



## Newsletter - Spring 2021

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The promise of renewal that comes with spring has never been more welcome. One year ago, the Hughes Center canceled events because the COVID-19 threat was too deadly to gather in person. Stockton University moved most classes online. We Zoomed into a presidential election like no other – and watched in horror on January 6 as domestic terrorists refused to accept the result.

So as millions in New Jersey get vaccinated, we dare to hope normalcy is around the corner. For the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy, normalcy would mean in-person debates, bringing legislators into Stockton classrooms, filling our polling call center with student interviewers and joining a panel discussion where people actually sit on a panel.

Mixed with hope is gratitude for our staff and supporters who have come through this awful year whole. Their support has allowed us to adapt and experience successes.

- Our candidate debates reached record numbers of voters.
- Researcher Alyssa Maurice is putting out quality polls attracting statewide attention.
- The Hughes Center expanded our work with students through internships and civic engagement activities.

We were reminded of our work's inspiration when we debuted “The Life and Legacy of William J. Hughes” film on YouTube Live on March 10. The film documentary captured Ambassador Hughes’ commitment to democracy, bipartisanship and to South Jersey. It also raised significant funding that helps the Hughes Center to continue to engage. As we emerge from the pandemic, our commitment to continue the legacy of Ambassador Hughes is renewed.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Froomjian, Executive Director

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**In this issue:**



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The full film, which was produced by Glasstown Productions of Millville, can be viewed [here](#).

## The latest Hughes Center poll results regarding President Biden's performance and the COVID vaccine

In a poll conducted by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy in March, New Jersey residents indicated stark differences in opinion that closely followed party lines. The poll focused mainly on President Biden's performance and his handling of the various issues relating to the COVID-19 outbreak.



Democrats consistently showed strong support, while Republicans almost universally were critical. Regarding Biden's job

performance, 91% of Democrats approved, and only 12% of Republicans approved.

- 97% of Democrats thought the 2020 presidential election was fair and free, whereas only 20% of Republicans felt so.
- 93% of Democrats supported the COVID-19 relief bill, compared to only 25% of Republicans.
- 85% of Democrats were confident in Biden's ability to unify the country, compared to 19% of Republicans.

When asked about the amount of government aid provided in the government COVID-19 relief packages, about half of both Democrats and Republicans thought it was not enough.

In New Jersey 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.

In another poll conducted by the Hughes Center this spring, New Jersey residents were questioned about their attitudes toward the coronavirus vaccine. A majority of racial and ethnic minorities and lower-income New Jersey residents said they want a COVID-19 vaccine, but reported getting vaccinated at half the rates of white and wealthier residents. As an example of this inequality, 16% of Black respondents had received a vaccine dose compared to 30% of Whites, and only 14% of Hispanic respondents got their first dose compared to 27% of non-Hispanics of any race. There was further inequality in vaccine administration when considering income: only 15% of respondents with a household income of less than \$50,000 had gotten their first dose, while 37% of those making more than \$100,000 in household income had been vaccinated.

"These findings reflect inequity in how the virus and the vaccination process are affecting people of color and lower-income populations in New Jersey," said John Froomjian, executive director of the Hughes Center. "Black, Hispanic and lower-income residents are just as worried about COVID-19 and are as eager to be vaccinated as the rest of the population. But they are waiting longer to get access to the vaccine, and more of them are getting sick," he said.

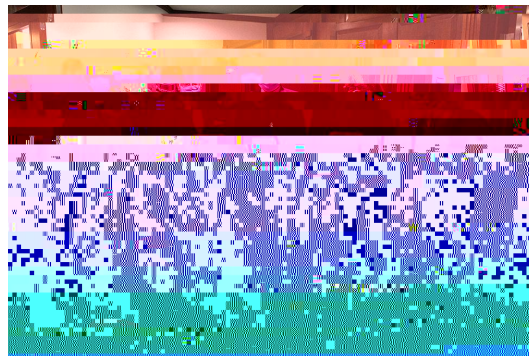
There was also a significant number of respondents who expressed hesitancy about the vaccine: 34% had fears about safety or side effects, 13% thought the vaccine was rushed, and 12% wanted to see how others are affected first. A majority of Republicans (52%) said they are not likely to get the vaccine, while only 15% of Democrats would refrain from

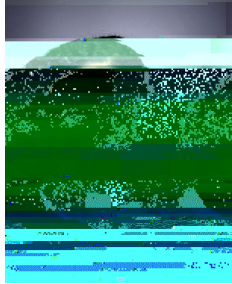
getting it. Republicans are also more likely to engage in behavior labeled as risky by public health officials, such as visiting people in their homes and eating at indoor restaurants.

To learn more about the poll results, visit: <https://stockton.edu/hughes-center/polling/polling-results-2021.html>.

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## Hughes Center Hosts Local Assemblymen as Legislators-in-Residence





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