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Work of Cleaning up after Rowland Scandal Unfinished

88 percent of state says governor needs to work with Legislature to get campaign finance reform passed

Hartford, CT — Clean Elections advocates, angry over a lack of progress on campaign finance reform, said the people of Connecticut expect their leaders to take an aggressive and immediate role in resolving the campaign finance reform impasse.

According to a poll commissioned by Connecticut Common Cause and Connecticut Citizen Action Group, 88 percent of state residents surveyed said that “Governor Rell needs to work with legislators in Hartford to immediately enact Clean Elections in order to prevent future scandals like those of former Governor Rowland’s administration.”

“A year ago, in the midst of an impeachment investigation, John Rowland resigned to avoid accountability for his actions,” said Andy Sauer, executive director of Connecticut Common Cause. “This year, in the midst of an apparent drive to restore the public trust, state leaders appear to have abandoned campaign finance reform. They cannot use campaign finance reform to bolster their image and then walk away from difficult negotiations. The people of Connecticut demand that they finish what they have started.”

Campaign finance reform talks between House and Senate Democrats collapsed more than two weeks ago, shortly before the Legislative session ended. On the last day of session, state leaders pledged to revisit campaign finance reform in a special session, but to date there has been no reported progress on negotiations or when the Legislature will meet to debate campaign finance reform. Only Senate President Pro Tem Don Williams has called for a special session.

“From her first day in office, Gov. Rell said campaign finance reform was a priority,” said Tom Swan, executive director of Connecticut Citizen Action Group. “Now, when campaign finance reform needs her leadership more than ever, she throws it back to the Legislature. She cannot claim to have cleaned up state government if she doesn’t overhaul our corrupt campaign finance system. We need her leadership now. We need her to call a special session immediately to force campaign finance reform negotiations.”

The results of the Connecticut Common Cause and CCAG poll, conducted by Zogby International, indicate that the people of Connecticut are overwhelmingly disappointed with the Legislature’s failure to pass campaign finance reform. Among the polls findings:

A LIFE
ACORN
AFSCME Council 4
American Postal Workers Union,
WestConn Area Local
Capitol Region Council of Churches
Citizens For Economic Opportunity
Citizens For Election Reform
Collaborative Center for Justice
Connecticut AFL-CIO
Connecticut Association of Human
Services
Connecticut Citizen Action Group
Connecticut Coalition for Lesbian,
Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
Connecticut Common Cause
Connecticut Communist Party
Connecticut Conference of the
United Church of Christ
Connecticut Federation of
Educational and Professional
Employees
Connecticut Green Party
Connecticut NOW
Connecticut State Employees
Association
CCD
Connecticut Women’s Education
and Legal Fund
ConnPIRG
CT NASW
Danbury Central Labor Council
Danbury Hospital Professional
Nurses Association, Local 5047
DemocracyWorks
Democracy for CT
Earth Matters
Fairfield County Labor Council
Grassroots Coalition, Inc.
Greater Hartford African American
Alliance
Greater Hartford Labor Council
Hartford Environmental Justice
Network
Healthcare For All
NAACP-CT
Northeast Action
One Connecticut
People’s Action for Clean Energy
SEIU
Sierra Club-CT
Toxic Action Center
United Auto Workers-Region 9A
Veterans for Peace, Chapter 18
Western Connecticut Central Labor
Council
Yale Students for Clean Elections
Youth for Justice

- 83% of the state's voters are disappointed in the Legislature's failure to pass any significant campaign finance reform measures.
- By a margin of two to one, 64% of voters believe that the legislature and the Governor should use a special session to pass Clean Elections reform.
- 58% indicated they would be less likely to vote to elect Governor Rell to another term if, in light of the closeness of the Clean Elections bill, she failed to use her influence with the Legislature to promote its passage.
- 41% say that the failure to pass a Clean Elections bill by Governor Rell, as well as House Speaker Jim Amann and Senate President Pro Tem Don Williams indicates they are not strong leaders.
- 36% say that if a bill is not passed this summer, it will prove that Governor Rell, Speaker Amman, and President Pro Tem Williams are just politicians who cannot be trusted.
- 75% voters say they are less likely to vote for a candidate who failed to support Clean Elections.

"Before state leaders pack up for the summer, they should take a close look at what the people of Connecticut are saying," Swan said. "The numbers don't lie. The people of Connecticut expect their leaders to clean up state government. If they think they can squander a historic and unique opportunity to pass Clean Elections without consequences, they are mistaken. Their voters will hold them accountable."

The poll commissioned by Connecticut Common Cause and CCAG was a statewide telephone survey of likely voters. The target sample was 501 interviews with approximately 14 questions asked, and the samples are randomly drawn by Zogby International. Zogby International is renowned polling firm whose clients include Microsoft Corporation, Cisco Systems, Inc., eToys Inc. and the United States Bureau of the Census.

The Clean Up Connecticut Campaign is a 50-organization coalition dedicated to establishing campaign finance reform in Connecticut. For more information, visit www.cleanupconnecticut.org.

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**Post-session poll of Connecticut Voters about
Campaign Finance Reform
*6/15/05 through 6/16/05***

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I. Methodology and Sample Characteristics

Methodology

Survey Methodology Connecticut Likely Voters: 6/15/05 through 6/16/05

This is a statewide telephone survey of likely voters conducted by Zogby International. The target sample is 501 interviews with approximately 14 questions asked. Samples are randomly drawn from telephone cd's of national listed sample. Zogby International surveys employ sampling strategies in which selection probabilities are proportional to population size within area codes and exchanges. As many as six calls are made to reach a sampled phone number. Cooperation rates are calculated using one of AAPOR's approved methodologies¹ and are comparable to other professional public-opinion surveys conducted using similar sampling strategies.² Weighting by *party, age, race, and gender* is used to adjust for non-response. Margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points.

Zogby International's sampling and weighting procedures also have been validated through its political polling: more than 95% of the firm's polls have come within 1% of actual election-day outcomes.

Sample Characteristics	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Sample size	501	100
Southwest CT	219	44
Other region	282	56
Very likely to vote	404	81
Somewhat likely to vote	97	19
Democrat	185	37
Republican	150	30
Independent/Minor party	163	33
Libertarian	3	1
18-29	78	16
30-49	205	42
50-64	136	28
65+	68	14

¹ See COOP4 (p.38) in *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates of Surveys*. The American Association for Public Opinion Research, (2000).

² *Cooperation Tracking Study: April 2003 Update*, Jane M. Sheppard and Shelly Haas. The Council for Marketing & Opinion Research (CMOR). Cincinnati, Ohio (2003).

Sample Characteristics (continued)

18-24	40	8
25-34	58	12
35-54	231	47
55-69	105	22
70+	52	11
Did not answer age	14	--
Less than high school	8	2
High school graduate	105	21
Some college	117	24
College graduate+	268	54
Did not answer education	3	--
White	417	85
Hispanic	34	7
African American	29	6
Asian/Pacific	5	1
Other/mixed	5	1
Did not answer race	11	--
Less than \$15,000	33	9
\$15,000-\$24,999	32	8
\$25,000-\$34,999	55	14
\$35,000-\$49,999	44	11
\$50,000-\$74,999	71	18
\$75,000 or more	152	39
Did not answer income	114	--
Male	241	48
Female	260	52

* Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100.

II. Executive Summary

The impact from disgraced former Governor John Rowland's resignation is clear in the expectations of Connecticut's voters. Two-thirds of Connecticut voters demand the June 23rd special session of the Connecticut Legislature focus its efforts on passage of a compromise Clean Elections bill that would prevent such a scandal from recurring.

The two-in-three Connecticut voters who are calling for the special session to address the Clean Elections bill are not surprising in light of the fact that 83% of the state's voters are disappointed in the Legislature's failure to pass any significant campaign finance reform measures.

The popularity of the Clean Elections bill stems from the public's repudiation of the corruption of the Rowland Administration. At nearly universal levels (88%), voters indicate that they believe Governor Rell must work with legislators to enact the bill so that future scandals like those of previous administration might be prevented—and these high levels of support hold across all party lines.

The June 23rd session will be held just a week prior to the first anniversary of Rowland's 2004 resignation—and the one-year mark of Governor Rell's tenure in office. And Rell's popularity seems tied very much to her ability to deliver on Clean Elections-style campaign reform. Three-in-five Connecticut voters (58%) indicate they would be less likely to vote to elect Governor Rell to another term if, in light of the closeness of the Clean Elections bill, she failed to use her influence with the Legislature to promote its passage—and as Zogby International's previous poll for Common Cause indicated, much of Governor Rell's current popularity is derived from a perception of her as honest and ethical. In fact, failing to work to promote the bill's passage would likely hurt Governor Rell even among her fellow Republicans, with 52% saying they would be less likely to vote for her under those circumstances.

In fact, the failure to act has already taken a toll, as is evidenced by the fact that a strong plurality (41%) say that the failure to pass a Clean Elections bill by Governor Rell, as well as House Speaker Jim Amann and Senate President Pro Tem Don Williams indicates they are not strong leaders—while an additional one-in-three (36%) say that if a bill is not passed this summer, it will prove that Governor Rell, Speaker Amman, and President Pro Tem Williams are just politicians who cannot be trusted.

High as the stakes clearly are for Governor Rell, the stakes for Speaker Amman, President Pro Tem Williams, and their fellow legislators may be even higher: three-in-four voters say they are less likely to vote for a candidate who failed to support Clean Elections and campaign finance reform.

The resignation of Governor Rowland clearly looms large over the special session. With these levels of public support for key election reforms, political leaders would do well to consider the strength of pro-reform forces in the state.

III. Narrative Analysis

4. *With the corruption scandal of convicted former Governor Rowland hanging over Connecticut government, the legislature and governor promised to pass significant campaign finance reform measures and ethics reform in this session. However, the session ended on June 8 with neither reform enacted. Which of the following describes your reaction:*

Very disappointed	36%
Somewhat disappointed	47
Not disappointed	14
Not sure	3

More than four in five (83%) respondents express some disappointment that the current legislative session has ended without passage of campaign finance or ethics reform; one in three (36%) are *very* disappointed. Just 14% say they are not disappointed.

The vast majority in each sub-group expressed some level of disappointment. Nearly half of voters 50 and older say they are *very* disappointed that such reforms have not been enacted.

Women (88%) are more likely than men (77%) to express disappointment

5. *Last week, just before the legislative session ended, the Connecticut Senate and House did pass very similar bills that would greatly restrict the influence of corporate and industry lobbyists in Hartford. Each bill included voluntary public financing of elections, sometimes called Clean Elections, and sweeping campaign finance reforms. But time ran out and they failed to reach a compromise between the bills. Now a special session has been called for June 23rd-24th. On the agenda are an energy bill and a bond package, both loaded with giveaways that benefit corporate and industry lobbyists. Do you agree or disagree that the legislature and governor should use the special session to pass Clean Elections before taking up the other bills?*

Agree	64%
Disagree	27
Not sure	10

By more than two to one (64% to 27%), voters agree that the legislature and governor should use the special session to pass the Clean Elections reforms before they consider other bills. One in ten are not sure.

Voters living in southwestern Connecticut (59%) are less likely than those living in other parts of the state (68%) to agree that a special session should address campaign and ethics reform before other issues. Both Democrats (69%) and Republicans (65%) agree at a higher rate than do independent voters (58%).

Most likely to agree among the age groups that a special session should address campaign and ethics reform before other bills are 70% of 50 to 64 year olds. Voters at either end of the age spectrum are the least likely to agree.

Men (69%) are more likely than women (60%) to agree, while women (12%) are twice as likely as men (6%) to be not sure.

6. Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: Governor Rell needs to work with legislators in Hartford to immediately enact Clean Elections in order to prevent future scandals like those of former Governor Rowland’s administration.

Strongly agree	64%		
Somewhat agree	24	Agree	88%
Somewhat disagree	4		
Strongly disagree	5	Disagree	9
Not sure	2		

Nearly nine in ten Connecticut voters agree that the governor should work with the legislature to immediately enact Clean Elections, while just 9% disagree. Sixty-four percent *strongly* agree.

The vast majority in every sub-group agrees. Women (92%) are more likely to agree than are men (84%).

7. If the legislature was close to agreement on a strong campaign finance package including Clean Elections and campaign contribution limits and Governor Rell didn’t use her power to get them to pass it, would you be much more likely, more likely, less likely, or much less likely to vote for Rell in a re-election?

Much more likely	13%		
More likely	16	More	29%
Less likely	38		
Much less likely	20	Less	58
Not sure	14		

Nearly three in five (58%) respondents say they would be less likely to vote for Governor Rell if the legislature is close to agreement on a strong campaign finance package—including one in five (20%) who would be much less likely to vote for her—should she fail to support passage of such a package. More than one in four (29%) say they would be more likely to vote for her under such circumstances.

Responses across sub-groups generally reflect responses overall with the majority in each group saying they would be less likely to vote for Governor Rell for reelection if she did not use her power to get the legislature to enact such reforms. More than half (52%) of Republicans say they would be less likely to support her under such

circumstances. The younger the respondent, the more likely he or she is to say they would be less likely to vote for Rell in a reelection bid if she did not use her influence to get such legislation passed, while as age increases, so to does the level of those who are not sure.

8. How likely are you to vote for a state legislative candidate who did not support both of these reforms – Clean Elections and campaign contribution limits – much more likely, more likely, less likely, or much less likely?

Much more likely	9%		
More likely	7	More	16%
Less likely	40		
Much less likely	35	Less	75
Not sure	10		

Three in four (75%) say they would be less likely to support a state legislative candidate who did not support both Clean Elections and campaign contribution limits. About one in six say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who did not support such measures.

Again, the majority in each sub-group say they would be less likely to support a legislative candidate who did not support both reforms. This is especially true of voters living in other parts of the state except the southwest (77%), voters under 50, and women.

9. The Speaker of the House, Jim Amann, the President pro tem of the Senate, Don Williams, and Governor Jodi Rell all said that their top priorities for this session were to pass substantial campaign finance reform measures and ethics reform. By the end of the session, they had passed neither. Which one of the following three statements do you agree with most strongly?

Table 1.

	%
B: Their efforts to pass a Clean Elections law may have been sincere but their ability to follow through was weak. I think this shows that Amann, Williams, and Rell are not strong leaders.	41
A: Talk is cheap and anyone can make empty promises. This is why people are cynical about politicians. If a Clean Elections bill isn't passed by mid-summer, voters will conclude that Amann, Williams, and Rell are politicians who can't be trusted.	36
C: Because I don't support Clean Elections and ethics reform, I am glad that Amann, Williams, and Rell's efforts failed.	7
Not sure	16

By a narrow margin, voters are more inclined to believe that Amann, Williams, and Rell are not strong leaders (41%) versus leaders who cannot be trusted (36%). Just

7% do not like Clean Elections and ethics reform and are glad the efforts failed. Sixteen percent are not sure where they stand.

Voters in the southwest are closely divided between statements A (weak leadership) and B (untrustworthy) with 37% and 38%, respectively, choosing that statement. More than half (55%) of those under 30 choose statement A, while a plurality (by a narrow margin) of all the other age brackets choose statement B. Least likely to say Amann, Williams, and Rell are weak leaders and most likely to say they are untrustworthy are voters between the ages of 30 and 49.

Interestingly, men are just slightly more likely to say that this group of elected officials are weak leaders (38%) than untrustworthy (35%), while women are noticeably more likely to say these officials are more untrustworthy (46%) than weak (34%).

Appendix – Script

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm doing a poll of Connecticut voters for Zogby International. May I ask you some questions? (Do you have a few minutes?)

1. Are you registered to vote in Connecticut?

1. Yes 2. No **(End)** 3. Not sure **(Do not read) (End)**

2. How likely are you to vote in statewide elections?

1. Very likely 2. Somewhat likely 3. Not likely **(End)** 4. Not sure **(Do not read) (End)**

3. In which party are you either registered to vote or do you consider yourself to be a member of – Democratic, Republican, Independent/Minor party, or Libertarian?

1. Democratic 2. Republican 3. Independent/Minor 4. Libertarian 5. Not sure **(Do not read) (End)**

4. With the corruption scandal of convicted former Governor Rowland hanging over Connecticut government, the legislature and governor promised to pass significant campaign finance reform measures and ethics reform in this session. However, the session ended on June 8 with neither reform enacted. Which of the following describes your reaction:

1. Very disappointed 2. Somewhat disappointed 3. Not disappointed 4. Not sure **(Do not read)**

5. Last week, just before the legislative session ended, the Connecticut Senate and House did pass very similar bills that would greatly restrict the influence of corporate and industry lobbyists in Hartford. Each bill included voluntary public financing of elections, sometimes called Clean Elections, and sweeping campaign finance reforms. But time ran out and they failed to reach a compromise between the bills. Now a special session has been called for June 23rd-24th. On the agenda are an energy bill and a bond package, both loaded with giveaways that benefit corporate and industry lobbyists. Do you agree or disagree that the legislature and governor should use the special session to pass Clean Elections before taking up the other bills?

1. Agree 2. Disagree 3. Not sure **(Do not read)**

6. Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: Governor Rell needs to work with legislators in Hartford to immediately enact Clean Elections in order to prevent future scandals like those of former Governor Rowland's administration.

1. Strongly agree 2. Somewhat agree 3. Somewhat disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Not sure **(Do not read)**

7. If the legislature was close to agreement on a strong campaign finance package including Clean Elections and campaign contribution limits and Governor Rell didn't use her power to get them to pass it, would you be much more likely, more likely, less likely, or much less likely to vote for Rell in a re-election?

1. Much more likely 2. More likely 3. Less likely 4. Much less likely 5. Not sure **(Do not read)**

8. How likely are you to vote for a state legislative candidate who did not support both of these reforms – Clean Elections and campaign contribution limits – much more likely, more likely, less likely, or much less likely?

1. Much more likely 2. More likely 3. Less likely 4. Much less likely 5. Not sure **(Do not read)**

9. The Speaker of the House, Jim Amann, the President pro tem of the Senate, Don Williams, and Governor Jodi Rell all said that their top priorities for this session were to pass substantial campaign finance reform measures and ethics reform. By the end of the session, they had passed neither. Which one of the following three statements do you agree with most strongly? **(rotate)**

Statement A: Talk is cheap and anyone can make empty promises. This is why people are cynical about politicians. If a Clean Elections bill isn't passed by mid-summer, voters will conclude that Amann, Williams, and Rell are politicians who can't be trusted.

Statement B: Their efforts to pass a Clean Elections law may have been sincere but their ability to follow through was weak. I think this shows that Amann, Williams, and Rell are not strong leaders.

Statement C: Because I don't support Clean Elections and ethics reform, I am glad that Amann, Williams, and Rell's efforts failed.

1. Statement A 2. Statement B 3. Statement C 4. Not sure **(Do not read)**

Thanks. We're done. I just need some statistics.

701. What is your age? _____

903. Which of the following best describes your highest educational level?

1. Less than h.s. graduate 2. H.S. graduate 3. Some college 4. College graduate 0. Refuse **(Do not read)**

904. Which of the following best represents your race or ethnic group?

1. White, non-Hispanic
2. Hispanic
3. African American
4. Asian/Pacific
5. Other/mixed
0. Refuse **(Do not read)**

921. Which of the following best represents your household income last year before taxes?

1. Less than \$15,000
2. \$15,000-24,999
3. \$25,000-34,999
4. \$35,000-49,999
5. \$50,000-74,999
6. \$75,000 or more
0. Refuse **(Do not read)**

922. Gender (**Do not ask, simply record.**)

1. Male
2. Female

Thank you for taking time to complete the survey.