

Stockton Poll: Murphy, Guadagno Lead in Primary Races for New Jersey Governor

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Galloway, N.J. - Republican Kim Guadagno and Democrat Phil Murphy both lead by double-digit percentages in the primary races to select their parties' nominees for New Jersey governor, according to a Stockton University Poll released today.

-continued from page 1-

Candidate (R)	April 26-May 1*	May 16-23*
Kim Guadagno	29%	37%
Jack Ciattarelli	19%	18%
Steven Rogers	4%	4%
Joseph Rullo	4%	3%
Hirsh Singh	2%	3%
Undecided	41%	31%

Sharon Schulman, executive director of the Hughes Center, theorized that the candidate debates and news coverage of them helped reduce the number of undecided voters. She noted that the Hughes Center committed to conducting two polls in its successful bid to host debates

-Continued from page 2-

Like most of their Republican counterparts, the Democrats other than Murphy remain largely unknown. Murphy is seen favorably by 45 percent and unfavorably by 8 percent, with 40 percent unfamiliar. Wisniewski's ratings are 26 percent favorable to 10 percent unfavorable, with 58 percent unfamiliar. Johnson's ratings are 22 percent favorable, 7 percent unfavorable and 64 percent unfamiliar. Lesniak's ratings are 18 percent favorable to 13 percent unfavorable with 62 percent unfamiliar. Brennan and Zinna are unfamiliar to 71 percent and 85 percent, respectively.

Schulman said the gubernatorial candidates face the challenge of trying to attract media coverage in the face of major news stories coming out of the Trump administration.

"It's hard to break through when the news from Washington dominates coverage," Schulman said.

Primary elections are typically low-turnout events, making name recognition especially important, added Stockton Polling Institute manager John Froomjian.

Fourteen percent of respondents watched or listened to at least one gubernatorial primary debate, including a televised forum for each party sponsored by NJTV and NJ Spotlight, while 85 percent did not view debates. Among those who saw or heard at least one debate, 24 percent tuned in for the Democrats, 22 percent for the Republicans, and 48 percent for both parties.

Eighty percent saw at least one debate on TV. Twelve percent saw one on Facebook Live and 18 percent on a website. Stockton streamed its debates over both online media. Twenty-one percent listened to at least one debate on radio.

In both Stockton polls, property taxes is seen as the No. 1 state issue by 22.5 percent, and taxes in general is second. State pension funding and education also place high in voter concern in both polls. Also in both polls, three-quarters of respondents say New Jersey is going off on the wrong track, versus less than 20 percent saying it is going in the right direction.

Finally, 63 percent in the pre-debate poll and 66 percent in the post-debate poll say they would consider voting for an independent candidate for governor.

For full poll results, visit: <https://stockton.edu/hughes-center/polling/polling-results-2017.html>.

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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