

# EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS -EAGLETON CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEREST POLLING -

To:Jon ShureFrom:Tim VercellottiRe.:Summary of poll results on family leave insurance

Date: Nov. 9, 2006

# INTRODUCTION

The Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling posed the questions to 809 adults in a random-digit-dial telephone survey Oct. 29-31. The margin of sampling error for the survey is plus or minus 3.4 percentage points. Methodological details about the survey can be found in Appendix A.

#### SUPPORT FOR FAMILY LEAVE INSURANCE

New Jersey residents support the concept of family leave insurance by a margin of four to one (see Table 1). Seventy-eight percent said they favored the idea, while 16 percent opposed it. Support varied by political party identification, with adults identifying as Democrats showing the strongest support (91 percent), followed by Independents (75 percent) and Republicans (59 percent). Women were slightly more likely to support the concept than men (80 percent to 74 percent). Support also was higher among non-white respondents than white respondents (87 percent to 74 percent). Opinion about family leave insurance varied by age, with support declining from a high of 97 percent among respondents ages 18 to 29 years to 60 percent among those ages 65 years or older. There were no significant differences by education level. In terms of income, support for the idea was lowest among those with annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more. Similar patterns emerged on most dimensions when the sample was narrowed to registered voters (sample size = 695, margin of error = +/- 3.7 percent). (See Table 2.)

Varying the estimated cost of the program does not appear to alter opinion patterns. Respondents heard two versions of a question that described the financing for family leave insurance as coming from an increase in employee contributions to the state's temporary disability insurance fund. Half of the sample was assigned at random to hear a version of the question in which the amount of the increase was estimated at just under one dollar per week per employee. The other half heard a version of the question in which the increase was estimated at two dollars per week per employee. In each case, about three-quarters of respondents said they would support family leave insurance (see Tables 3 and 4).

#### PAST AND FUTURE NEEDS

Several questions asked respondents about their previous experience with issues surrounding family medical leave. Twenty-three percent said either they or their spouse had taken time off in the past five years to care for a sick family member or to care for a newborn or newly adopted child (see Table 5). Breaking down the results by gender showed that 26 percent of men and 19 percent of women said they or their spouse had taken time off. This may seem counter-intuitive, in that one might reasonably expect that women would be more likely to take time off to care for a child, for example. It is important to note that the question applies to the respondent and his or her spouse, so the percentage of men answering in the affirmative could reflect their spouse having taken time off as well. A follow-up question, posed only to those who said they or their spouse had taken time off, found that 8 percent of men and 1 percent of women said their spouse took the time off (see Table 6).

The amount of time off that respondents took to care for a family member was most likely to be two weeks or fewer (42 percent), followed by three to six weeks (22 percent), and more than 12 weeks (15 percent). (See Table 6.) Women were more likely than men to take off for more than 12 weeks (22 percent to 10 percent). The small sub-sample of 77 women who said they or their spouse took time off in the past five years, however, has a margin of error of +/- 11 percent. Thus some caution is required in interpreting the data for the small sub-samples of men and women who answered this question.

More than one-third of respondents (39 percent) who said they took time off also said they did so without pay (see Table 7). Thirty-three percent said they received more than half of their pay during the period in which they were off. Gender differences were stark, however. Forty-one percent of men said they received more than half of their pay, compared to 23 percent of women. Even with the larger margin of error for the subsamples, this is a significant difference.

About one-fifth of the sample said there was a time in the past five years when they wanted to take family leave, but could not (See Table 8). This was true for 26 percent of women, compared to 16 percent of men. Finances were the key reason, with 54 percent of those who could not take leave saying they couldn't afford to take the time off (see Table 9). Also, about one-third of respondents said they have used a week or more of vacation or sick time to care for a family member who was sick (see Table 10). About one-third of respondents anticipate that they or their spouse will need to take time off in the next five years to care for a sick family member or a newborn or newly adopted child (see Table 11).

#### CONCLUSION

The data show significant support for the concept of family leave insurance, with respondents favoring the idea by a four to one margin. Varying the amount of employee contributions to the temporary disability insurance fund to support the program does not appear to reduce support for family leave insurance. About one-fourth of adults said they

or their spouses have taken time off in the previous five years to care for a family member, and one-fifth said there have been times when they wanted to take time off, but could not. Finances appear to be the most common reason that people cannot take time off. About one-third of respondents said they have used vacation or sick time to care for a family member. About one-third of respondents say they expect that they or their spouse will need to take time off for that purpose some time in the next five years.

# TABLES

F1. Next, we'd like to ask you about a proposal for the state to create <u>family leave</u> <u>insurance</u>. Under the program, employees could take off from work for up to 12 weeks in a 12-month period to care for a newborn baby, a newly adopted child, or a close relative who is seriously ill. Employees would receive two-thirds of their regular pay-- up to about \$500 per week from the insurance fund.

Would you support or oppose [ROTATE order of support and oppose] creation of this program?

- 1 Support
- 2 Oppose
- 9 Don't know/Refused (VOL)

Table 1 – Family and Medical Leave – All Adults						
		Support	Oppose	(VOL) Don't know/Refused	N	
Oct. 2006	All adults	78%	16%	7%	809	
Party ID	Democrat	91%	6%	3%	263	
	Republican	59%	32%	8%	208	
	Independent	75%	17%	8%	249	
Gender	Male	74%	18%	7%	391	
	Female	80%	13%	6%	418	
Race	White	74%	19%	7%	633	
	Non-white	87%	8%	6%	153	
Age	18-29	97%	2%	2%	72	
	30-49	80%	14%	6%	291	
	50-64	72%	22%	5%	252	
	65+	60%	26%	15%	181	
Education	High school or below	76%	17%	7%	219	
	Some college and above	79%	15%	6%	580	
Income	Under \$35,000	82%	12%	6%	110	
	\$35,000-\$69,999	80%	17%	3%	193	
	\$70,000-\$99,000	84%	11%	4%	154	
	\$100,000 or more	69%	22%	9%	252	
Region	North	80%	13%	8%	359	
	Central	74%	19%	7%	206	
	South	78%	18%	4%	224	

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 2 – Family and Medical Leave – Registered Voters						
		Support	Oppose	(VOL) Don't know/Refused	N	
Oct. 2006	Registered voters	76%	17%	7%	695	
Party ID	Democrat	90%	6%	4%	229	
	Republican	54%	36%	10%	187	
	Independent	75%	16%	9%	217	
Gender	Male	72%	20%	8%	327	
	Female	79%	14%	6%	368	
Race	White	73%	20%	7%	562	
	Non-white	86%	9%	6%	115	
Age	18-29	98%	2%	0%	40	
	30-49	79%	14%	7%	250	
	50-64	72%	24%	4%	231	
	65+	61%	24%	15%	165	
Education	High school or below	72%	20%	8%	167	
	Some college and above	78%	16%	6%	522	
Income	Under \$35,000	78%	14%	8%	85	
	\$35,000-\$69,999	78%	18%	4%	167	
	\$70,000-\$99,000	86%	10%	5%	134	
	\$100,000 or more	68%	22%	10%	230	
Region	North	78%	14%	8%	313	
	Central	72%	20%	7%	187	
	South	75%	19%	6%	183	

#### [ONE-HALF OF SAMPLE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO EITHER F2A OR F2B]

F2a. The entire cost of family leave insurance would be paid through an increase in employee contributions to the state's temporary disability insurance fund. The increase would average just <u>under one dollar</u> per week per employee.

Knowing this information, would you support or oppose [ROTATE order of support and oppose] creation of this program?

- 1 Support
- 2 Oppose
- 9 Don't know/Refused (VOL)

Table 3							
			(VOL) Don't				
	Support	Oppose	know/Refused	Total			
All adults	75%	18%	7%	400			
Male	73%	20%	7%	194			
Female	76%	18%	6%	206			
Registered voters	77%	18%	5%	343			

F2b. The entire cost of family leave insurance would be paid through an increase in employee contributions to the state's temporary disability insurance fund. The increase would average two dollars per week per employee.

Knowing this information, would you support or oppose [ROTATE order of support and oppose] creation of this program?

- 1 Support
- 2 Oppose
- 9 Don't know/Refused (VOL)

Table 4							
			(VOL) Don't				
	Support	Oppose	know/Refused	Total			
All adults	74%	19%	7%	409			
Male	74%	21%	6%	197			
Female	74%	18%	8%	212			
Registered voters	75%	18%	7%	352			

- F4. In the past five years, have you or your spouse ever taken leave from work to care for a sick child, parent, spouse or other family member, or to care for a newborn or newly adopted child?
  - 1 Yes 2 No (GOTO F8)
  - 9 Don't know/No response (VOL) (GOTO F8)

Table 5							
	Yes	No	(VOL) Don't know/No Response	Total			
All adults	23%	76%	1%	809			
Male	26%	73%	1%	391			
Female	19%	80%	1%	418			
Registered voters	21%	78%	1%	695			

- F6 Thinking about the last time you took leave from work for one of these reasons, how many weeks did you end up taking off from work?
  - 1 Two weeks or fewer
  - 2 Three to six weeks
  - 3 Seven to nine weeks
  - 4 Ten to twelve weeks
  - 5 More than twelve weeks
  - 8 Didn't take time off; spouse did (VOL) (GOTO F8)
  - 9 Don't know/Refused (VOL)

	Table 6								
	2 weeks or fewer	3 to 6 weeks	7 to 9 weeks	10 to 12 weeks	More than 12 weeks	(VOL) Didn't take time off, spouse did	(VOL) Don't know/ Refused	N	
All adults	42%	22%	8%	7%	15%	5%	1%	172	
Male	45%	22%	10%	2%	10%	8%	2%	95	
Female	37%	22%	4%	12%	22%	1%	0%	77	
Registered voters	41%	22%	7%	6%	17%	6%	2%	143	

- F7 Over the entire time you were on leave, how much of your usual pay did you receive? Did you receive in total over this period more than half, about half, less than half of your usual pay, or no pay at all?
  - 1 More than half
  - 2 About half
  - 3 Less than half
  - 4 No pay
  - Don't know/No response 9 (VOL)

Table 7								
	More than	About			(VOL) Don't know/			
	half	half	Less than half	No pay	No response	Total		
All adults	33%	9%	12%	39%	7%	162		
Male	41%	6%	6%	38%	8%	86		
Female	23%	13%	18%	41%	6%	76		
Registered voters	36%	8 %	12%	37%	6%	134		

F8 In the past five years, was there ever a time when you wanted to take family or medical leave from work, but did not for any reason?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Don't know/No response (VOL)

(GOTO F10) (GOTO F10)

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	Table 8						
9	Don't know/No response	(VOL)	(GC				

Table 8							
	Yes	No	(VOL) Don't know/ No Response	N			
All adults	21%	76%	3%	809			
Male	16%	80%	4%	391			
Female	26%	72%	2%	418			
Registered voters	20%	77%	3%	695			

# F9 What was the main reason you did not take the family or medical leave?

- 1 Risk losing job
- 2 Hurt chances for job advancement
- 3 Could not afford to go on leave
- 4 Employer denied request for leave
- 5 Other (SPECIFY) (VOL)
- 9 Don't know/No response (VOL)

	Table 9									
	Risk	Hurt chances for job	Could not afford to go on	Employer denied request	Other	(VOL) Don't know/				
	losing job	advancement	leave	for leave	(SPECIFY)	No response	Total			
All adults	14%	2%	54%	2%	19%	9%	146			
Male	14%	3%	45%	5%	16%	17%	53			
Female	14%	1%	59%	0%	21%	5%	93			
Registered voters	14%	2%	56%	2%	20%	6%	125			

F10. Have you ever used a week or more of vacation or sick time to care for a sick child, parent, or spouse?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

9 Don't know/No response (VOL)

Table 10							
	Yes	No	(VOL) Don't know/ No response	Total			
All adults	31%	69%	0%	809			
Male	32%	68%	0%	391			
Female	29%	70%	1%	418			
Registered voters	30%	69%	1%	695			

- F12. Looking ahead to the next five years, do you currently expect that you or your spouse will need to take leave from work to care for a sick child, parent or other family member, or to care for a newborn or newly adopted child?
  - 1 Yes
  - 2 No

Table 11							
	Yes	No	(VOL) Don't know/ No response	Total			
All adults	31%	60%	8%	809			
Male	32%	60%	8%	391			
Female	30%	61%	9%	418			
Registered voters	29%	62%	9%	695			

9 Don't know/No response (VOL)

# **APPENDIX A – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES**

#### **Questionnaire Development**

Eagleton research staff drafted the questionnaire for this survey. The draft questionnaire was pre-tested with a random group of New Jersey residents and Eagleton staff modified the survey instrument in order to increase the understandability and accuracy of the questions asked.

Besides the substantive questions, some basic demographic information was obtained from all study participants in order to provide more detailed analysis of the data. The final version of the questionnaire was programmed into a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) system. The CATI system enables the interviewer to accurately skip over certain questions which may be irrelevant to a particular study participant, while retaining the flow and integrity of the interview process.

#### **Data Collection**

A random proportional probability sample was used to select the 809 New Jersey residents 18 years of age and older who participated in this study. The sample was designed to make sure that regions of the state (defined by area code) and population gender were sampled proportionately. The three-digit telephone exchange was used to match telephone numbers and geographic areas. The remaining four digits were randomly selected. This procedure ensures that those with unlisted or new telephone numbers are included in the sample. Each working phone number was called a maximum of eight times, at different times of the week, in an effort to reach people who were infrequently at home.

The interviews were conducted by telephone between October 29 and October 31, 2006 by experienced professional interviewers who were trained and monitored by the Eagleton research staff. The response rate for the survey was 13 percent, which was calculated using response rate formula #2 from the American Association for Public Opinion Research.

# Weighting

While those interviewed in a survey ideally will have the same characteristics as the population they represent, samples frequently may under-represent groups that are more difficult to interview, such as young adults or those with less than a high school education. To correct this imbalance, a statistical technique known as "weighting" is used. The weighting procedure compares New Jersey population figures for gender. age, education, race, and ethnicity based on U.S. Census data with those of the sample.

When there is significant difference between these two figures, the sample is weighted so it more accurately reflects the population of the state. For example, if census figures show that 39 percent of New Jerseyans, 18 years and older, have a high school education, and the sample consists of 32 percent with a high school education, each respondent in

this category would be counted as 1.21 persons to adjust for this difference. The data in this report were weighted by gender, age, education, race and ethnicity to ensure a sample that is representative of the adult population of New Jersey.

# **Sampling Error**

The percentages obtained in a sample survey are estimates of what the distribution of responses would be if the entire population had been surveyed. "Sampling error" is a statistical term which describes the probable difference between interviewing everyone in a given population and a sample drawn from that population. For example, the sampling error associated with a sample of 809 persons is  $\pm 3.4$  percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus, if 50 percent of those in a sample of 809 are found to agree with a particular statement, the percentage of agreement within the population from which the sample was drawn would be between 46.6 and 53.4 percent (50  $\pm$  3.4 %) 95 times out of 100.

Sampling error increases as the sample size is reduced. For, example, if statements are made based on a sub-group of 400 people, the sampling error is  $\pm 5$  percent. This fact must be kept in mind when comparing the responses of different groups within a sample (e.g. men compared with women). Figure 1 in this appendix shows the relationship between sample (or group) size and sampling error.

Readers should note that sampling error does not take into account other possible sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion.



# Figure 1

# Sample Size and Sampling Error

Weighted Sample Demographics (N = 809 Adults)*		
Variable	Category	%
Party ID	Democrat	34%
	Republican	25%
	Independent	29%
	Something else/Other	8%
Gender	Male	49%
	Female	51%
Race	White	69%
	Black	12%
	Asian	3%
	Hispanic	12%
	Other	2%
Age	18-29	18%
	30-49	41%
	50-64	22%
	65+	19%
Education	High school and below	44%
	Some college	22%
	College graduate	20%
	Post-graduate	14%
Income	Under \$35,000	18%
	\$35,000-\$69,999	26%
	\$70,000-\$99,000	20%
	\$100,000 or more	25%
Region**	North	45%
	Central	24%
	South	29%

# **APPENDIX B – SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS**

\* "Don't know/Refused" categories are omitted, so percentages may not sum to 100.

** North region:	Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and	
	Warren counties.	
Central region:	Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Somerset and	
	Union counties.	
South region:	Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland,	
	Gloucester, Ocean, and Salem counties.	

# **APPENDIX C – TEXT OF DEMOGRAPHIC MEASURES**

#### GENDER

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

#### PARTY IDENTIFICATION:

In politics today, do you consider yourself a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or something else?

- 1 Democrat
- 2 Republican
- 3 Independent
- 4 Something Else / Other
- 9 Don't Know / Refused

# RACE:

- 1 White
- 2 Black
- 3 Asian
- 4 Hispanic / Latino
- 5 (VOL) OTHER, SPECIFY: \_
- 9 Don't know/Refused (DO NOT READ)

#### AGE:

What was your age on your last birthday?

- 1 18 to 29
- 2 30 to 49
- 3 50 to 64
- 4 65 and older
- 9 Don't know / Refused

#### EDUCATION:

What was the last grade in school you completed?

- 0 Some high school and below
- 1 High school graduate
- 2 Some college
- 3 College graduate
- 4 Post-graduate studies or degree
- 9 Don't know / Refused

#### INCOME:

So that we can group all answers, is your total annual family income before taxes: Under \$35,000; between \$35,000 to just under \$70,000; between \$70,000 to just under \$100,000; or \$100,000 or more?

- 1 Under \$35,000
- 2 \$35,000 to \$69,999
- 3 \$70,000 to \$99,999
- 4 \$100,000 or more
- 9 (VOL) Don't Know / Refused

#### **REGION:**

- 1 North region = Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren counties.
- 2 Central region = Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Somerset and Union counties.
- 3 South region = Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Ocean, and Salem counties.
- 99 Don't know / Refused