

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*."

NEW JERSEYANS' OPINIONS ABOUT THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

In November 1994, Republicans who were running for U.S. House of Representatives proposed the Contract with America as a statement of their unified political goals. Since the election, Republican members of the House have promised to achieve the goals outlined in this Contract.

Although New Jerseyans are willing to express opinions about the different programs included in the Contract with America, 55 percent have not read or heard much about it.

In general there is solid support for six of the seven key policy programs found in the Contract with America that were included in the poll. Tougher anti-crime legislation and a cut in taxes are supported the most and favored by 8-in-10 or more state residents. Increasing defense spending is the one program that less than half of New Jerseyans say they favor.

In the 1994 election, less than half of the state residents who voted for a Republican U.S. House of Representatives candidate say the Contract with America was a reason for their vote choice.

"Similar to what has been found in national polls, New Jerseyans endorse the key programs outlined in the Contract with America. In addition, although the Contract was conceived and committed to by the Republicans, a majority of New Jersey Democrats also favor most of these

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programs," commented Janice Ballou, Director of the Poll. "Currently the focus is on the general programs included in the Contract. When it comes time to discuss the specific plans and trade-offs to carry out these programs, opinions may shift."

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll was conducted by telephone with 801 New Jerseyans 18 years old or older from February 24 to March 1, 1995.

AWARENESS OF THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

Overall, New Jerseyans are more likely not to have read or heard about the Contract with America than to know something about it. While 55 percent report that they have read or heard nothing at all (32%) or not much (23%) about the Contract, 44 percent say they have read or heard a great deal (16%) or some (28%).

Awareness of the Contract is similar across partisan groups. Democrats (33%), independents (33%), and Republicans (28%) are about as equally likely to say they have not read or heard anything about the Contract with America.

OPINIONS OF PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

Although six out of seven Contract with America programs are favored by state residents, some programs receive more support than others.

The two programs that state residents are most likely to favor are tougher anti-crime legislation (88%) and a cut in taxes for most Americans (81%). Republicans are more likely than independents or Democrats to favor both of these programs.

About 7-in-10 New Jerseyans favor a Constitutional amendment to balance the budget (73%), legislation to limit welfare payments (73%), and a Constitutional amendment to limit the number of terms members of Congress can serve (70%).

A Constitutional amendment to balance the budget receives greater support from Republicans (82%) than independents (73%) or Democrats (67%). In addition, fewer New Jerseyans who have read or heard about the Contract with America (65%) favor it than those who are less aware (80%).

Legislation to limit welfare payments is also more likely to be favored by Republicans (81%) than by independents (76%), or Democrats (63%).

The two programs that receive the least amount of support among state residents are a cut in the capital gains tax and an increase in defense spending. A cut in the capital gains tax is favored by 59 percent of New Jerseyans, but a smaller 30 percent favor an increase in defense spending.

A cut in the capital gains tax receives more support from Republicans (69%) than independents (55%) or Democrats (53%). New Jerseyans with total household incomes over \$50,000 (70%) are more likely than those with total household incomes of \$30,000 or less (57%) or \$30,001-\$50,000 (54%) to favor a cut in the capital gains tax.

An increase in defense spending is more likely to be favored by Republicans (36%) than by independents (30%) or Democrats (23%).

Looking at New Jerseyans' opinions for all seven of these programs, 34 percent of New Jerseyans consistently favor a total of 4 or less of these programs, 31 percent favor a total of 5 programs, and 35 percent favor six or seven of these programs. Residents with household incomes over \$50,000 (48%), with a high school education or more (37%) or Republicans (46%) are more likely than their counterparts to support six or seven of the programs included in the Contract.

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IMPACT OF THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA ON VOTE CHOICE

The Contract with America was not the main reason why those who voted for a Republican in the 1994 election for U.S. House of Representatives selected their candidate. Among those who voted Republican, 55 percent say that the Contract with America was not a reason why they selected their candidate, compared to 44 percent who say it was a major (21%) or minor (23%) reason for their vote choice.

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BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP52-2 (EP102-2), SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 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.

"During the election last year nearly all Republican candidates for Congress signed a statement about their political goals which they call a Contract with America. How much have you read or heard about this Contract with America--a great deal, some, not much, or nothing at all?" [Q.27]

	<u>Great Deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not Much</u>	<u>Nothing At All</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	16%	28%	23%	32%	1%	100%	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	16	33	18	33	--	100	(220)
--Independent	15	27	24	33	1	100	(323)
--Republican	17	26	27	28	2	100	(231)

"The following are some items that are included in the Contract with America. For each one please tell me whether you favor or oppose it." [Q.28]

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
a. Tougher anti-crime legislation	88%	10%	2%	100%	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>					
--Democrat	83	14	3	100	(220)
--Independent	87	10	3	100	(323)
--Republican	94	6	--	100	(231)
b. A cut in taxes for most Americans	81	16	2	99	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>					
--Democrat	79	19	2	100	(220)
--Independent	80	18	2	100	(323)
--Republican	87	11	2	100	(231)

Q.28 (continued)

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
c. A Constitutional amendment to balance the budget	73	22	5	100	(801)

	<u>Party ID</u>					
	--Democrat	67	29	4	100	(220)
	--Independent	73	23	4	100	(323)
	--Republican	82	15	3	100	(231)
	<u>Contract with America Awareness</u>					
	--Some/Great deal	65	31	4	100	(409)
	--Not much/Not at all	80	16	5	101	(387)
d.	Legislation to limit welfare payments	73	24	3	100	(801)
	<u>Party ID</u>					
	--Democrat	63	35	2	100	(220)
	--Independent	76	20	4	100	(323)
	--Republican	81	17	2	100	(231)
	<u>Race</u>					
	--White	78	19	3	100	(631)
	--Non-white	61	35	3	99	(147)
	<u>Total Household Income</u>					
	--\$30,000 or less	69	29	3	101	(190)
	--\$30,001 - \$50,000	74	22	3	99	(210)
	--\$50,001 - \$70,000	79	20	2	101	(127)
	--Over \$70,000	79	18	3	100	(167)
e.	A Constitutional amendment to limit the number of terms members of Congress can serve	70	25	5	100	(801)
	<u>Party ID</u>					
	--Democrat	70	24	6	100	(220)
	--Independent	70	27	3	100	(323)
	--Republican	71	25	4	100	(231)
f.	A cut in the capital gains tax	59	30	12	101	(801)
	<u>Party ID</u>					
	--Democrat	53	36	11	100	(220)
	--Independent	55	31	14	100	(323)
	--Republican	69	23	8	100	(231)
	<u>Total Household Income</u>					
	--\$30,000 or less	57	27	15	99	(190)
	--\$30,001 - \$50,000	54	34	12	100	(210)
	--\$50,001 - \$70,000	70	27	3	100	(127)
	--Over \$70,000	70	25	6	101	(167)
g.	An increase in defense spending	30	66	3	99	(801)
	<u>Party ID</u>					
	--Democrat	23	75	3	101	(220)
	--Independent	30	65	5	100	(323)
	--Republican	36	62	2	100	(231)

CONTRACT WITH AMERICA SUPPORT INDEX*

	<u>Items or Less</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Items or More</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	34%	31%	35%	100%	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>					
--Democrat	41	27	32	100	(220)
--Independent	38	31	31	100	(323)
--Republican	20	34	46	100	(231)
<i>Education</i>					
--Less than high school	47	23	29	99	(74)
--High school graduate	27	36	37	100	(238)
--More than high school	33	30	37	100	(489)
<i>Total Household Income</i>					
--\$20,000 or less	43	34	23	100	(106)
--\$20,001 - \$30,000	23	38	40	101	(84)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	33	34	32	99	(210)
--Over \$50,000	29	23	48	100	(294)
<i>Contract with America Awareness</i>					
--Some/Great deal	38	27	35	100	(409)
--Not much/Not at all	32	33	35	100	(387)

"Last year in the election for the U.S. House of Representatives in your district, did you vote for the Republican candidate, the Democratic candidate, or didn't you vote?" [Q.29]

	<u>Voted For Republican</u>	<u>Voted For Democrat</u>	<u>Didn't Vote</u>	<u>Vote For Other</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	32%	27%	32%	2%	7%	100%	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	5	65	24	1	5	100	(220)
--Independent	24	20	44	3	10	101	(323)
--Republican	73	2	23	--	3	101	(231)

AMONG THOSE WHO VOTED FOR A REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE

"Would you say the Contract with America was a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason why you voted for the Republican candidate?" [Q.29a]

	<u>Major Reason</u>	<u>Minor Reason</u>	<u>Not A Reason</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1995	21%	23%	55%	2%	101%	(288)

* This information is calculated by giving a score of "1" each time they answered that they supported each item in Q.28 a-g and calculating the total number.