

Hughes Center Report Shows New Jerseyans Split Along Party Lines, Other Factors on Foreign Policy

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Galloway, N.J. - New Jerseyans are divided by party, gender and other traits in their opinions on major foreign policy issues and America's role in world affairs, according to research published today by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy.

Strong differences of opinion are found between Republicans and Democrats, men and women, and among different racial or ethnic backgrounds in an analysis of survey data by Tina Zappile, an assistant professor of Political Science at Stockton University.

A statewide poll of 802 New Jersey adults was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the Hughes Center. Live interviewers on the Stockton campus called both landlines and cell phones. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.5 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

Zappile noted that New Jersey businesses maintain strong economic ties with other countries, and that one out of five state residents was born in another country.

"Government policy decisions about foreign affairs have a direct economic and personal effect on many residents of New Jersey," she said.

When asked to identify major threats to the well-being of the United States, both Democrats and Republicans name ISIS as a top concern. Republicans identify nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea as secondary concerns. Independents and Democrats are most likely to identify cyber-attacks as secondary concerns.

There is a partisan divide on America's leadership role in the world. Nearly two-thirds of Republicans and half of independents say the United States has a less important and powerful role in the world than 10 years ago. Only a quarter of Democrats feel that way.

Other findings of Zappile's report, "Foreign Policy Views of New Jerseyans," include:

- Compared to Republicans, Democrats are more likely to favor negotiating international

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treaties, strengthening the United Nations and economic aid as the most effective foreign policy strategies, while Republicans are more likely than Democrats to favor military superiority.

- Women see strengthening the United Nations as effective strategy more than men, who favor strengthening the military more.
- Majorities of Democrats and young adults and nearly half of blacks/African-Americans and Hispanics support accepting U.N. decisions even if the United States disagrees with them. Majorities of Republicans, senior citizens and whites say the United States should reject U.N. decisions with which it disagrees.
- Only about a third of Republicans support establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba and ending the Cuban trade embargo, while close to 90 percent of Democrats favor these policies.
- Seven of 10 Republicans oppose the United States accepting Syrian refugees, while six of 10 Democrats support it. Two-thirds of Republicans support sending ground troops to fight Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria, while a similar majority of Democrats oppose it.
- Majorities of men and Republicans believe enhanced interrogation techniques are always or usually effective, while minorities of women and Democrats feel that way.
- Majorities of most demographic groups say that climate change is a very serious problem, except only one in five Republicans and self-identified conservatives say it is. Three-quarters support U.S. participation in the 2015 Paris Agreement, though almost two-thirds say that developing countries should contribute as much or more than wealthy countries.

“People’s views of the world are shaped by multiple factors. Clearly, party affiliation and ideology have influence over where many people come out on particular issues,” Zappile said. “But we also see a gender gap on some key issues, as well as differences among people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and generations.”

In areas of common ground, three-quarters of New Jerseyans, including majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independents, favor allowing illegal immigrants to stay in the United States if they met certain requirements. Also, six in 10 say trade agreements have led to job losses in America but have helped people in developing countries.

Access the full report and other research at stockton.edu/hughescenter.

Methodology

A statewide public opinion poll was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at Stockton University. Live interviewers on the Stockton campus called both landlines and cell phones from March 31 to April 12, 2016. The poll was conducted with 802 adult residents of New Jersey. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.5 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets. Data are weighted based on United States Census Bureau demographics for New Jersey.

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. 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. # # #