

# The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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## RELEASE INFORMATION

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in Sunday's *Star-Ledger*. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*."

## THE MOOD OF THE NEW JERSEY ELECTORATE

In this release the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll* includes a classification of likely voters that is based on how firmly they support a candidate. A firm voter is one who selects a candidate and says they are "very sure" about their choice and will not change their mind before the election. "Not firm" voters are those who select a candidate and say they might change their mind or who are initially undecided. Traditionally election studies have grouped voters who "lean" toward a candidate with those who are "undecided." Voters who are "firm" in their choice of candidate or those who say they "might change" have been allocated to a specific candidate. A 1993 Eagleton post-election study showed that this traditional classification underrepresents the larger group of voters who might change their minds prior to or even on Election Day.

Candidates running for election in New Jersey are dealing with voters who are cynical about campaign promises and angry about the way government works. Nine-in-ten likely voters agree that many political candidates make promises that they do not keep, and 7-in-10 say that they often get angry about actions government takes. Looking specifically at this election, half of New Jersey voters feel that the Senatorial candidates are addressing the issues that concern them, 4-in-10 say that the Democrats have controlled Congress long enough and it's time to vote in the Republicans, and 1-in-3 would vote for a candidate they don't know much about if they are dissatisfied with an incumbent.

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The *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll conducted by telephone between October 16 and 20 with 586 likely voters also found that 38 percent of the voters are very interested in the Senate election, and more voters are satisfied than dissatisfied with the candidates running for the U.S. Senate. In addition, about half of these voters say that things in New Jersey are going in the right direction.

"The negative undercurrent of voter discontent may impact turnout as well as candidate choice," commented Janice Ballou. "On the one hand, voters who are dissatisfied may be more motivated to vote to change things and reject the incumbents. On the other hand, they may just give up on politics and decide to stay home."

### ***ATTITUDES TOWARD GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS***

While New Jersey voters have a range of negative feelings about politics, they are most skeptical about campaign promises. Ninety-one percent of the voters strongly (78%) or mildly (13%) agree that "many political candidates make promises that they do not keep." Voters who are firm for Haytaian (95%) are more likely to agree with this statement than those who are firm for Lautenberg (86%). In addition, 91 percent of the voters who are not yet firm for a candidate also agree with this statement.

A solid majority of voters are also generally annoyed with government. Seventy-three percent agree strongly (54%) or mildly (19%) that "I often get angry about actions government takes." Voters who are firm for Haytaian (84%) and those who are not yet firm for a candidate (73%) are more likely to agree with this statement than those who are firm for Lautenberg (64%).

While half of the voters strongly (19%) or mildly (32%) agree that "the candidates in this Senatorial campaign are addressing the issues and concerns most important to me," 33 percent mildly (21%) or strongly (12%) disagree. A majority of voters who are firm for Haytaian (64%) and those who are firm for Lautenberg (53%) agree with this statement. Fewer voters who are not yet firm for a candidate (42%) feel the candidates are addressing issues that concern them.

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Voters who say they are very interested in the election are also more likely than those who are somewhat interested to agree that the Senate candidates are speaking about issues that concern them by a margin of 60 to 45 percent. There is a similar difference between voters who say they will definitely vote (55%) and those who say they will probably vote (41%).

The issue of partisan change in the Congress is supported strongly (28%) or mildly (13%) by 41 percent of the state's voters. As might be expected, Republicans (85%) are more likely than Democrats (11%) to agree that "The Democrats have controlled Congress long enough; it's time to vote in a Republican." Thirty-five percent of the voters who consider themselves to be independents strongly (20%) or mildly (15%) agree with this statement. Firm Haytaian supporters (82%) are more likely than firm Lautenberg supporters (13%) or those who are not firm for either candidate (37%) to agree with this statement.

Knowledge of a candidate may not be necessary for voters to select him or her as a candidate. Thirty-three percent of the voters say they strongly (16%) or mildly (17%) agree that "If I am dissatisfied with who is in office, I would vote for a candidate I don't know much about." Voters who are firm for Haytaian (41%) are more likely to agree that they would vote for a lesser known candidate than those who are firm for Lautenberg (29%). Thirty-three percent of the voters who are not yet firm for a candidate agree with this statement.

### ***INTEREST IN THE ELECTION***

At this time, 38 percent of New Jersey voters say they are very interested in the election compared to 57 percent who are somewhat interested and 4 percent who are not at all interested.

Voters who are firm in their choice of Haytaian (55%) are more likely than those who are firm for Lautenberg (44%) to say that they are very interested in this election. Fewer voters who have not yet made a firm choice for a candidate (24%) say they are very interested in this election. In comparison, at this time last year, 57 percent of the voters said they were very interested in the Florio/Whitman election.

***SATISFACTION WITH THE CANDIDATES***

Overall 67 percent of the voters are very (11%) or somewhat (56%) satisfied with the candidates who are running for the U.S. Senate this year, compared to 21 percent who are very (5%) or somewhat (16%) dissatisfied. Voters who are firm for Haytaian (76%) and those who are firm for Lautenberg (73%) are more likely to say that they are satisfied with the candidates than voters who are not firm about their candidate choice for U.S. Senate (57%).

***DIRECTION OF THE STATE***

About half (49%) of New Jersey voters say that the state is going in the right direction compared to 39 percent who say things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track. Haytaian supporters (55%) are more likely than those who are firm for Lautenberg (50%) to feel things are going in the right direction. Voters who are not firm for either one of the candidates (45%) are somewhat less likely to say thing are going in the right direction.

## BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP50-3 (EP100-3), SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1994

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll was conducted between October 16 and 20, 1994, when a random sample of 801 New Jerseyans, 18 years and older, was interviewed by telephone. Percentages based on this sample size are subject to a sampling error of about  $\pm 3.5$  percent at a 95 percent confidence interval.

Percentages in this release are based on those considered most likely to actually vote in the November election. This subset, identified as **LIKELY VOTERS** in this background memo, contains 586 respondents. The sampling error for this subset is about  $\pm 4.0$  percent. Unless otherwise indicated all percentages refer to this group of voters. Likely voters are people who say that they are registered to vote and will "definitely" or "probably" vote on Election Day.

Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from that population. Sampling error does not take into account other possible sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The questions and figures referred to in this release are presented below. The location of each question on the actual questionnaire is in brackets.

"How interested are you in this election — very interested, somewhat interested, or not at all interested? [Q.5]

	Very <u>Interested</u>	Somewhat <u>Interested</u>	Not At All <u>Interested</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1994 - Likely Voters</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(586)</b>
<u>Vote Choice - Traditional</u>						
--Haytaian	46	51	2	2	101	(200)
--Undecided	30	64	5	1	100	(97)
--Lautenberg	35	59	5	1	100	(279)
<u>New Vote Choice</u>						
--Firm Haytaian	55	42	2	1	100	(144)
--Not Firm	24	70	5	1	100	(255)
--Firm Lautenberg	44	52	4	1	101	(177)
<b><u>PAST SURVEYS</u></b>						
September, 1994 - Likely Voters	37	57	5	2	101	(598)
October, 1994 - Likely Voters	57	28	12	2	99	(601)

"Generally speaking, would you say things in New Jersey are gong in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?" [Q.2]

	Right <u>Direction</u>	Wrong <u>Track</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1994</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(586)</b>
<u>Vote Choice - Traditional</u>					
--Haytaian	52	40	9	101	(200)
--Undecided	45	40	14	99	(97)
--Lautenberg	48	38	14	100	(279)
<u>New Vote Choice</u>					
--Firm Haytaian	55	36	9	100	(144)
--Not Firm	45	41	14	100	(255)
--Firm Lautenberg	50	37	13	100	(177)

"Overall, how satisfied are you with the candidates running for the U.S. Senate this year -- very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?" [Q.16]

	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1994 - Likely Voters</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(586)</b>
<i><u>New Vote Choice</u></i>							
--Firm Haytaian	16	60	13	6	6	101	(144)
--Not Firm	4	53	21	4	18	100	(255)
--Firm Lautenberg	16	57	12	4	10	99	(177)
<i><u>Vote Choice - Traditional</u></i>							
--Haytaian	12	55	19	6	9	101	(200)
--Undecided	3	48	15	8	25	99	(97)
--Lautenberg	13	59	14	3	11	100	(279)
<i><u>Party ID</u></i>							
--Democrat	14	56	14	5	11	100	(183)
--Independent	6	53	22	5	13	99	(219)
--Republican	13	59	12	4	12	100	(168)

"People have lots of different opinions about our government. I am going to read you a series of statements. For each one, please tell me whether you agree or disagree." [Q.32]

*"The Democrats have controlled Congress long enough, it's time to vote in the Republicans."*

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1994</b>							
<b>Total</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<b>Likely Voters</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>(586)</b>
<i><u>Party ID</u></i>							
--Democrats	6	5	21	62	5	100	(183)
--Independents	20	15	29	25	11	100	(219)
--Republicans	66	19	9	3	3	101	(168)
<i><u>Vote Choice - Traditional</u></i>							
--Haytaian	63	17	12	7	3	102	(200)
--Undecided	21	12	27	22	19	101	(97)
--Lautenberg	7	9	25	51	8	104	(279)
<i><u>New Vote Choice</u></i>							
--Firm Haytaian	69	13	11	5	2	100	(144)
--Not Firm	22	15	25	25	12	99	(255)
--Firm Lautenberg	6	7	22	59	6	100	(177)
<i><u>Interest in the Election</u></i>							
--Very interested	37	8	15	34	6	100	(222)
--Somewhat interested	23	16	25	27	9	100	(335)
<i><u>Vote Probability</u></i>							
--Definitely will vote	33	11	19	31	7	101	(400)
--Probably will vote	20	16	25	31	9	101	(186)

*"The candidates in this Senatorial campaign are addressing the issues and concerns most important to me."*

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<i>Issues</i>							
<b>October, 1994</b>							
<b>Total</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<b>Likely Voters</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>(586)</b>
<i>Vote Choice - Traditional</i>							
--Haytaian	22	38	20	9	12	101	(200)
--Undecided	10	27	21	12	30	100	(97)
--Lautenberg	20	30	21	14	15	100	(279)
<i>New Vote Choice</i>							
--Firm Haytaian	24	40	19	9	8	100	(144)
--Not Firm	15	27	22	12	24	100	(255)
--Firm Lautenberg	20	33	19	14	13	99	(177)
<i>Interest in the Election</i>							
--Very interested	25	35	18	13	10	101	(222)
--Somewhat interested	15	30	24	11	19	99	(335)
<i>Vote Probability</i>							
--Definitely will vote	21	34	20	12	13	100	(400)
--Probably will vote	13	28	23	13	24	101	(186)
<i>"I often get angry about actions government takes."</i>							
<i>Actions</i>							
<b>October, 1994</b>							
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<b>Likely Voters</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>(586)</b>
<i>Vote Choice - Traditional</i>							
--Haytaian	67	17	12	2	2	100	(200)
--Undecided	47	20	19	11	3	100	(97)
--Lautenberg	47	21	22	7	4	101	(279)
<i>New Vote Choice</i>							
--Firm Haytaian	71	13	13	1	2	100	(144)
--Not Firm	52	21	19	7	2	101	(255)
--Firm Lautenberg	42	22	21	8	6	99	(177)
<i>Interest in the Election</i>							
--Very interested	60	14	15	6	5	100	(222)
--Somewhat interested	52	21	20	5	2	100	(335)
<i>Vote Probability</i>							
--Definitely will vote	56	16	18	6	4	100	(400)
--Probably will vote	49	26	17	7	1	100	(186)



*"Many political candidates make promises that they do not keep."*

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1994</b>							
<b>Total</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<b>Likely Voters</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>(586)</b>
<u>Vote Choice - Traditional</u>							
--Haytaian	85	12	3	1	1	102	(200)
--Undecided	81	5	8	4	1	99	(97)
--Lautenberg	71	18	5	4	3	101	(279)
<u>New Vote Choice</u>							
--Firm Haytaian	83	12	4	--	1	99	(144)
--Not Firm	81	10	4	3	2	100	(255)
--Firm Lautenberg	67	19	7	4	3	100	(177)
<i>"If I am dissatisfied with who is in office, I would vote for a candidate I don't know much about."</i>							
<b>October, 1994</b>							
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<b>Likely Voters</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>(586)</b>
<u>Vote Choice - Traditional</u>							
--Haytaian	20	24	21	31	5	101	(200)
--Undecided	15	13	15	52	4	99	(97)
--Lautenberg	13	15	19	50	4	101	(279)
<u>New Vote Choice</u>							
--Firm Haytaian	19	22	22	32	6	101	(144)
--Not Firm	16	17	17	47	3	100	(255)
--Firm Lautenberg	14	15	19	47	5	100	(177)
<u>Interest in the Election</u>							
--Very interested	14	15	17	50	5	101	(222)
--Somewhat interested	18	19	20	40	3	100	(335)
<u>Vote Probability</u>							
--Definitely will vote	15	17	18	45	5	100	(400)
--Probably will vote	18	18	20	40	3	99	(186)