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*This poll was conducted by the
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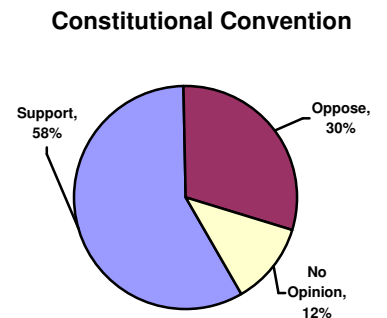
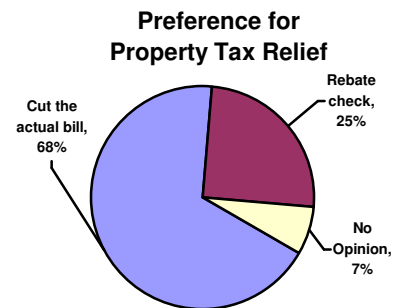
NEW JERSEY SUPPORTS PROPERTY TAX CONVENTION

Few see likelihood of property tax relief soon

The Garden State’s outlook on property taxes is gloomy. Only 1-in-4 residents (26%) expect to see any significant relief in the near future, compared to two-thirds (68%) who forecast that reforms to the state’s most disliked tax are unlikely in the next few years. Most New Jerseyans say that the legislature has shirked its responsibility in this area and that’s why many are supporting a property tax convention to remedy this situation.

According to the latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll*, holding a constitutional convention to lessen local governments’ dependence on property taxes – even if it means possible increases in other taxes – garners public support by a nearly 2-to-1 margin. Overall, 58 percent of the public support this idea versus 30 percent who are opposed. The remaining 12 percent have no opinion. Majority support comes from Democrats (62%), Republicans (55%) and independents (58%) alike.

The poll results indicate a clear preference for reforming the property tax system over increasing the current property tax rebate program. When asked whether they prefer actual cuts in their property tax bills or annual rebate checks, fully two-thirds of the state’s residents (68%) want a lower tax payment. Only 1-in-4 (25%) prefer to receive a rebate check from the state.



“Property taxes were the number one issue in last year’s gubernatorial campaign and the lack of property tax relief is a key factor in Governor Corzine’s slumping approval ratings,” noted Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “These poll results couldn’t be more clear. New Jersey wants real property tax reform.”

While 62 percent of New Jerseyans agree with the view of some convention opponents that property tax reform should be the responsibility of the state legislature, a majority of 54 percent also feel that the legislature has punted on the Garden State’s number one issue and that a constitutional convention is the only way taxpayers will get results.

An issue that is central to the ongoing debate over a constitutional convention is its scope. Currently, the most prominent proposal in the legislature would restrict a convention to considering only the tax structure. Supporters of this plan say such a limitation is necessary so that the convention is manageable and delegates can come to agreement. A competing legislative proposal puts forward the notion that any reform of property taxes needs to address spending, such as school aid formulas, in addition to taxes in order to achieve real reform.

The New Jersey public registers some preference – by a margin of 42 to 20 percent – for a constitutional convention that deals with both taxes and spending over one which focuses solely on revenues. Another 31 percent say it doesn’t matter to them which plan is implemented. Among those who support calling a convention, a majority of 52 percent prefer it to deal with both sides of the fiscal equation – taxes and spending.

The poll found that few residents (19%) have heard of these property tax convention proposals. However, there were no significant differences in support for the plan based on levels of prior awareness.

Among current homeowners, nearly 8-in-10 (79%) would scrap the rebate program in favor of getting their property tax bills cut. Renters, though, are divided, as it is not clear whether a property tax decrease would be reflected in their rent. Among renters, 43 percent would stick with the current rebate system compared to a similar 45 percent who would rather have local property tax bills lowered.

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. 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.)

T1. How likely is it that the state will enact reforms in the next few years to significantly lower property taxes – very, somewhat, not too, or not at all likely?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			HOME OWNER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Rep	Ind	Own	Rent
Very likely	6%	6%	7%	9%	3%	5%	5%	9%
Somewhat likely	20%	19%	24%	28%	17%	14%	17%	30%
Not too likely	17%	18%	14%	17%	19%	18%	19%	14%
Not at all likely	51%	52%	48%	43%	59%	56%	56%	40%
(VOL) Dont Know	5%	4%	7%	4%	1%	6%	3%	7%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	803	652	151	278	174	303	587	177

T2. If you had your choice, would you prefer to receive an annual rebate check or to have your actual property tax bill cut?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			HOME OWNER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Rep	Ind	Own	Rent
Receive annual rebate check	25%	24%	27%	29%	22%	22%	17%	43%
Actual property tax bill cut	68%	70%	63%	65%	71%	72%	79%	45%
(VOL) Dont Know	7%	6%	9%	6%	8%	6%	4%	12%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	803	652	151	278	174	303	587	177

T3. There is currently a proposal to hold a state constitutional convention to deal with the issue of property tax reform. Have you read or heard anything about this? [Have you heard a lot or just a little?]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			HOME OWNER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Rep	Ind	Own	Rent
YES, heard a lot	5%	6%	1%	5%	7%	4%	7%	1%
YES, heard a little	14%	15%	9%	13%	15%	14%	15%	12%
NO, not heard of this	81%	79%	90%	82%	78%	82%	78%	87%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	803	652	151	278	174	303	587	177

T4. This convention would be responsible for proposing amendments to the New Jersey constitution to lessen local governments' dependence on property taxes and to provide other means of funding local services, including possible increases in other taxes. Do you support or oppose holding such a constitutional convention?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			HOME OWNER		Aware of Tax Convention Idea	
		Yes	No	Dem	Rep	Ind	Own	Rent	Yes	No
Support	58%	60%	50%	62%	55%	58%	60%	55%	59%	58%
Oppose	30%	29%	37%	27%	32%	34%	28%	34%	31%	30%
(VOL) Dont Know	12%	11%	13%	11%	13%	9%	12%	10%	10%	12%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	803	652	151	278	174	303	587	177	172	631

[Questions T5 and T6 were asked of half the sample]

T5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Reforming property taxes should be the responsibility of the state legislature, and NOT a constitutional convention?

	TOTAL
Agree	62%
Disagree	25%
(VOL) Dont Know	13%
Unwtd N	390

T6. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: State legislators have not dealt with the property tax issue, so a constitutional convention is the only way we'll get real tax reform?

	TOTAL
Agree	54%
Disagree	36%
(VOL) Dont Know	10%
Unwtd N	413

T7. Some people say that a constitutional convention to reform property taxes needs to address government spending, such as school aid formulas, in order to achieve real reform. Others say that a constitutional convention should only focus on taxes or it will be difficult for the convention delegates to come to an agreement on any proposals. Which do you support more – a constitutional convention that includes both taxes and spending or one that focuses only on taxes, or does it make no difference to you?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		Dem	PARTY ID			Support Property Tax Convention		Aware of Tax Convention Idea	
		Yes	No		Rep	Ind	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Includes both taxes and spending	42%	44%	37%	41%	43%	45%	52%	24%	41%	43%	
Focuses only on taxes	20%	20%	21%	20%	20%	22%	21%	20%	28%	18%	
No difference	31%	30%	38%	34%	30%	28%	23%	48%	25%	33%	
(VOL) Other/Dont Know	6%	6%	4%	4%	8%	6%	3%	9%	6%	6%	
Unwtd N	803	652	151	278	174	303	488	227	172	631	

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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