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AFTER SUPERSTORM SANDY, GARDEN STATERS GIVE THE STATE, POWER COMPANIES, AND THEMSELVES HIGH MARKS

It has been over three weeks since Superstorm Sandy made landfall in New Jersey and brought with it historic destruction for Garden State residents. The latest panel survey of registered voters in the Garden State by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind finds that three-quarters (77%) give high marks to state government for its response to the storm. More than a quarter (28%) say the state did an "excellent" job and another half (49%) say the state did a "good" job in the days after Hurricane Sandy. Registered voters are more decisive when asked to respond to a choice of two statements. Eight-in-ten (83%) voters say "Government officials acted swiftly and decisively to help residents who were affected," compared to just five percent who say "Government officials were more of an obstacle than a help to residents who were affected."

"It remains early in the recovery effort, and many have a long way to go to find their way back to normal, but I think you can interpret these numbers as a vote of support for state workers and officials," said Krista Jenkins, director of PublicMind and professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Registered voters also give themselves good marks for heeding the warnings before the storm. Three-quarters (75%) report their own readiness as "excellent" or "good."

These positive self-evaluations may be especially good news, given that 41 percent of those polled believe extreme weather events are "very likely" to happen more often in New Jersey. An additional third (33%) believe extreme weather events are "somewhat likely" to happen more often.

"Having been hit by three debilitating storms in a little more than a year – Hurricane Irene, last year's "Snowtober" storm, and now Sandy – residents may find these events akin to a new normal in weather patterns," said Jenkins.

As for the role that government should or shouldn't play in helping people to rebuild after Sandy-like events, a clear majority say the feds need to fund reconstruction and worry about how to pay for it later. Sixty-seven percent say it is all right to build now

and worry later about how to pay, as compared with a fifth (21%) who believe the federal government shouldn't spend money it doesn't have, even if there is a natural disaster.

Turning to what respondents have to say about the widespread power outages in the state, 73 percent report a loss of power as a result of the storm, and of these, 61 percent were off the grid for five or more days. These people managed their outage a variety of ways, with more than half (52%) remaining in their home without the assistance of a generator, and another quarter who stayed put with the help of a generator (25%). The remainder went to a family or friend's house (19%) or did something else (5%).

Despite the lengthy outages, respondents offer understanding appraisals of the power companies. Nearly three-quarters (69%) say their power company did the best they could, while a quarter (26%) said their company could have done better, despite the difficulties that accompany widespread outages.

“Not surprisingly, those with lengthier outages are less understanding,” said Jenkins, “but given the concerns raised over how long it took to get everyone back on the grid, these numbers should be welcome news to the power companies.”

The Fairleigh Dickinson University panel survey of 241 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone using both landlines and cell phones from October 26 through October 29, 2012 and November 13 through November 18, 2012, and has a margin of error of +/-6.3 percentage points.

*Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 201.692.7032*

Methodology

The most recent panel survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from October 26 – October 29, 2012 and then again from November 13 – November 18, 2012 using a randomly selected sample of registered voters statewide. Respondents were initially contacted in the days before the presidential election and Hurricane Sandy, yielding an original sample size of 394. The desired sample size was larger, however the effects of Hurricane Sandy brought the data collection to an early conclusion in the first wave.

The same 394 respondents were recontacted after the election and Hurricane Sandy. Due to the inevitable attrition that comes with any panel design, the final number of respondents who completed both pre- and post-election interviews was 241, or 61% of the original sample. With a sample of this size one can be 95% confident that the sample estimates reported in this release are within plus or minus 6.3 percentage points from the entire population of registered voters who live in the Garden State.

The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Furthermore, survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

PublicMind interviews were conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a land-line phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

Landline households were supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone respondents interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample was mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

Tables

Did your property or residence suffer any damage as a result of the storm?			
	All	Region	
		North	South
Yes	20%	19	25
No	80%	81	75

How much damage? Would you say it's a lot, some, or just a little?			
	All	Region	
		North	South
A lot	13%	8	17
Some	18%	21	21
A little	70%	71	62

Did you lose electrical power as a result of the storm?			
	All	Region	
		North	South
Yes	73%	81	65
No	27%	19	35

For how many days?			
	All	Region	
		North	South
Fewer than 1 or 2	22%	17	32
3 or 4	17%	18	14
5 or 6	24%	22	24
7+	37%	42	30

Which of the following best describes how you got through power outage?			
	All	Region	
		North	South
Generator	25%	27	22
No generator	52%	50	58
Hotel	2%	2	3
Family or friend's house	19%	18	15
Other/Ref	3%	3	3

Which company provides you with electrical service?						
	All	Region		Party ID		
		North	South	Dem	Ind	Rep
PSE & G	50%	56	40	65	65	31
JCP & L	34%	32	38	25	23	48
Someone else	13%	7	22	8	12	17
Unsure/Ref	3%	5	-	2	-	5

How would you rate your own preparation for Hurricane Sandy?						
	All	Region		Party ID		
		North	South	Dem	Ind	Rep
Excellent	27%	29	31	23	34	32
Good	48%	45	51	47	45	51
Fair	17%	18	12	25	10	8
Poor	7%	7	4	6	8	7
Unsure/Ref	1%	1	2	-	3	3

How would you rate the state's response to Hurricane Sandy?						
	All	Region		Party ID		
		North	South	Dem	Ind	Rep
Excellent	28%	24	35	30	22	28
Good	49%	50	45	49	43	49
Fair	14%	17	10	17	18	11
Poor	6%	6	7	1	17	10
Unsure/Ref	2%	2	4	2	-	2

Which of the following best describes your opinion of the state government's response to the storm, even if neither statement is perfect?

*"Government officials acted swiftly and decisively to help residents who were affected ... or ...
Government officials were more of an obstacle than a help to residents who were affected."*

	All	Region		Party ID		
		North	South	Dem	Ind	Rep
Government was efficient	83%	79	83	88	75	77
Government was an obstacle	5%	5	4	3	4	8
Both/Neither	6%	6	5	2	14	9
Unsure/Ref	7%	10	7	7	8	5

Which of the following best describes your opinion of your power company's response to the storm, even if neither statement is perfect?

"My power company did the best they could in responding to widespread outages ... or ... My power company could have done better, despite the difficulties that accompany widespread outages."

	All	Region		Party ID		
		North	South	Dem	Ind	Rep
They did the best they could	69%	62	75	66	56	74
Could've done better	26%	34	17	30	35	20
Both/Neither	2%	2	3	1	-	5
Unsure/Ref	3%	2	6	3	9	2

	Electric Company			How long did you lose power?	
	PSE & G	JCP & L	Other	4 or less days	5 or more days
They did the best they could	65	68	83	84	55
Could've done better	30	29	6	14	41
Both/Neither	2	1	5	1	1
Unsure/Ref	3	2	6	1	4

Some say that global warming will make extreme weather events happen more often, others say extreme weather events will remain unlikely. What about you? How likely or unlikely do you think it is that that extreme weather events will happen more often in New Jersey?

	All	Region		Party ID		
		North	South	Dem	Ind	Rep
Very likely	41%	46	33	55	41	22
Somewhat likely	33%	33	31	28	25	42
Somewhat unlikely	8%	9	9	6	7	12
Very unlikely	8%	4	14	4	12	12
Unsure/Ref	10%	8	12	6	15	12

Some people think that the federal government should fund reconstruction from natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy, and worry about how to pay for it later. Others say that the federal government shouldn't spend money it doesn't have, even if there is a natural disaster. What comes closer to your view?

	All	Region		Party ID		
		North	South	Dem	Ind	Rep
Fund	67%	69	65	83	55	49
Not fund	21%	19	22	11	27	33
Both/Neither	8%	8	8	4	11	11
Unsure/Ref	3%	4	4	1	7	5

Question Wording and Order

Sandy1 Did your property or residence suffer any damage as a result of the storm?

- 1 Yes [Ask SANDY1A]
- 2 No [Ask SANDY2]
- 9 DK [Ask SANDY2]

Sandy1a How much damage? Would you say it's a lot, some, or just a little.

- 1 A lot
- 2 Some
- 3 A little
- 9 DK/Refused

Sandy2 Did you lose electrical power as a result of the storm?

- 1 Yes [Ask Sandy2a]
- 2 No [Ask Sandy3]
- 9 DK [Ask Sandy3]

Sandy2a For how many days? [open ended, pre code]

- 1 Fewer than 1 day or 2 days
- 2 3 or 4
- 3 5 or 6
- 4 7+
- 9 DK

Sandy2b Which of the following best describes how you got through your power outage?

- 1 Remained in residence with the assistance of a generator
- 2 Remained in my residence without the assistance of a generator
- 3 Left my residence for a hotel
- 4 Left my residence for a friend or family member's house
- 5 Other
- 9 DK/Refused

Sandy3 Which company provides you with electrical service? [Randomize]

- 1 PSE &G [Public Service Electric and Gas]
- 2 JCP&L [Jersey Central Power & Light]
- 3 Someone else
- 9 Not sure

Sandy4 How would you rate your own preparation for Hurricane Sandy?

- 1 Excellent
- 2 Good
- 3 Fair
- 4 Poor
- 9 DK

Sandy5 How would you rate the state's response to Hurricane Sandy?

- 1 Excellent
- 2 Good
- 3 Fair
- 4 Poor
- 9 DK

Sandy6 Which of the following best describes your opinion of the state government's response to the storm, even if neither statement is perfect. [Randomize]

- 1 Government officials acted swiftly and decisively to help residents who were affected.
- 2 Government officials were more of an obstacle than a help to residents who were affected.
- 3 Both/neither
- 9 DK

Sandy7 Which of the following best describes your opinion of your power company's response to the storm, even if neither statement is perfect. [Randomize]

- 1 My power company did the best they could in responding to widespread outages
- 2 My power company could have done better, despite the difficulties that accompany widespread outages.
- 3 Both/neither
- 9 DK

Sandy8 Some say that global warming will make extreme weather events happen more often, others say extreme weather events will remain unlikely. What about you? How likely or unlikely do you think it is that that extreme weather events will happen more often in New Jersey?

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Somewhat unlikely
- 4 Very unlikely
- 9 DK/Refused

Sandy9 Some people think that the federal government should fund reconstruction from natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy, and worry about how to pay for it later. Others say that the federal government shouldn't spend money it doesn't have, even if there is a natural disaster. What comes closer to your view? [RANDOMIZE RESPONSE CHOICES]

- 1 The federal government should fund reconstruction from natural disasters
- 2 The federal government shouldn't spend money it doesn't have, even if there is a natural disaster
- 3 Both/neither
- 9 DK/refused

Sample characteristics – Registered voters**Gender**

Male	48
Female	52

Age

18-29	10
30-44	23
45-59	31
60+	33
Refused	2

Race/Ethnicity

White	70
Black/African-American	12
Latino or Hispanic	9
Asian	3
Other/refused	6

Region

North	55
South	45

Party identification

Democrat/Lean Democrat	49
Independent/DK/refused	17
Republican/Lean Republican	34