

Stockton Poll: Murphy Maintains Lead Over Ciattarelli in N.J. Governor's Race

Slim majority against college sports betting

For immediate release

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Galloway, N.J. - Incumbent Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy leads Republican challenger Jack Ciattarelli 50% to 41% when voters leaning toward a candidate are included, according to a Stockton University poll released today.

The race for N.J. Governor remains stable, with Murphy holding the same 9 percentage point lead found in a September Stockton poll. Three percent are undecided.

The poll of 522 likely voters was conducted for the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University and has a +/- 4.3% margin of error.

"When you consider that this poll was taken after the gubernatorial debates were done, it appears that voters' feelings are fairly baked in at this point," said John Froomjian, Hughes Center executive director. "The polling spread between the candidate is very consistent."

Murphy was viewed favorably by 49%, while 44% had an unfavorable impression. Ciattarelli was unfamiliar to 19% of voters, an improvement in name recognition from a September Stockton poll which found that 45% were not familiar with him. Those who did know of him were split almost evenly, with 38% viewing him positively and 37% negatively.

More voters (45%) thought the state was going in the wrong direction than the right direction (42%), with 13% unsure. But 52% still approved of Murphy's job performance leading the state as governor, while 44% disapproved.

Property taxes (15%) and taxes in general (12%) continue to be a top issue identified by voters, followed by COVID safety (11%) and the economy (8%).

Nearly identical levels of extreme partisan polarization were evident among Democrats and Republicans across every measure, but Democrats have the advantage of more than one million more registered voters. Murphy also led with independents in the poll, showing improvement with that bloc of voters since the earlier Stockton Poll.

Ciattarelli leads among white voters and men while Murphy is supported at higher rates by those with a four-year degree or more, Hispanic voters, women, and, overwhelmingly, by Black voters, said research associate Alyssa Maurice.

Other findings:

- More than half (60%) of N.J. voters did not watch or listen to either Murphy-Ciattarelli governor debate, while 39% did.
- Nearly all voters (95%) skipped the Lieutenant governor debate with only 3% tuning in.

“The fact that many did not view the gubernatorial candidate debates does not reflect negatively on the value of these debates,” Froomjian said. “Most partisans already know how they are going to vote, but debates have value in allowing undecided or uncertain voters to evaluate the candidates in action.”

Voters oppose college sports gambling in N.J.

The majority of voters (51%) opposed a constitutional amendment to allow gambling on college games held in N.J. or on games in which N.J. teams participate. This is up from 45% in a September Stockton poll. Thirty-seven percent support such an amendment while 11% are unsure.

Find full poll results [here](#).

Methodology

The poll of New Jersey adults screened as likely voters was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy October 17-26, 2021. Live interviewers, who are mostly Stockton University students, called cell phones and landlines from the Stockton University campus. Opinion Services supplemented the field work by completing 250 telephone interviews. Overall, 81 percent of interviews were conducted on cell phones and 19 percent on landline phones. A total of 522 registered voters were interviewed after being screened as likely voters on criteria including self-professed intention to vote on a scale of 1 to 10, having voted in New Jersey's 2017 election, and how closely voters are following the election. Both cell and landline samples included a mix of voter list and random digit dialing (RDD) sample. Data are weighted based on U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey data for New Jersey on variables of age, race, ethnicity, education level, sex and region. The poll's margin of error is +/- 4.3 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets.

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey, and promotes the civic life of New Jersey through engagement, education and research. The center is named for the late 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. The Hughes Center can be found on [YouTube](#), and can be

followed on Facebook [@StocktonHughesCenter](#), Twitter [@hughescenter](#) and Instagram [@ stockton_hughes_center](#).

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Stockton University

Stockton University, which is celebrating its 50th year of teaching in 2021-22, is [ranked](#) among the top public universities in the Northeast. Our almost 10,000 students can choose to live and learn on the 1600-acre wooded main campus in the Pinelands National Reserve in South Jersey and at our coastal residential campus just steps from the beach and Boardwalk in Atlantic City. The university offers more than 160 undergraduate and graduate programs. Learn more at Stockton.edu.