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*This poll was conducted by the
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NEGATIVE REACTION TO PROPERTY TAX PLAN

*“Caps and Credits” amount to a whole lot of nothing
residents tell Monmouth/Gannett pollsters*

More than six months ago, the New Jersey legislature embarked on a “special session” to provide comprehensive relief and reform of the state’s burdensome property tax system. Last week, they approved a package of bills that are now awaiting Governor Corzine’s signature. The public’s reaction: “Uh, you’re kidding, right?”

The latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* found that more than 3-in-4 New Jerseyans have been following the legislative process. Among this group, more residents are dissatisfied (49%) than satisfied (37%) with the “Caps and Credits” plan passed by the legislature. Democrats, Republicans, and independents alike are more likely to be dissatisfied rather than satisfied with the final proposal.

Only 1-in-10 homeowners (10%) believes that they will see significant savings from the “Credits” portion of the legislation. This opinion holds even among those who will stand to benefit the most – homeowners earning less than \$100,000. Nearly half of homeowners (47%) say they will see a small savings from this program, but a sizable 39% expect to see no benefit in the end. Among renters – who stand to get a nominal increase in their rebates – only 40% expect to gain any benefit at all.

On the “Caps” side of the equation, New Jerseyans are not optimistic that the legislation does anything to actually reform the property tax system. Only 12% expect that the current plan will bring long-term relief while about half (47%) say that any savings to the taxpayer will

disappear fairly quickly. Another 34% feel that by the time the plan gets implemented in the coming year there won't even be any short-term relief for the state's homeowners.

"For most New Jerseyans, the whole process has been much ado about nothing. In short, they think both the legislature and the governor dropped the ball," commented Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

The poll found few respondents who agreed with legislative leaders' claims that this plan was the product of necessary compromises. Only 31% feel it was probably the best deal the state could get given all the issues involved. A majority of 56%, on the other hand, believes the legislature could have accomplished a lot more but caved into special interests. The latter view is shared by majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independents alike.

New Jerseyans also feel that their governor was not out in front on this issue as much as he should have been. Only one-third (33%) say Governor Corzine showed enough leadership during the property tax negotiations, while 50% say he showed too little leadership on this issue. Poll results indicate that the group most dissatisfied with both the governor and the legislature's performance on this issue are homeowners who earn below \$50,000 a year.

Murray remarked, "While this group would get the highest possible relief under the plan, it's still not enough to make a dent in their living expenses. These are the folks who live paycheck to paycheck, and they will continue to just scrape by even with the proposed credits."

OPINION OF TARGET GROUPS	HOMEOWNERS BY INCOME:		
	< \$50K	\$50-100K	> \$100K
Satisfied with legislature's plan	31%	40%	38%
Believe they will see significant savings	11%	11%	10%
Feel legislature gave in to special interests	63%	50%	52%
Feel governor showed enough leadership	27%	35%	39%

Back in October, the *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* found that 66% of residents would support a constitutional convention to deal with property taxes if the legislature did not pass "significant reform." The current poll indicates that the "Caps and Credits" package does not meet this threshold. At this time, 62% feel that such a convention should be held to deal with this issue. Only 28% oppose holding a convention now and 10% are unsure.

Other poll results show that more residents disapprove (40%) rather than approve (35%) of the job the state legislature is doing. However, Governor Corzine does nominally better,

getting a 44% to 34% positive job approval. The governor's job rating is largely unchanged from September 2006.

While the governor's approval rating has held steady, his handling of the property tax issue has not engendered a great deal of public confidence that he will fight for the average taxpayer. During these sessions, the governor said that he, rather than the legislature, would deal with reforms to the public health and retirement benefits system when state workers union contracts are up for renegotiation this year. New Jerseyans are not optimistic that much reform will come from this process either. Only 1-in-3 (35%) believe that Corzine will be a strong negotiator on behalf of the New Jersey taxpayer, compared to 49% who believe he will give the unions too many concessions in upcoming contract talks.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 801 New Jersey adults from February 8-12, 2007. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. Most of the findings in this release are based on a sub-sample of 654 residents who are aware of the property tax legislation. These results have a ± 3.8 percent margin of error. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the Gannett New Jersey newspaper group (Asbury Park Press, Courier-Post, Courier News, Daily Journal, Daily Record, Home News Tribune, and Ocean County Observer).

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Would you say things in New Jersey are going in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE			HOMEOWNER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb	Own	Rent
Right direction	34%	37%	32%	31%	39%	32%	32%	33%	31%
Wrong track	55%	47%	60%	62%	47%	57%	57%	56%	52%
(VOL) DEPENDS	6%	8%	4%	3%	9%	4%	6%	4%	11%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	8%	4%	4%	5%	7%	5%	6%	6%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	801	278	306	176	140	341	299	618	139

	TREND:			
	February 2007	September 2006	April 2006	September 2005
Right direction	34%	29%	30%	31%
Wrong track	55%	58%	55%	54%
(VOL) Depends	6%	6%	9%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	7%	6%	10%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	801	800	803	800

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Jon Corzine is doing as governor?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE			HOMEOWNER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb	Own	Rent
Approve	44%	56%	41%	30%	52%	42%	42%	42%	48%
Disapprove	34%	25%	37%	46%	23%	36%	39%	35%	34%
(VOL) Don't know	22%	18%	22%	23%	26%	22%	19%	23%	18%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	801	278	306	176	140	341	299	618	139

	TREND:		
	February 2007	September 2006	April 2006
Approve	44%	42%	34%
Disapprove	34%	38%	37%
(VOL) Don't know	22%	20%	29%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	801	800	803

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the state legislature is doing?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE			HOMEOWNER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb	Own	Rent
Approve	35%	40%	31%	33%	42%	34%	32%	33%	32%
Disapprove	40%	33%	47%	44%	31%	41%	43%	42%	43%
(VOL) Don't know	25%	27%	22%	23%	27%	25%	24%	25%	25%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	801	278	306	176	140	341	299	618	139

4. How much have you read or heard about the property tax relief proposals that were recently passed by the state legislature – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE			HOMEOWNER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb	Own	Rent
A lot	30%	29%	30%	39%	26%	33%	29%	32%	27%
A little	47%	49%	48%	39%	47%	46%	47%	50%	40%
Nothing at all	22%	21%	21%	22%	24%	20%	22%	16%	31%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	801	278	306	176	140	341	299	618	139

5. How would you describe your reaction to the plan – would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with it?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE			HOMEOWNER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb	Own	Rent
Satisfied	37%	41%	33%	37%	39%	39%	33%	37%	31%
Dissatisfied	49%	45%	53%	51%	50%	48%	52%	50%	55%
(VOL) Don't know	13%	14%	14%	12%	12%	13%	15%	13%	14%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	654	224	254	147	111	283	243	530	97

6. Do you think you personally will see a significant savings in your property taxes, small savings, or no savings?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE			HOMEOWNER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb	Own	Rent
Significant savings	9%	10%	8%	10%	6%	12%	9%	10%	6%
Small savings	45%	45%	50%	38%	36%	44%	50%	47%	34%
No savings	38%	34%	39%	47%	44%	39%	35%	39%	41%
(VOL) Don't pay property taxes	4%	7%	2%	2%	10%	0%	3%	0%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	5%	2%	3%	3%	5%	3%	3%	4%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	654	224	254	147	111	283	243	530	97

7. Do you think the plan will provide New Jersey homeowners with property tax relief over the long-term, just for the short-term, or not really at all?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE			HOMEOWNER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb	Own	Rent
Long term	12%	16%	7%	8%	7%	12%	12%	12%	11%
Short term	47%	46%	51%	45%	58%	44%	45%	48%	42%
Not really at all	34%	29%	35%	43%	27%	38%	34%	34%	35%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	9%	6%	4%	8%	5%	8%	6%	12%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	654	224	254	147	111	283	243	530	97

8. Which of the following better describes the property tax package: Given all the issues involved, this was probably the best compromise we could get – OR – the legislature could have done a lot more but gave in to the special interests?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE			HOMEOWNER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb	Own	Rent
Best compromise we could get	31%	31%	34%	29%	39%	31%	28%	33%	26%
Gave in to special interests	56%	55%	55%	60%	55%	54%	57%	54%	63%
(VOL) SOME OF BOTH	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
(VOL) Don't Know	13%	13%	11%	11%	6%	14%	15%	12%	11%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	654	224	254	147	111	283	243	530	97

9. Some have said that if the legislature doesn't deliver real property tax reform, a constitutional convention should be held to deal with the issue. Do you think a constitutional convention on property taxes should be held or not?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE			HOMEOWNER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb	Own	Rent
Should be held	62%	58%	66%	63%	65%	60%	64%	61%	67%
Should NOT be held	28%	31%	26%	25%	27%	29%	27%	27%	29%
(VOL) Don't Know	10%	11%	7%	12%	8%	10%	9%	12%	4%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	654	224	254	147	111	283	243	530	97

10. In general, did Governor Corzine show enough leadership or too little leadership during the property tax negotiations?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE			HOMEOWNER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb	Own	Rent
Enough leadership	33%	40%	30%	28%	25%	37%	33%	35%	24%
Too little leadership	50%	44%	51%	60%	61%	47%	49%	49%	60%
(VOL) Too much/involved too much	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
(VOL) Don't Know	16%	14%	18%	11%	12%	15%	18%	15%	14%
Unwtd N	654	224	254	147	111	283	243	530	97

11. One issue raised in the property tax sessions was reform of the state pension system. The governor has said that he will negotiate changes to health and retirement benefits with the state workers unions when their contracts come up for renewal this year. When it comes to pension and benefit reforms, do you believe that Corzine is more likely to be a strong negotiator on behalf of the New Jersey taxpayer or more likely to give the unions too many concessions?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE			HOMEOWNER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb	Own	Rent
Strong negotiator	35%	42%	35%	20%	37%	34%	34%	33%	41%
Too many concessions	49%	42%	49%	67%	52%	49%	48%	49%	51%
(VOL) Don't know	16%	16%	16%	13%	10%	17%	17%	17%	9%
Unwtd N	654	224	254	147	111	283	243	530	97

Results for this *Monmouth University/Gannett NJ Poll* are based on telephone interviews conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on February, 8-12, 2007 with a statewide random sample of 801 adult residents. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult New Jersey residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues which affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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