



For immediate release **Tuesday, March 25, 2014**

5 pp.

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POLS AND THEIR MUSICIANS – IT’S NOT MUSIC TO THEIR EARS

Does it matter what celebrities think of politicians? What about the effect of a politician on a celebrity’s appeal? A recent statewide survey from Fairleigh Dickinson University’s PublicMind finds the answer is no, at least among registered voters in the Garden State.

When it comes to two well-known New Jersey natives - Chris Christie and Bruce Springsteen - New Jersey voters prefer The Boss over The Gov. And Garden Staters are more apt to embrace the president than the musician who referred to POTUS as a “subhuman mongrel,” according to the most recent statewide poll from Fairleigh Dickinson University’s PublicMind.

Sixty-seven percent of registered voters have a favorable opinion of Bruce Springsteen, compared with only 46 percent for Governor Christie. Ted Nugent, the singer/political commentator is viewed favorably by 22 percent compared with 52 percent who feel favorably toward President Obama.

As for whether favorability for a politician correlates with higher levels of favorability for an entertainer, and vice versa, the data suggests the two are unrelated. Specifically, attitudes toward the governor are unrelated to attitudes toward Springsteen, and the same is true when attitudes toward President Obama are correlated with one of his biggest detractors, Ted Nugent.

“Of course, one is a case of no love, and the other is a case of requited love,” said Krista Jenkins, professor of political science and director of PublicMind. “But either way, music man doesn’t appear to sway any voters. The idea that it matters what celebrities think or say about politicians is just not supported by the evidence. Apparently, voters don’t necessarily adopt the political views of rock stars they admire.”

The recent appearance by Springsteen on *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, in which he lampooned the governor for his role in the Bridgegate affair, clearly resonated better with Democrats than Republicans. Half of all Republicans have a favorable opinion of the music legend, compared with more than three quarters of Democrats (79%). Republicans hold the governor in higher esteem than Springsteen by a sizable margin (73% versus 59%, respectively).

Regarding Ted Nugent and the politician who has drawn the most ire in Nugent’s public remarks, around a third of respondents, regardless of partisanship, have never heard of the singer/commentator. His name recognition -- or lack thereof -- coupled with the percentage who say they “don’t know” when asked if they have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of him – make parsing his likability more difficult. Still, some partisan differences are apparent. Democrats have decidedly unfavorable opinions of him

(38%), while more independents and Republicans say they like (26% and 28%) than dislike (22% and 21%) him. The same is true when it comes to President Obama. Unlike Democrats, independents and Republicans maintain unfavorable attitudes in numbers exceeding favorable ones regarding the president. Forty-two percent of independents and 20 percent of Republicans look upon the president favorably, as compared with half of independents and more than three-quarters of Republicans who do not like Obama.

Meanwhile, little has changed in the attitudes of Garden State voters concerning the president's job performance and the direction of the country. The president remains a divisive figure, with 44 percent approving of his job performance, and 42 percent disapproving. These numbers are unchanged from January's survey of registered voters, when the same number approved and disapproved of the president's job performance. And by a significant margin, more respondents believe the country is on the wrong track (54%) than believe it's headed in the right direction (33%). As with presidential approval, these numbers are virtually identical to those observed in January, when 35 percent said the country was headed in the right direction, and 54 percent expressed concern.

"We're now months away from midterm elections. Democrats can only hope that Obama's appeal both nationally and within New Jersey improves in order help fellow Democrats in congressional races," said Jenkins.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 703 registered voters in New Jersey was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from March 3 through March 9. The margin of error is +/- 3.7 percentage points.

Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>

Radio actualities at 201.692.2846

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Methodology

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from March 3 through March 9 using a randomly selected sample of 703 registered voters in New Jersey. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/- 3.7 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. 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 are 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 landline phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

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

Tables

Now I'm going ask about some people. If you haven't heard of one of them, just say so. Have you heard of ... [ROTATE LIST]? Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of... [MATCH ROTATION]? Would that be very or somewhat?

	Haven't heard of		Have heard of	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure (vol)
Chris Christie	1%		99%	46%	46%	8%
Barack Obama	0		100%	52%	41%	7%
Bruce Springsteen	7%		93%	67%	15%	11%
Ted Nugent	30%		70%	22%	28%	20%

	Haven't heard of				Have heard of			Favorable			Unfavorable			Unsure (vol)		
	Dem	Ind	Repub		Dem	Ind	Repub	Dem	Ind	Repub	Dem	Ind	Repub	Dem	Ind	Repub
Chris Christie	0	2	1		100	98	99	26	54	73	67	34	21	8	11	5
Barack Obama	0	1	0		100	99	100	79	42	20	12	50	77	8	7	3
Bruce Springsteen	8	11	3		92	89	97	79	67	51	5	12	32	8	10	14
Ted Nugent	31	30	26		69	70	74	16	26	28	38	22	21	15	21	25

<i>First, do you approve or disapprove of the job Barack Obama is doing as president? [Randomize approve/disapprove]</i>													
	PID				Gender		Race		Age			Education	
	All	Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-34	35-59	60+	College	Non-college
Approve	44%	73	32	10	44	45	35	65	51	46	38	45	43
Disapprove	42%	13	49	82	44	39	51	20	30	41	51	42	42
Neither (vol)	13%	13	18	9	12	15	12	15	18	13	10	12	14
DK/Ref (vol)	1%	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1

<i>In your opinion, do you believe the country is moving in the right direction or is it on the wrong track?</i>													
	PID				Gender		Race		Age			Education	
	All	Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	18-34	35-59	60+	College	Non-college
Right direction	33%	56	21	7	35	31	27	45	45	30	28	35	31
Disapprove	54%	28	62	88	55	53	62	35	47	54	58	54	54
Neither (vol)	13%	15	17	4	10	16	10	20	8	15	13	11	14
DK/Ref (vol)	1%	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0

Exact Question Wording and Order

US1. First, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

- 1 Approve
- 2 Disapprove
- 8 DK/Unsure/mixed [DON'T READ]
- 9 Refused [DON'T READ]

US2. In your opinion, do you believe the country is moving in the right direction or is it on the wrong track?

- 1 Right direction
- 2 Wrong track
- 8 DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]
- 9 Refused. [DON'T READ]

NJ1 through NJ11 released March 11, 2014

POT1 through POT2 withheld for future release

TAX1 through TAX3 released March 17, 2014

WEA1 through WEA4 released March 13, 2014

ID1. Now I'm going ask about some people. If you haven't heard of one of them, just say so. Have you heard of ... [ROTATE LIST]? Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of... [MATCH ROTATION]? Would that be very or somewhat?

- ID1 Chris Christie
- ID2 Barack Obama
- ID3 and ID4 withheld for future release
- ID5 Bruce Springsteen
- ID6 Ted Nugent

ID1-6 Have you heard of [INSERT]?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No (Skip to next name)

ID1-6a Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of [INSERT]?

- 1 Favorable
- 2 Unfavorable
- 8 Don't Know (vol) (skip to next name)

Weighted sample characteristics

		Registered voters N = 703; MoE = +/- 3.7
Gender	<i>Male</i>	49%
	<i>Female</i>	51%
Age	<i>18-34</i>	22%
	<i>35-59</i>	45%
	<i>60+</i>	30%
	<i>Refused</i>	3%
Race	<i>White</i>	67%
	<i>African American</i>	12%
	<i>Hispanic</i>	13%
	<i>Asian</i>	4%
	<i>Other/Refused</i>	4%
	<i>Self</i>	14%
Union household	<i>Someone else</i>	11%
	<i>No</i>	75%
Party (with leaners)	<i>Dem</i>	45%
	<i>Ind/DK/Refused</i>	25%
	<i>Repub</i>	30%