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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*."

WHITMAN AND CLINTON RATINGS GOING IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS

CHANGING ATTITUDES ABOUT THE 30% CUT IN STATE INCOME TAX RATES

Governor Christie Whitman's job performance rating continues to steadily improve with 56 percent giving her positive ratings. In contrast, President Bill Clinton's roller-coaster ratings in New Jersey are on a decline with 1-in-3 residents describing his job performance as excellent or good.

New Jerseyans don't support either Whitman or Clinton for national office. Six-in-ten New Jersey residents feel Whitman is obligated to serve out her full term as Governor even if she is given the opportunity to run for national office. And, although President Clinton won New Jersey in the 1992 Presidential Election, 6-in-10 residents would like to see a change in the oval office in 1996.

The telephone survey, conducted with 801 New Jerseyans from February 24 to March 1, 1995, found that while 6-in-10 residents say that cutting the state income tax rates by 30 percent may lead to increased property taxes, there has been some increase in support for the tax cut, even if higher property taxes may be the consequence. Although there has been a full year of discussion about Governor Whitman's 30 percent state income tax cut, 4-in-10 New Jersey residents still have not read or heard anything about this plan.

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"The contrast in the ratings of Whitman and Clinton points out the continuing reversal of fortunes for Democrats here in New Jersey," commented Janice Ballou, Poll Director. "As a key state in the 1996 Presidential election, both parties will be interested in seeing if Republicans maintain this positive momentum."

GUBERNATORIAL JOB PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Since she has been elected Governor, Christie Whitman's positive job performance ratings have been on a steady climb. Currently 56 percent of New Jerseyans rate her job as Governor as excellent (13%) or good (43%). This is a 4 percentage point increase from 52 percent in September 1994 and a 19 percentage point increase from a year ago when 37 percent gave her positive ratings after she first took office in February 1994.

As would be expected, more Republicans (77%) than independents (51%) or Democrats (41%) give the Governor positive job performance ratings.

Whitman's job performance ratings on two specific issues are somewhat lower than her overall rating. Forty-five percent give her handling of the problems with the state budget positive ratings of excellent (7%) or good (38%), compared to 47 percent who say it is only fair (32%) or poor (15%). When it comes to rating Whitman on how she has handled state taxes, 41 percent give her excellent (9%) or good (32%) ratings while 54 percent say it is only fair (34%) or poor (20%). Positive impressions of the Governor's management of both of these issues have increased from a year ago when 37 percent gave excellent (7%) or good (30%) ratings for her handling of the state budget, and 37 percent rated her handling of state taxes as excellent (8%) or good (29%).

WHITMAN FOR NATIONAL OFFICE

A majority of New Jerseyans want Christie Whitman to serve out her term as Governor and not run for national office. While 6-in-10 residents say Whitman is obligated to serve out her

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full term as Governor, 30 percent feel she should be free to run for national office such as Vice-President. Democrats (69%) are more likely than Republicans (61%) or independents (59%) to say Whitman should serve her full term as Governor.

In 1987 Governor Tom Kean was also being considered for national office. At that time, 54 percent of New Jerseyans said he should serve out his full term as Governor compared to 39 percent who supported his run for national office.

PRESIDENTIAL JOB PERFORMANCE RATINGS

New Jerseyans have had a range of opinions about Bill Clinton's job performance since he became President. Currently, he is experiencing a decline in his positive ratings. One-in-three state residents give him positive ratings of excellent (4%) or good (28%), and 66 percent rate his job performance as only fair (41%) or poor (25%). This is a 6 percentage point decline from September 1994 when 39 percent gave him positive ratings, and a 19 percentage point decline from a year ago when Clinton enjoyed his highest positive rating in New Jersey (51%) with 12 percent excellent and 39 percent good. Clinton's lowest positive ratings (28%) were in June 1993.

There are strong partisan differences in the positive job performance ratings for the President. While 54 percent of Democrats rate him as excellent or good, 27 percent of independents and 19 percent of Republicans give him this evaluation. Since September, the President's positive ratings have declined the most among independents from 38 percent positive ratings in September 1994 to 27 percent in this poll.

CLINTON FOR PRESIDENT

Bill Clinton is not the choice of most New Jerseyans for President in 1996. While 31 percent say Clinton deserves to be re-elected, 57 percent think it is time for a change. As would be expected, Democrats (58%) are more likely than independents (27%) or Republicans (11%) to say Clinton deserves re-election.

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In 1991 a somewhat similar question was asked about George Bush's re-election in 1992. At that time 48 percent said Bush deserved re-election. Bush had much stronger partisan support than Clinton currently has with 81 percent of Republican's saying he deserved re-election. However, in a presidential race which also included Ross Perot, Bush lost to Clinton in the 1992 presidential election in New Jersey.

STATE INCOME TAX CUT: AWARENESS AND BENEFIT

Although Christie Whitman has been talking about her 30 percent state income tax cut since her campaign for Governor, 39 percent of New Jerseyans report that they have not read or heard anything about this tax cut plan. A year ago 34 percent said they did not know about this tax reduction plan.

Overall, a majority of New Jerseyans (55%) say the 30 percent cut in state income tax rates will benefit them not much (35%) or not at all (20%), compared to 43 percent who see a great deal (9%) or some (34%) benefit. Republicans (48%) are more likely than independents (44%), or Democrats (35%) to feel they will benefit a great deal or some from the state income tax reduction. Also, New Jerseyans who have household incomes over \$70,000 (53%) are more likely than those with smaller household incomes of \$50,001-\$70,000 (47%), \$30,001-\$50,000 (43%), or \$30,000 or less (39%) to say they will benefit from the state income tax reduction.

A year ago, more New Jerseyans (48%) thought they would benefit from the state income tax cut a great deal (7%) or some (41%) while 51 percent said they would benefit not much (34%) or not at all (20%).

STATE INCOME TAX CUT VERSUS PROPERTY TAXES

Compared to a year ago, New Jerseyans are more likely to say the 30 percent state income tax cut may lead to increased property taxes. Since February 1994 there has been an 11 percentage point increase, from 51 to 62 percent, in those who say that the 30 percent state income tax cut may

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lead to increased property taxes. In comparison, the percentage who say it is possible to cut the state income tax rates by 30 percent by eliminating waste in spending has declined from 41 to 29 percent. Democrats (68%) and independents (66%) are more likely than Republicans (51%) to say property taxes may increase because of the state income tax cut.

Even with the risk of a possible property tax increase, support for the 30 percent state income tax has increased by 9 percentage points in the last year. In the current poll 34 percent agree with this statement that, "Even if it means that my town may receive less state aid and might need to raise property taxes to make up the difference, the state income tax rate should be cut by 30 percent." In February 1994, 25 percent supported this statement.

A majority (62%) still disagrees with cutting the state income tax if property taxes might increase. However, this is a 10 percentage point decline from the 72 percent who disagreed with the statement in February 1994. This 10 percentage point shift in opinion goes across all partisan groups.

Fifty-four percent of state residents say that in the past year their local property taxes have gone up a lot (26%) or a little (28%) compared to 31 percent who say they have stayed the same. This is 5 percentage points less than in 1994 when 59 percent said their local property taxes have gone up a lot (29%) or a little (30%).

New Jerseyans are most likely to say it is the local schools (45%) that are most responsible for the increase in local property taxes compared to 21 percent who say state government, 19 percent local government, and 9 percent county government. This represents a 7 percentage point increase from February 1994 when 38 percent said their local schools were most responsible for the property tax increase.

THE MOOD IN NEW JERSEY

Overall, about half of New Jersey residents say things in the state are going in the right direction compared to 38 percent who feel things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track. This opinion about the state has stayed about the same since June 1994. Republicans (62%) are more likely than independents (48%) or Democrats (44%) to be optimistic about the direction of the state.

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BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP52-1 (EP102-1), SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 1995

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll was conducted between February 24 and March 1, 1995, when a random sample of 801 New Jerseyans, 18 years and older, was interviewed by telephone. Figures based on this sample size are subject to a sampling error of about ± 3.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. 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.

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

	<u>Right Direction</u>	<u>Wrong Track</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	51%	38%	11%	100%	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>					
--Democrat	44	43	12	99	(220)
--Independent	48	40	12	100	(323)
--Republican	62	29	9	100	(231)
<i>Age</i>					
--18 - 29	59	33	7	99	(143)
--30 - 49	49	42	10	101	(312)
--50 - 64	46	40	14	100	(182)
--65 and older	51	34	16	101	(143)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>					
September, 1994	49	40	11	100	(801)
June, 1994	50	39	12	101	(801)
June, 1993	40	52	8	100	(800)
April, 1992	33	60	7	100	(799)
June, 1991	37	55	8	100	(800)

"How would you rate the job Christie Whitman is doing as Governor--excellent, good, only fair or poor?" [Q.3]

	Only				Don't		<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Know</u>			
February, 1995	13%	43%	28%	12%	4%	100%	(801)	
<u>Party ID</u>								
--Democrat	7	34	36	18	5	100	(220)	
--Independent	10	41	32	12	5	100	(323)	
--Republican	22	55	14	6	4	101	(231)	
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>								
September, 1994	12	40	33	9	6	100	(801)	
<u>Party ID</u>								
--Democrat	6	40	36	11	7	100	(245)	
--Independent	11	35	36	10	8	100	(323)	
--Republican	24	48	23	3	2	100	(203)	
June, 1994	11	39	29	7	14	100	(801)	
February, 1994	9	28	28	5	31	101	(801)	

"And how would you rate Whitman's handling of problems with the state budget?" [Q.4]

	Only				Don't		<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Know</u>			
February, 1995	7%	38%	32%	15%	8%	100%	(801)	
<u>Party ID</u>								
--Democrat	4	27	38	23	7	99	(220)	
--Independent	5	37	34	16	8	100	(323)	
--Republican	13	48	24	6	8	99	(231)	
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>								
February, 1994	7	30	28	7	29	101	(801)	
<u>Party ID</u>								
--Democrat	2	24	31	12	30	99	(237)	
--Independent	6	29	29	5	31	100	(334)	
--Republican	14	39	23	4	20	100	(197)	

"How would you rate the Governor's handling of state taxes?" [Q.5]

	Only				Don't		<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Know</u>			
February, 1995	9%	32%	34%	20%	5%	100%	(801)	
<u>Party ID</u>								
--Democrat	8	21	35	30	6	100	(220)	
--Independent	4	33	39	19	5	100	(323)	
--Republican	18	40	28	11	4	101	(231)	
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>								
February, 1994	8	29	31	10	22	100	(801)	
<u>Party ID</u>								
--Democrat	3	26	32	14	26	101	(237)	
--Independent	6	26	31	10	26	99	(334)	
--Republican	15	40	29	4	12	100	(197)	

"There has been talk in recent months about Christie Whitman running for national office in 1996 before her term as Governor is over in 1997. Should Whitman feel free to run for national office such as Vice-President in 1996, or do you think she is obligated to serve out her full term as Governor?" [Q.6]

	Consider National <u>Office</u>	Serve Full Term <u>As Governor</u>	<u>Depends</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	30%	62%	3%	5%	100%	(801)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	23	69	2	6	100	(220)
--Independent	33	59	4	3	99	(323)
--Republican	32	61	2	4	99	(231)

PAST SURVEYS

January, 1987* 39 54 2 5 100 (800)

* Question wording in January, 1987 was as follows: "There has been talk in recent months about Tom Kean running for national office in 1988 before his term as Governor is over in 1989. Should Kean feel free to run for a national office such as Vice-President in 1988, or do you think he is obligated to serve out his full term as Governor?"

"How would you rate the job Bill Clinton is doing as President--excellent, good, only fair or poor?" [Q.7]

	Only				Don't	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Know</u>		
February, 1995	4%	28%	41%	25%	1%	99%	(801)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	9	45	36	10	1	101	(220)
--Independent	3	24	48	23	1	99	(323)
--Republican	1	18	37	43	1	100	(231)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
September, 1994	6	33	38	20	2	99	(801)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	10	49	32	6	2	99	(245)
--Independent	5	33	43	18	1	100	(323)
--Republican	4	14	37	42	3	100	(203)
February, 1994	12	39	35	13	1	100	(801)
June, 1993	5	23	45	25	2	100	(801)
February, 1993	15	29	26	18	12	100	(801)

"In 1996 there will be an election for President of the United States. Thinking about the job that Bill Clinton has done as President, do you think he deserves to be re-elected or do you think it's time for a change?" [Q.8]

	Yes-Deserves <u>Re-election</u>	No-Time <u>For A Change</u>	<u>Depends</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	31%	57%	7%	6%	101%	(801)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	58	33	5	4	100	(220)
--Independent	27	55	11	7	100	(323)
--Republican	11	83	3	3	100	(231)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>						
October, 1991*	48	34	10	8	100	(800)
<u>Party ID</u>						

--Democrat	24	53	11	11	99	(225)
--Independent	42	39	11	7	99	(303)
--Republican	81	9	6	4	100	(223)

* Question wording in October, 1991 was as follows: "Thinking back over George Bush's first 1,000 days in office, do you think he deserves to be re-elected for a second term, or not?"

"Governor Whitman says that an important part of her economic plan for the state is cutting the state income tax rates by 30 percent. Have you read or heard anything about the Governor cutting the state income tax? (**IF YES, ASK:** How much have you read or heard -- a lot, some, a little, or nothing at all?)" [Q.22]

	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	20%	22%	18%	39%	1%	100%	(801)

PAST SURVEYS

February, 1994*	21	25	19	34	--	99	(801)
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* Question wording in February, 1994 was as follows: "Governor Whitman says that an important part of her economic plan for the state is to cut the state income tax rates by 30 percent over the next three years, starting with a 5 percent cut this year. Have you read or heard anything about the Governor's plan to cut the state income tax? How much have you read or hear -- a lot, some, a little, or nothing at all?"

"Do you think it is possible to cut state income tax rates by 30 percent by eliminating waste in spending, or do you think this tax cut may lead to increased property taxes?" [Q.23]

	<u>Is Possible</u>	<u>Lead To Increased Property Taxes</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	29%	62%	9%	100%	(801)

Party ID

--Democrat	23	68	9	100	(220)
--Independent	26	66	7	99	(323)
--Republican	40	51	9	100	(231)

PAST SURVEYS

February, 1994	41	51	8	100	(801)
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Party ID

--Democrat	36	57	7	100	(237)
--Independent	41	50	8	99	(334)
--Republican	48	43	8	99	(197)

"Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Even if it means that my town may receive less state aid and might need to raise property taxes to make up the difference, the state income tax rate should be cut by 30 percent. (**PROBE:** Do you (agree/disagree) strongly or mildly?" [Q.24]

	Agree <u>Strongly</u>	Agree <u>Mildly</u>	Disagree <u>Mildly</u>	Disagree <u>Strongly</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	16%	18%	20%	42%	5%	101%	(801)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	15	15	16	49	5	100	(220)
--Independent	17	16	18	44	5	100	(323)
--Republican	17	24	22	32	5	100	(231)
<u>Type of Location</u> ¹							
--Central City	14	16	21	41	7	99	(80)
--Older City and Suburb	17	14	26	37	5	99	(158)
--New Suburb	17	19	17	42	5	100	(446)
--Rural	14	18	18	46	4	100	(117)
<u>Region of State</u> ²							
--North	18	16	21	39	6	100	(381)
--Central	18	20	17	41	4	100	(210)
--South	12	18	18	46	5	99	(210)

PAST SURVEYS

February, 1994*	8	17	21	51	3	100	(801)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	7	15	20	56	2	100	(237)
--Independent	6	15	22	52	4	99	(334)
--Republican	14	20	21	43	2	100	(197)

* Note: Question wording in February, 1994 was as follows: "Do you agree or disagree with this statement: The plan to cut state income taxes by 30 percent should be passed even if it means that my town may receive less state aid and might need to raise property taxes to make up the difference. Do you (agree/disagree) strongly or mildly?"

"How much do you think you will benefit from a 30 percent cut in state income tax rates -- a great deal, some, not much, or not at all?" [Q.25]

	Great <u>Deal</u>	Some <u>Some</u>	Not <u>Much</u>	Not <u>At All</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	9%	34%	35%	20%	3%	101%	(801)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	9	26	40	21	3	99	(220)
--Independent	7	37	34	21	2	101	(323)
--Republican	10	38	32	15	4	99	(231)
<u>Total Household Income</u>							
--\$30,000 or less	7	32	37	20	5	101	(190)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	5	38	37	18	2	100	(210)
--\$50,001 - \$70,000	11	36	35	16	2	100	(127)
--Over \$70,000	18	35	34	12	1	100	(167)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
February, 1994*	7	41	34	17	2	101	(801)

* Note: Question wording in February, 1994 was as follows: "How much do you think you will benefit from the Governor's plan to reduce state income tax rates — a great deal, some, not much, or not at all?"

"In the past year, have your local property taxes gone up, gone down, or stayed about the same? Have they gone (up/down) a lot or just a little? [Q.26A]

	Gone Up <u>A Lot</u>	Gone Up <u>A Little</u>	Stayed <u>Same</u>	Gone Down <u>A Little</u>	Gone Down <u>A Lot</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	26%	28%	31%	3%	1%	12%	101%	(801)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>								
February, 1994	29	30	26	2	--	12	99	(801)

ASKED OF THOSE WHO SAY THEIR PROPERTY TAXES HAVE GONE UP:

"Which of the following do you think is most responsible for the increase in your local property taxes — state government, county government, local government, or the local public schools?" [Q.26B]

	State <u>Government</u>	County <u>Government</u>	Local <u>Government</u>	Local <u>Schools</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>	
February, 1995	21%	9%	19%	45%	6%	101%	(431)	
<u>Type of Location</u> ¹								
--Central City	27	19	17	33	5	101	(37)	
--Older City and Suburb	22	11	22	41	5	101	(91)	
--New Suburb	18	9	17	49	7	100	(236)	
--Rural	26	2	21	48	2	99	(67)	
<u>Region of State</u> ²								
--North	25	13	19	36	8	101	(210)	
--Central	16	6	14	57	6	99	(117)	
--South	19	5	23	51	2	100	(104)	
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>								
February, 1994	19	13	21	38	8	99	(506)	

¹ Type of Place Respondent Lives In: All municipalities in the state have been classified into one of four groups, based on location, settlement patterns, population density and growth.

Central Cities: New Jersey's largest cities: Newark, Jersey City, Paterson, Elizabeth, Trenton and Camden.

Older Cities and Suburban Areas: This category is generally based on the cities of the state over 25,000 in 1980 with the following exceptions: balance of Hudson and Union counties, included because of their high density. Long Branch and Vineland were excluded because of the rapid growth and their small proportion of their county's population. Woodbridge, South Amboy and Carteret were included because of their similarity to nearby high density areas of Union County.

New Suburbs: These are primarily "outside central city" proportions of the Census Bureau's Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, with the addition of Somerset and parts of Middlesex, Ocean and Monmouth because of their settlement patterns.

Rural Areas: Includes communities not in any of the three categories above. Salem, Warren and sections of Gloucester, Burlington, Middlesex and Monmouth are not classified as rural by the Census Bureau, but they are included here either because of the minor central cities toward which they are directed or because of their development patterns. Atlantic County outside of Atlantic City is included here because of its development pattern and similarity to surrounding rural areas.

² Region of State Respondent Lives In:

North Jersey: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, Union and Warren counties;

Central Jersey: Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset counties;

South Jersey: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Ocean and Salem counties.