

Stockton Poll: Clinton Leads Trump 51-40 Percent; Casino Expansion Opposed

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Galloway, N.J. - Democrat Hillary Clinton has opened up an 11-point lead over Republican Donald Trump in the contest for New Jersey's 14 Electoral College votes, according to a Stockton Poll released today.

Clinton leads in New Jersey 51 percent to 40 percent for Trump, with 3 percent for Libertarian Gary Johnson and 1 percent for Jill Stein of the Green Party, according to the statewide poll. Less than 6 percent are undecided or not expressing a preference for any of the four major candidates.

The Democrat led by only six percentage points in a Stockton Poll released Sept. 30. The majority of the new poll was conducted after the FBI announced that it had discovered more Clinton emails on an aide's computer.

Meanwhile, an overwhelming 71 percent oppose a proposed Constitutional amendment to allow two new casinos to be located 72 miles from Atlantic City. Only 24 percent support the amendment, and 5 percent are undecided.

Regarding a second proposed Constitutional amendment, 63 percent support dedicating increased gasoline tax revenues to pay for transportation projects, while 33 percent oppose it and 4 percent are unsure.

The poll was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. Live interviewers on the Stockton University campus called both landlines and cell phones from Oct. 27-Nov. 2, 2016. The poll was conducted with 678 adults who are likely voters in New Jersey. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.75 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

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-continued from page 1-

“New Jersey is a blue state, and it doesn’t appear that the latest headlines have shaken Clinton’s base of Democratic support,” said Sharon Schulman, executive director of the Hughes Center.

But the email publicity appears to have hurt Clinton’s image in the area of trustworthiness. In the Sept. 30 poll, Clinton and Trump were essentially tied (38 percent to 37 percent) on who voters consider more honest and trustworthy. In the latest poll, Trump leads in that category 39 percent to 34 percent. Clinton leads in other candidate comparisons.

Which candidate ...	Sept. 30		Nov. 4	
	Clinton	Trump	Clinton	Trump
Would manage the economy better?	45%	45%	47%	45%
Has a better temperament?	67%	20%	68%	19%
Is more honest and trustworthy?	38%	37%	34%	39%
Would keep the country safer from terrorism?	45%	43%	49%	41%
Would handle foreign policy better?	57%	33%	59%	33%

Majority of likely voters view both candidates unfavorably, although Clinton still polls better with 41 percent viewing her as somewhat or very favorable and 33 percent viewing Trump as somewhat or very favorable. Fifty-one percent have very unfavorable views of Trump, compared to 42 percent for Clinton.

There is a strong gender gap in the presidential contest. Among New Jersey men, Clinton (44 percent) and Trump (43 percent) are essentially tied. But Clinton leads among women 56 percent to 35 percent for Trump. While Trump leads 49-46 percent among white voters, 82 percent of black/African American voters support Clinton. Clinton leads among Hispanic voters 60 percent to 24 percent for Trump.

The economy is identified by 30 percent as the top issue in the presidential election (up from 24 percent on Sept. 30), with terrorism and national security issues second at 13 percent (up from 11 percent). In the new poll, foreign policy and world affairs is third at 5 percent, followed closely by immigration. Health care and jobs were each identified as the main issue by 4 percent.

President Obama is given a 52 percent job performance rating, with 48 percent rating it as fair or poor. On the other hand, Governor Chris Christie gets a dismal 15 percent positive rating; 52 percent rate his job performance as poor. The poll was taken after witnesses in the Bridgewater trial of two top aides testified that Christie knew of George Washington Bridge lane closings as they occurred.

By a more than 2-to-1 margin, New Jersey voters say it is more important for members of

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-continued from page 2-

Congress to compromise on issues than to stand firm on principles and not compromise. Sixty-six percent feel it is more important to compromise, while 27 percent feel House members should stick to their principles and 6 percent are unsure. Asked which party is doing more to solve the nation's problems, half said neither party is. Twenty-two percent identify the Democrats and 12 percent identify the Republicans, with 12 percent saying both parties are working equally hard.

Looking ahead to the 2017 gubernatorial election, the poll finds only two Republicans with any significant name recognition among New Jersey voters. Two-thirds (67 percent) say Sen. Thomas Kean Jr., son of former Governor Thomas Kean, is familiar to them, while 41 percent are familiar with Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno. Twelve percent or less each say they are familiar with Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick, Evesham Mayor Randy Brown, Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli and businessman Joseph Rullo.

Democrats being mentioned as possible gubernatorial candidates are a little better known, with 34 percent familiar with declared candidate Phil Murphy, 26 percent with Assemblyman John Wisniewski, and 27 percent with Tom Byrne, son of former Gov. Brendan Byrne.

Likely voters for the most part are not supporting any particular candidate so far ahead of the 2017 election. More than three quarters (77 percent) are not sure. Eight percent identified Murphy as their early favorite, with 4 percent naming Guadagno and Kean.

Methodology

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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 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 at <https://www.facebook.com/StocktonHughesCenter> and can be followed on Twitter @hughescenter

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