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*This poll was conducted by the
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NEW JERSEY SAYS HANDS OFF OUR ASSETS

Public not convinced proceeds will be restricted to ‘allowable’ purposes

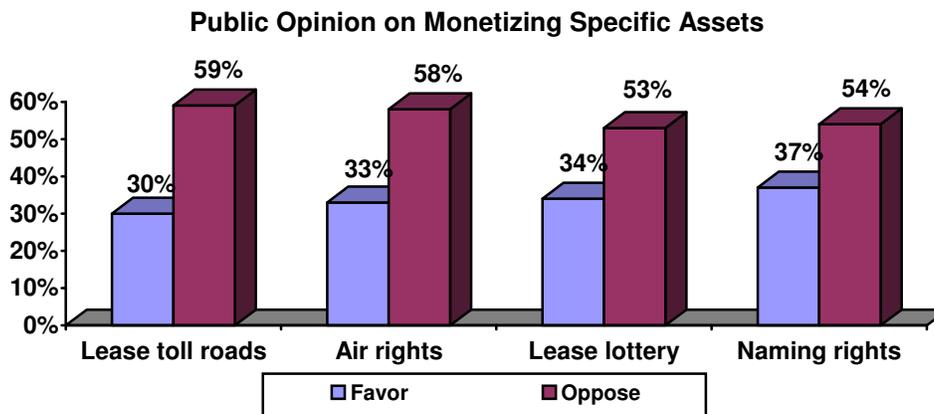
When it comes to increasing state revenue, Governor Corzine appears to have put nearly all his eggs in the asset monetization basket. Media reports say that he is preparing to mount a high-profile public information campaign to win over the state. Results from the latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* indicate that he has a lot of work ahead of him.

In general, most New Jerseyans think the idea of “state asset monetization” – or more specifically, leasing toll roads or the lottery, allowing developers to build on train stations, and selling naming rights to state owned property like parks – is a bad one. Fully 55% say this concept is a bad idea compared to 33% who say it is a good one. The remainder have mixed feelings or no opinion. About 6-in-10 Republicans (58%) and independents (61%) give asset monetization a thumbs down, and even the governor’s fellow Democrats are more negative (46%) than positive (37%) on the idea.

The governor has not released specific plans on how he proposes to leverage state assets for revenue, but much of the public discussion focuses on operation of the state’s toll roads. The poll found that 59% of state residents specifically oppose leasing operation of the New Jersey Turnpike or Garden State Parkway even if the money were used for a specific purpose. Just 30% support the idea.

However, the public are just as opposed to other revenue-raising efforts that involve state assets. They oppose allowing developers to build over train stations 58% to 33%. They also oppose leasing operation of the state lottery 53% to 34%. And they even oppose selling the

naming rights to state parks 54% to 37%. Majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents alike oppose all these monetization ideas.



However, when faced with a forced choice between leasing state assets and raising taxes, New Jerseyans would give away the state assets by a 62% to 21% margin. Opinion is more divided if the choice is between leasing state assets (43%) and making significant cuts in education and other government services (44%).

“As a general concept, asset monetization, to use the governor’s parlance, just doesn’t sit well with New Jerseyans,” remarked Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “While most residents would choose leasing state assets over raising taxes, it is really not clear that the public believes that the state has only these two options available.”

The poll asked respondents who feel asset monetization is a bad idea to name their main reason against it. And the answers run the gamut, starting with those who say that the state can raise money in other ways (13%) or that this is just a one-shot fix for short term gains (7%). Another 11% fear the consequences of giving up operational control and 10% specifically say that tolls and other costs will go up. Other reasons against asset monetization include a philosophical opposition to putting the operation of public property into private hands (11%), a fear of over-development on state land (8%), and a concern that the state will waste the revenue (6%).

Murray added, “Without a specific plan to respond to, there is no over-riding reason why residents oppose this idea. New Jerseyans just have a sense that little good can come of it.”

When asked about some potential consequences related specifically to the lease of New Jersey’s toll roads, nearly 2-in-3 residents (65%) say it is “very” likely that tolls will go up every year or two under such an arrangement. About 4-in-10 say it is “very” likely that tolls will become unaffordable (41%) and that traffic congestion will worsen (38%). Over 1-in-3 feel it is

“very” likely that the roadways will not be properly maintained (35%). In fact, large majorities say that each of these things is at least “somewhat” likely to happen under non-governmental operation of the toll roads. Conversely, very few residents – between 10% and 31% – believe that any of these four scenarios are unlikely to occur.

Last month, Governor Corzine issued a statement of “core principles” on asset monetization, one of which is to identify allowable uses of the proceeds upfront. The poll presented five potential uses and asked respondents to choose their top two. The clear leader in public opinion is to use any such money to provide direct tax relief to residents (53%). Next on the list are paying down the state debt (41%) and balancing the annual budget (38%). Farther down the list of preferences are using the money to catch up on back pension payments (25%) or for specific road and transportation investments (25%).

Public Preference: Allowable Uses for Asset Monetization Proceeds				
<i>Top two choices:</i>	TOTAL	Dem	Ind	Rep
Provide direct tax relief to residents	53%	48%	57%	54%
Pay down state debt	41%	38%	44%	46%
Help balance the annual state budget	38%	41%	38%	34%
Pay off money owed to the state pension system	25%	34%	20%	20%
Pay for road construction and transportation projects	25%	26%	22%	29%

The governor’s core principles also insist there will be safeguards against the diversion of funds to non-allowable uses. On this point, the public is not convinced. Fully 61% say that it is more likely that proceeds from monetization will ultimately be used to balance the annual state budget. Only 26% are confident that the money will be committed to allowable purposes as designated.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 800 New Jersey adults from July 16 to 19, 2007. 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.)

1. Recently, there has been some talk about New Jersey raising money from state assets, such as leasing toll roads or the lottery, allowing developers to build on train stations, and selling naming rights to state owned property like parks. In general, do you think raising money from state assets like this is a good idea or bad idea?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	North	Central	South
Good idea	33%	28%	49%	37%	29%	34%	34%	27%	35%
Bad idea	55%	59%	38%	46%	61%	58%	52%	63%	55%
Mixed good & bad	6%	6%	8%	9%	5%	5%	7%	6%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	7%	5%	8%	6%	3%	6%	4%	6%
Unwtd N	800	678	122	234	334	190	363	179	241

2. [IF "BAD IDEA", ASK:] What is the main reason you think it is a bad idea?

	TOTAL
Public property, we paid for it	11%
Not best way to raise revenue, avoids real reform	13%
Short-term gain, one-shot fix	7%
Plan not clear, money will be wasted	6%
Loss of operational control	11%
Lead to overdevelopment on open space	8%
Tolls, other costs will rise	10%
Ripe for corruption	8%
Just a bad idea	8%
Other	16%
(VOL) Don't know/No answer	4%
Unwtd N	481

3. Regardless of how you feel, let's say for a moment that New Jersey is able to raise billions of dollars from state assets. There are a number of ways that the state can use this money. I'm going to read you a list of five possible uses. Please tell me which is the most important way this money should be used? And what should be the second most important use for this money?

	1 st Choice	2 nd Choice	Combined TOTAL
Pay down state debt	19%	22%	41%
Pay for road construction and transportation projects	9%	16%	25%
Provide direct tax relief to residents	35%	18%	53%
Pay off money owed to the state pension system	12%	13%	25%
Help balance the annual state budget	18%	20%	38%
(VOL) Other usage volunteered	3%	2%	5%
(VOL) No choice	2%	3%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	6%	8%
Unwtd N	800	800	800

4. If the money raised were used for a specific purpose, would you favor or oppose the following:

A. Leasing operation of the Turnpike or Parkway

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	North	Central	South
Favor	30%	27%	39%	29%	28%	31%	32%	25%	29%
Oppose	59%	63%	48%	59%	60%	63%	57%	61%	64%
(VOL) Depends	4%	3%	5%	2%	6%	2%	5%	2%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	6%	9%	10%	6%	4%	7%	12%	4%
Unwtd N	800	678	122	234	334	190	363	179	241

B. Leasing operation of the state lottery

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	North	Central	South
Favor	34%	33%	39%	34%	35%	34%	34%	37%	32%
Oppose	53%	54%	48%	50%	53%	58%	53%	46%	59%
(VOL) Depends	2%	3%	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	0%
(VOL) Don't know	11%	11%	14%	14%	11%	7%	11%	13%	9%
Unwtd N	800	678	122	234	334	190	363	179	241

C. Allowing private developers to build on top of train stations

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	North	Central	South
Favor	33%	34%	28%	32%	31%	38%	38%	25%	30%
Oppose	58%	57%	59%	61%	59%	50%	53%	63%	61%
(VOL) Depends	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	7%	11%	6%	8%	10%	7%	10%	8%
Unwtd N	800	678	122	234	334	190	363	179	241

D. Selling naming rights to state parks

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	North	Central	South
Favor	37%	35%	45%	34%	39%	41%	36%	37%	39%
Oppose	54%	57%	46%	56%	56%	50%	56%	54%	53%
(VOL) Depends	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%	1%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	7%	9%	9%	5%	7%	8%	8%	5%
Unwtd N	800	678	122	234	334	190	363	179	241

5. If the state uses its assets to raise revenue, which do you think is more likely to happen – The state will use the money only for allowable purposes such as debt reduction or capital improvements, or the state will use the money to balance the annual budget?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	North	Central	South
For allowable purposes	26%	24%	30%	23%	26%	26%	25%	24%	26%
Balance the annual budget	61%	60%	62%	66%	61%	55%	62%	61%	60%
(VOL) Both	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%
(VOL) Neither	8%	10%	4%	5%	9%	13%	8%	9%	9%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	4%	2%	4%	3%	5%	3%	4%	3%
Unwtd N	800	678	122	234	334	190	363	179	241

6. If New Jersey's toll roads are leased to a non-governmental organization, how likely is it that [READ ITEM] – very, somewhat, or not too likely?

	Tolls will become unaffordable	Tolls will go up every year or two	Congestion will get worse	The roadways will not be properly maintained
Very likely	41%	65%	38%	35%
Somewhat likely	28%	22%	25%	30%
Not too likely	26%	10%	31%	29%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	4%	7%	5%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	800	800	800	800

[NOTE: The following questions were asked of half the sample:]

- 7A. If you had to choose one option in order to meet future state costs, would you prefer to lease state assets or raise taxes?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER
Lease state assets	62%	60%
Raise taxes	21%	21%
(VOL) Neither	14%	16%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	4%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	392	345

- 7B. If you had to choose one option in order to meet future state costs, would you prefer to lease state assets or make significant cuts in government spending, including education and other services?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER
Lease state assets	43%	39%
Make significant cuts	44%	46%
(VOL) Neither	6%	7%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	8%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	408	333

Results for this *Monmouth University/Gannett NJ Poll* are based on telephone interviews conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on July 16-19, 2007 with a statewide random sample of 800 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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