here has a margin of error of +/- 3.6 percentage points.

