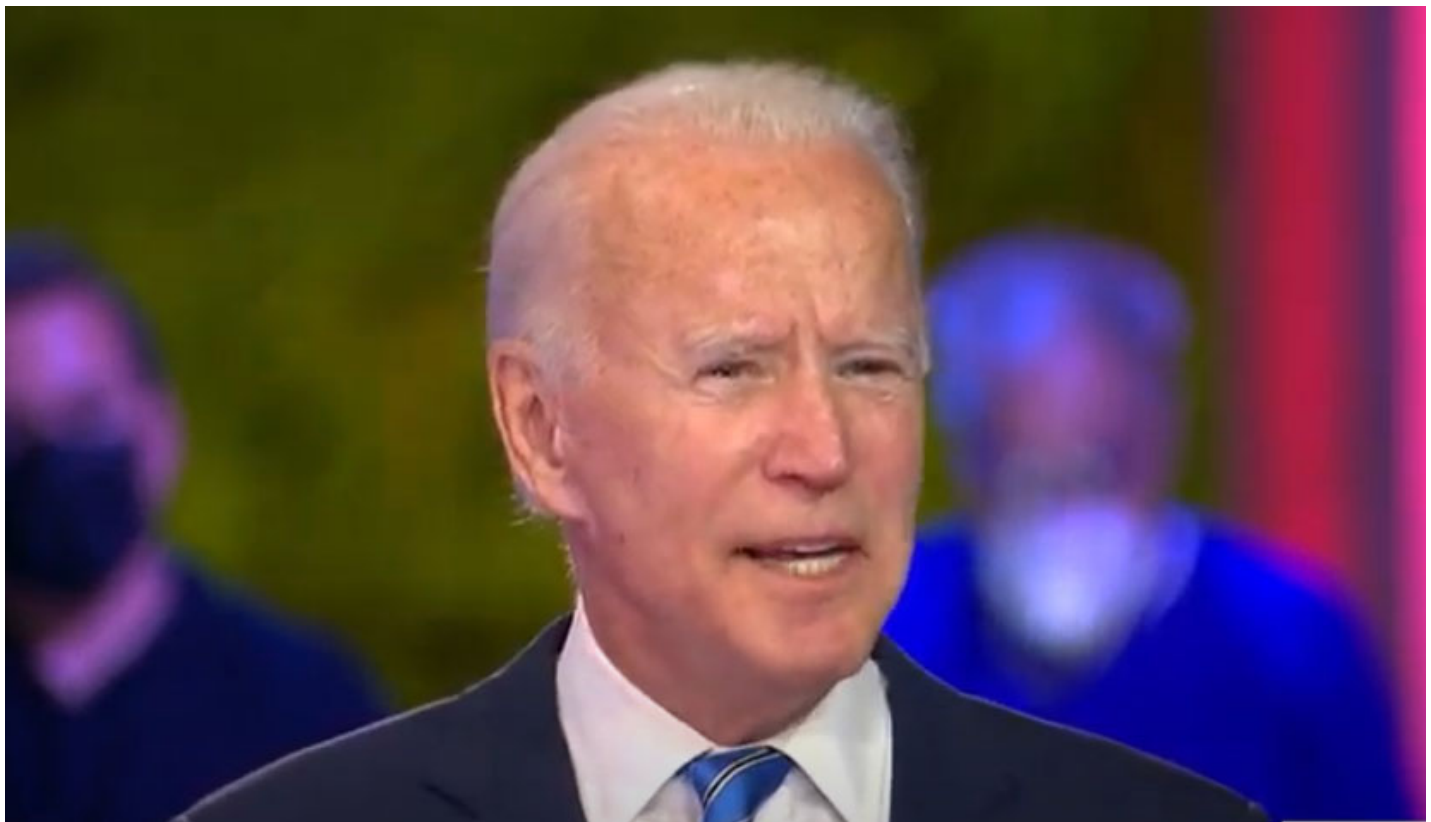# Stockton Poll Finds Deep Partisan Divide on All Biden Policies – Except Stimulus Aid

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**Stockton Poll Finds Deep Partisan Divide on All Biden Policies – Except Stimulus Aid**

*For immediate release*
March 31, 2021

**Galloway, N.J. –** About the only thing New Jersey Republicans and Democrats agree on according to a Stockton University Poll released today is that many would like even more stimulus aid than was provided in the recent $1.9 trillion pandemic relief package.

Beyond that, however, the poll of 647 New Jersey voters found that the deep polarization that characterized the 2020 election extends to the new Biden administration and to the major policy issues being debated.

A majority of registered voters polled approve of the job President Biden is doing and support his positions, but the chasm between Democrats and Republicans on virtually every issue is deep.

Overall, 53% approved of President Biden's job performance, while 38% disapproved and 9% were unsure. Another 53% thought the country is going in the right direction, with 39% saying it's going in the wrong direction.

One in four Republicans (25%) supported the COVID-19 relief bill compared to most Democrats (93%) favoring it.

But a question asking voters to rate the amount of aid provided showed rare bipartisan agreement. Half the voters of both parties and independents thought the amount of relief provided was not enough. Overall, 29% said the aid level was the right amount and 12% said too much was provided. The federal government is sending $1,400 checks to a majority of Americans after providing $600 payments in December.

While there was bipartisan support for more aid, respondents did not always agree on how that aid should be allocated.  Respondents from both major parties called for greater direct stimulus payments and more small business relief. More Republicans than Democrats wanted at least some foreign aid to be redirected to Americans. More Democrats than Republicans supported extended unemployment benefits.

According to the poll conducted for the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University, majorities felt somewhat or very confident that Biden can ease the coronavirus pandemic (76%), improve the economy (62%), increase health care access (68%) and unify the country (56%). Sixty percent supported the recent coronavirus relief package and 63% supported raising the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour.

However, the poll results differed dramatically on most issues according to party identification. Democrats, who make up the largest voter bloc in New Jersey at 39%, overwhelmingly supported Biden (91% approval), while few Republicans did (12%).

"The polarization we saw on presidential candidates in the 2020 election extends not only into the new presidency but to the major issues of the day," said John Froonjian, executive director of the Hughes Center.

Partisan differences on specific issues included the following.

|  | Democrats | Republicans | Independents/other |
|---|---|---|---|
| Approve of Biden job performance | 91% | 12% | 42% |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Confidence in ability to ease pandemic | 99% | 47% | 72% |
| Confidence in ability to improve the economy | 94% | 17% | 56% |
| Support COVID relief bill | 93% | 25% | 49% |
| Support $15/hour minimum wage | 88% | 32% | 59% |
| Confident Biden can improve health care access | 92% | 37% | 63% |
| Confident in ability to unify the country | 85% | 19% | 49% |
| Approve of direction Biden is taking on policy | 94% | 10% | 48% |
| Agree '20 presidential election was fair and free | 97% | 20% | 57% |

The closest the two major parties came to agreement on the major policy questions was on trusting Biden's ability to ease the coronavirus pandemic – and they were 52 percentage points apart on that issue (99% Democrats to 47% Republicans). On most major issues polled, voters in the two parties ended up between 60 and 80 percentage points apart, with independents charting a middle ground between the two. Asked whether they approve of the direction Biden is taking on policy, the major parties were 84 points apart.

"Forget about being on the same page. They're not even in the same book," Froonjian said. "Joe Biden campaigned on a pledge to unify the country. He's got his work cut out for him."

**Murphy job approval**

Regarding New Jersey state politics, 58% approved of Gov. Phil Murphy's job performance either somewhat or strongly, with 36% disapproving. The job approval rating was the highest Murphy has received in the three years the Stockton Poll has asked that question, said Alyssa Maurice, Hughes Center research associate.

However, just under half (49%) said the state of New Jersey is going in the right direction. That was still higher than the 40% who said "wrong direction," with 10% unsure. Racial and ethnic minorities, women, Democrats and lower income residents – all part of Murphy's voting base – were more bullish on the state's direction. Men, wealthier residents, Whites and Republicans were more likely to say the state is going in the wrong direction.

In other poll results:

- 52% of voters disapprove of the job Congress is doing and 40% approve, with 8% are unsure

- Easing the pandemic was identified as the top issue for the federal government to address, followed by immigration

- And a majority supported expanding vote by mail and early voting (58%) while 40% opposed such measures. On March 30 Murphy signed early voting in New Jersey into law.

To view full poll results, click here (https://stockton.edu/hughes-center/polling/polling-results-2021.html).

## Methodology

The poll of New Jersey registered voters was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy March 11-22, 2021. Live interviewers who are mostly Stockton University students called cell phones and landlines from the Stockton University campus. Overall, 90 percent of interviews were conducted on cell phones and 10 percent on landline phones. A total of 647 New Jersey adults who were screened as registered voters were interviewed. Both cell and landline samples consisted 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, ethnicity, education level, sex, and region. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.8 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 (http://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 (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUZ2StL36unDd0jyfOaFkNg), and can be followed on Facebook @StocktonHughesCenter (https://www.facebook.com/StocktonHughesCenter), Twitter @hughescenter (https://twitter.com/HughesCenter) and Instagram @ stockton_hughes_center (https://www.instagram.com/stockton_hughes_center/).