

2nd District Voters Concerned with Jobs, Support Minimum Wage Hike, Stockton Poll Finds

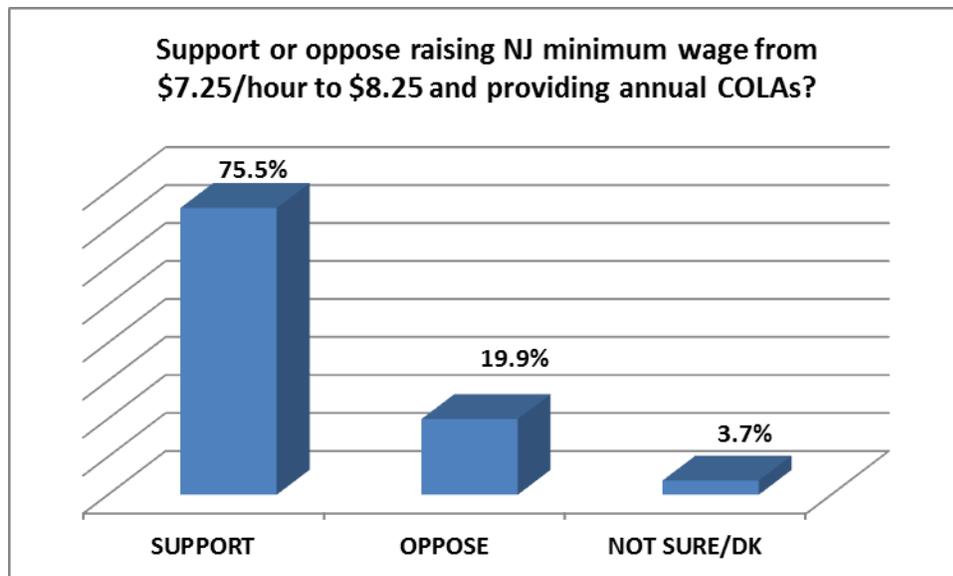
For Immediate Release

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Galloway, NJ – Likely voters in the 2nd Legislative District, where jobs is the top issue, strongly support increasing New Jersey's minimum wage and providing annual cost of living increases, according to a Stockton Polling Institute poll released today.

The poll of 596 likely voters found 76 percent supporting a proposal to raise the state's minimum wage from \$7.25 an hour to \$8.25 an hour and to tie future increases to the cost of living. Twenty percent oppose the proposal, and 4 percent are undecided.



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Among opponents and undecideds, 38 percent would switch to supporting the minimum wage hike if the annual increases were dropped from the plan. More than half would still oppose the increase.

When respondents are asked to name the most important issue facing New Jersey, one in four identify jobs (the top response), and 9 percent cite the economy (the fourth-highest response)..

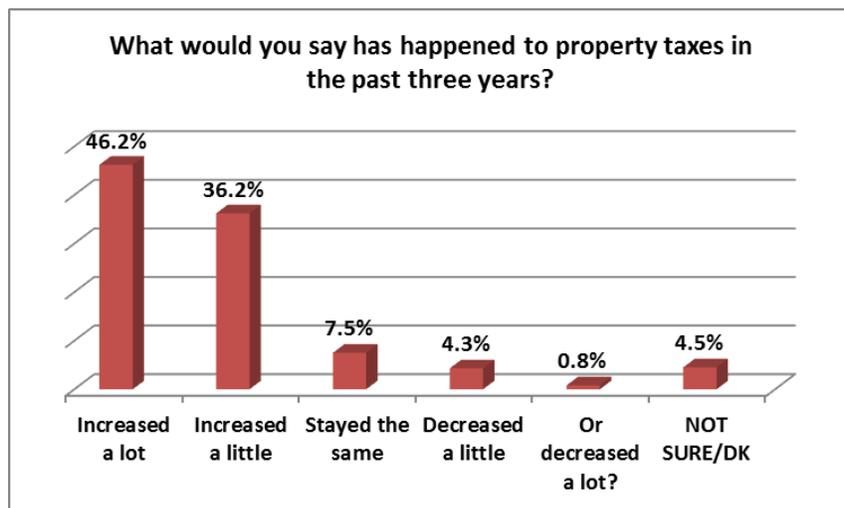
The No. 2 issue in the 2nd District is property taxes, identified by 19 percent, with taxes in general placing third at 11 percent, according to the poll.

The poll was conducted with 596 likely voters from September 7-9. Interviewers called both land lines and cell phones. The survey has a margin of error of +/-4.0 percent. The Stockton Polling Institute is part of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

Daniel J. Douglas, director of the Hughes Center, noted that the 2nd District is home to Atlantic City, where casino revenues have plummeted over the past six years. Unemployment in Atlantic County hovers at 11.5 percent, three percentage points above the state average, Douglas said.

“For many of these voters in a tourism economy, increasing the minimum wage is a pocketbook issue,” Douglas said. “It’s personal.”

An overwhelming majority of 82 percent said property taxes have gone up in the past three years, with nearly half – 46 percent – saying they have increased “a lot.”



K-12 education is cited as the top issue by 7 percent, with another 5 percent citing education in general as their priority.

Despite the economic concerns, the district’s voters generally feel the state is going in the right direction (56 percent), with 31 percent saying the state has gotten off on the wrong track.

Consistent with that opinion, the poll found support for local and state incumbents: Democratic state Sen. Jim Whelan, Republican Assemblymen John Amodeo and Chris Brown, and Republican Gov. Chris Christie.

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(See press release of Sept. 11, 2013:

<http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/hughescenter/content/docs/Polling/2013%20Polling/Stockton2ndDistrictPoll2013PressRelease.pdf>.)

While the governor receives support in the district, his ability to influence this year's legislative elections may be limited. Sixty-one percent said an endorsement by the governor would make them less likely to support that candidate or would make no difference. Thirty percent said Christie's backing would make them more likely to vote for a Senate or Assembly candidate.

Finally, 77 percent support a proposal to allow veterans groups to use proceeds from games of chance for operating expenses, while 13 percent oppose the ballot question proposal and 8 percent are unsure.

Methodology

Interviews were conducted at the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy's Stockton Polling Institute by live interviewers calling from the Stockton College campus. The poll was conducted with 596 likely voters from Sept. 7-9. Interviewers called both land lines and cell phones. All prospective respondent households in the source telephone list have the same chance of joining the sample because of random selection. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percent at 95% confidence level. Data are weighted based on United States Census Bureau demographics for the 2nd Legislative District population.

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey. The Center is named for William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton College. The Hughes Center can be found at www.facebook.com/Hughes.Center.Stockton.College and can be followed on Twitter @hughescenter.



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