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This poll was conducted by the
Monmouth University Polling Institute

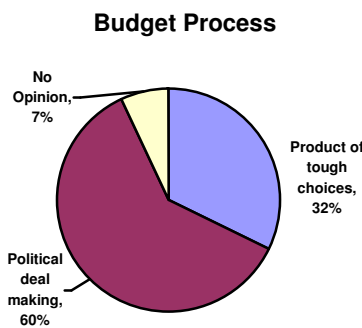
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NEW JERSEY’S BUDGET WOES

Aware of scope of the problem, most see budget plan as a political deal

Governor Corzine’s budget plan is not going over well with the New Jersey public who see it as a political deal that did not go far enough in finding spending cuts. Most New Jerseyans are aware of the state’s larger-than-average budget deficit, although only 1-in-4 has actually heard “a lot” about Governor Corzine’s plan to close it. While New Jerseyans do not like what they have heard about this budget package, many are already preparing themselves to live with it.



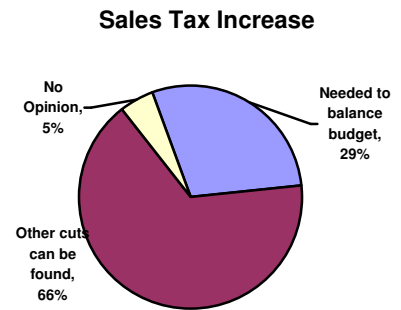
The problem, as residents see it, is that the governor has taken an extraordinary problem and met it with timeworn political solutions. By a 2-to-1 margin, New Jerseyans describe the governor’s budget package as “more of the same old political dealings” (60%) rather than the “product of tough, thoughtful choices” (32%). Even the governor’s fellow partisans tend to see this budget as a political plan – 54% of Democrats say it is mainly the product of political deal

making, along with 69% of Republicans and 62% of independents who feel the same.

Furthermore, the state isn’t sold on the need for a one cent increase in the state sales tax – the main lightning rod in the governor’s proposal. By a greater than 2-to-1 margin, residents who are aware of the budget believe that the governor should be able to find more spending cuts

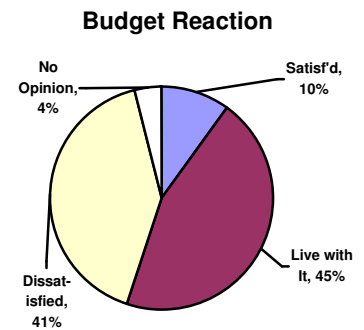
(66%) compared to those who agree with the necessity of raising the sales tax (29%). Again, this is the majority view of Democrats, Republicans and independents alike.

“Governor Corzine claims that he has scrubbed the budget and that some sort of tax increase is necessary to close the gap completely. That message has not been sold to the state’s residents,” observed Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.



Overall, more than 8-in-10 New Jerseyans have heard about the state’s budget deficit. Among this group, 60 percent are aware that it is larger than normal. About 3-in-4 residents have heard something about Governor Corzine’s proposed budget, although only 25 percent say they have heard a lot about it.

Among those who are aware of the budget plan, only 1-in-10 (10%) are satisfied with the job Governor Corzine did trying to close the gap compared to 41 percent who are decidedly dissatisfied with the proposal. Nearly half (45%) say they are not particularly happy about the budget but can live with it.



When the impact of the budget is broken down, there is very little that New Jerseyans see as a positive. More than two-thirds say an increase in the sales tax will cause them some financial hardship, including 30 percent who say it will pose a “lot” of hardship to their family. Households with incomes below the state median will be hardest hit – 43 percent of those earning less than \$50,000 a year say a one cent increase in the sales tax will cause them a lot of hardship compared to about 1-in-4 families earning \$50,000 or more.

Among those aware of the budget plan, a majority say it does a “bad job” at keeping tax increases to a minimum (54%) and providing property tax relief (53%). Only about 1-in-5 feel the governor’s budget does a “good job” in these areas.

Likewise, more residents feel that the proposed budget does a bad job rather than good job when it comes to being fair to the middle class (43% bad to 24% good), being fair to the poor (35%-22%), providing funding for schools (35%-29%), and cutting waste and fraud (33%-26%).

Murray remarked, “The governor campaigned on his ability to avoid tax increases and specifically to restore property tax rebates. His inability to do so in his first budget, regardless of the circumstances, is not going over well with the public.”

Residents are split on whether the governor’s plan does a good or bad job at promoting economic growth (27%-28%) and avoiding the use of one-time financial gimmicks to balance the budget (27%-25%). The only area where more New Jerseyans see the budget doing a good rather than bad job on the environment (35%-16%), although half have no opinion on this.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 803 New Jersey adults from April 17 to 20, 2006. 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 613 residents who are aware of the budget plan. These results have a ± 4 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.)

B1. How much have you heard about the state’s budget deficit – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Rep	Ind
A lot	42%	47%	25%	41%	46%	42%
A little	42%	40%	47%	41%	41%	41%
Nothing at all	17%	13%	28%	17%	13%	17%
Unwtd N	803	652	151	278	174	303

[The following question was asked only of those aware of the deficit]

B2. Would you say the current state deficit is larger, smaller, or about the same as in past years? [Is that a lot or a little?]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			Aware of Deficit	
		Yes	No	Dem	Rep	Ind	Lot	Little
Lot Larger	34%	36%	25%	27%	37%	39%	45%	23%
Little Larger	26%	27%	23%	30%	23%	23%	22%	30%
Smaller	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	2%	3%	5%
About the Same	28%	26%	37%	31%	27%	28%	26%	30%
VOL Dont Know	8%	7%	12%	7%	8%	8%	4%	12%
Unwtd N	697	584	113	238	158	262	371	326

B3. How much have you heard or read about Governor Corzine’s budget proposals to deal with this deficit – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Rep	Ind
A lot	25%	28%	12%	23%	30%	25%
A little	49%	48%	53%	53%	42%	49%
Nothing at all	27%	24%	36%	24%	27%	26%
Unwtd N	803	652	151	278	174	303

[The remaining questions B4-B8 were asked only of those aware of the governor’s budget plan]

B4. How would you describe your reaction to the governor’s budget plan – would you say you are satisfied with it, not particularly satisfied but you can live with it, or you are definitely dissatisfied with it?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			Aware of Budget Plan	
		Yes	No	Dem	Rep	Ind	Lot	Little
Satisfied	10%	10%	12%	11%	9%	10%	14%	9%
Can live with it	45%	44%	48%	60%	27%	38%	37%	49%
Dissatisfied	41%	42%	35%	27%	57%	47%	47%	37%
(VOL) Dont know	4%	4%	5%	2%	6%	5%	1%	5%
Unwtd N	613	510	103	219	133	231	220	393

B5. In general, would you describe the governor’s budget plan as: the product of tough, thoughtful choices - or - more of the same old political dealings?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			Aware of Budget Plan	
		Yes	No	Dem	Rep	Ind	Lot	Little
Product of tough, thoughtful choices	32%	31%	34%	39%	25%	29%	40%	28%
More of the same old political dealings	60%	61%	57%	54%	69%	62%	56%	63%
(VOL) Dont Know	7%	8%	10%	7%	7%	10%	4%	9%
Unwtd N	613	510	103	219	133	231	220	393

B6. Governor Corzine says his budget plan tries to spread the cost of closing the budget gap. For each of the following, please tell me if you think the budget does a good or bad job, or if you haven’t heard enough yet to form an opinion.

April 2006	<u>Good Job</u>	<u>Bad Job</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>(n)*</u>
A. Keeping tax increases to a minimum	21%	54%	25%	(613)
B. Promoting economic growth	27%	28%	45%	(293)
C. Cutting waste and fraud in state government	26%	33%	41%	(293)
D. Being fair to the middle class	24%	43%	33%	(293)
E. Being fair to the poor	22%	35%	42%	(293)
F. Providing funding for schools	29%	35%	36%	(320)
G. Providing property tax relief	16%	53%	30%	(320)
H. Not relying on the one-time financial gimmicks	27%	25%	49%	(320)
I. Protecting the environment	35%	16%	49%	(320)

*[*Most items were asked of a random half of the sample]*

B7. A key component of the governor's budget plan is to raise the state sales tax by one cent from 6 cents to 7 cents. Do you think it is necessary to raise the sales tax in order to balance the budget or should the governor be able to find more spending cuts?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			Aware of Budget Plan	
		Yes	No	Dem	Rep	Ind	Lot	Little
Necessary to raise sales tax	29%	30%	25%	36%	21%	28%	36%	26%
Be able to find more spending cuts	66%	65%	70%	60%	75%	65%	60%	69%
(VOL) Dont Know	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%	5%	5%
Unwtd N	613	510	103	219	133	231	220	393

B8. How much of an economic hardship would such an increase in the sales tax cause your family – a lot, a little, or not really any hardship?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			INCOME		
		Yes	No	Dem	Rep	Ind	< \$50K	\$50 to \$100K	\$100K+
Lot of hardship	30%	29%	35%	28%	28%	34%	43%	28%	22%
Little hardship	40%	41%	38%	36%	43%	41%	36%	44%	37%
Not really a hardship	28%	29%	25%	34%	28%	25%	20%	28%	40%
(VOL) Dont Know	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Unwtd N	613	510	103	219	133	231	174	208	149

Results for this *Monmouth University/Gannett NJ Poll* are based on telephone interviews conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on April 17-20, 2006 with a statewide random sample of 803 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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