

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 Friday's *Star-Ledger*. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*."

JOB PERFORMANCE RATINGS: CLINTON UP, WHITMAN DOWN

THE RACE FOR BRADLEY'S SEAT: MOST CANDIDATES ARE UNKNOWN

While positive job performance ratings for President Bill Clinton have improved among New Jerseyans, Governor Christie Whitman's job performance ratings have decreased. The President is given positive ratings by 4-in-10 New Jerseyans – an increase of 7 percentage points since February, 1995. The Governor's positive ratings are now 48 percent – a decrease of 5 percentage points since May, 1995. The change in the ratings of both Clinton and Whitman are primarily the result of a shift in opinion among Democrats and independents.

Among six possible candidates for the U.S. Senate seat Bill Bradley will vacate in 1996, only one – former Governor Jim Florio – is familiar to most New Jerseyans. Although 7-in-10 New Jerseyans do not yet have an impression of the Republican contender Dick Zimmer, those who make a choice for the 1996 Senate race, give him a slight edge over Democrats Jim Florio and Robert Torricelli. It is very important to keep in mind that these early preferences are expressed before the campaigns have even started, and before most voters have formed an impression of the possible candidates.

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“Democratic elected officials are gaining back the members of their own party and also making inroads among independents,” commented Janice Ballou, Director of the Poll. “This may be a preliminary sign that Republicans won’t be able to count on Democratic defections in upcoming elections.”

The *Star-Ledger/Eagle* Poll was conducted with 804 New Jerseyans by telephone from September 6 to 13, 1995.

RATING THE GOVERNOR

New Jerseyans’ opinions about Governor Whitman’s job performance are about equally divided. About half of New Jerseyans give Governor Whitman positive job performance ratings of either excellent (8%) or good (40%), while an almost equal 46 percent report negative ratings of only fair (36%) or poor (10%), and 6 percent have no opinion. This is a decline of 5 percentage points in the Governor’s rating since May, 1995, when 53 percent of New Jerseyans rated her job performance as excellent (11%) or good (42%), and 4-in-10 gave her negative ratings of only fair (29%) or poor (11%).

This decline in the Governor’s evaluations is due mainly to fewer positive opinions among Democrats and independents. In the current survey, 30 percent of Democrats rate Whitman’s performance as excellent (2%) or good (28%), which is 13 percentage points lower than in May 1995; and 45 percent of independents give excellent (5%) or good (40%) ratings – a 4 percentage point drop from May. More than 7-in-10 Republicans rate the Governor as excellent (19%) or good (54%), which is the same as in May.

In addition, almost half of New Jerseyans have a very (17%) or somewhat (30%) favorable impression of Whitman, while one-quarter have a very (12%) or somewhat (12%) unfavorable

impression of her. Twenty-nine percent have not formed an overall impression of the Governor. While favorable impressions of Whitman are the same as the 48 percent last September, unfavorable impressions have increased by 6 percentage points.

RATING THE PRESIDENT

New Jerseyans have had a range of opinions about Bill Clinton's job performance since he became President. Currently, he is experiencing an upswing from his February, 1995 ratings. Four-in-ten state residents give him positive ratings of excellent (5%) or good (34%), and 6-in-10 rate his job performance as only fair (39%) or poor (21%). This is a seven percentage point gain from February, 1995 when 32 percent gave him positive ratings.

This improvement is due primarily to increased partisan support. Clinton's positive ratings among Democrats have increased 8 percentage points from 54 percent in February to 62 percent currently. Also, among independents, Clinton's positive ratings have increased 13 percentage points from 27 percent to 40 percent. In comparison, his positive ratings among Republicans have declined 7 percentage points, from 19 percent in February to 14 percent currently.

RATING NEW JERSEY'S U.S. SENATORS

The job performance ratings of both Senators Bill Bradley and Frank Lautenberg have remained about the same since June, 1994. Currently, 53 percent rate Bill Bradley's job performance as excellent (13%) or good (40%), 40 percent give ratings of only fair (31%) or poor (9%), and 6 percent have no opinion. This is an increase in his positive ratings of 3 percentage points from June, 1994, when 50 percent gave the state's senior Senator

positive ratings, and a 3 percentage point increase in his negative ratings when 37 percent gave him negative ratings.

Forty-two percent of New Jerseyans rate Frank Lautenberg's job performance as excellent (6%) or good (36%), 47 percent give ratings of only fair (36%) or poor (11%), and 11 percent have no opinion. Compared to June, 1994, Lautenberg had a similar 41 percent who gave him positive ratings. However, his negative ratings were 8 percentage points lower at 39 percent.

Since June, 1994, positive ratings of both senators have increased among Democrats and independents, while they have decreased among Republicans. Currently, 67 percent of Democrats give Bradley positive marks (up 10 percentage points from June, 1994) and 54 percent of independents rate him positively (up 8 percentage points from June, 1994), compared to 40 percent of Republicans who give Bradley positive ratings (down 4 percentage points from June, 1994). Also, 53 percent of Democrats give Lautenberg positive marks (up 2 percentage points from June, 1994) and 43 percent of independents rate him positively (up 8 percentage points from June, 1994), compared to 30 percent of Republicans who give Lautenberg positive ratings (down 8 percentage points from June, 1994).

RATING THE STATE LEGISLATURE/THE ASSEMBLY ELECTION

There has been little change in New Jerseyans' evaluations of the state legislature. One-third give the legislature positive job performance ratings of excellent (3%) or good (31%), compared to 54 percent who rate the legislature as only fair (45%) or poor (9%). Eleven percent have no opinion.

With less than two months before the General Assembly election, more New Jerseyans are undecided about who they will vote for in the Assembly races than have made a decision about either party's candidates. While 36 percent of state residents have not decided upon a candidate, 31 percent say they will vote for the Republican candidates from their district and 29 percent say they will vote for the Democrats.

OPINION ON BRADLEY'S RETIREMENT

Two-in-three New Jerseyans have read or heard a great deal (20%) or some (44%) about Bill Bradley's decision not to seek re-election to the U.S. Senate in 1996, while one-third have heard not much (22%) or nothing at all (13%) about his announcement.

A majority of New Jerseyans say they are not disappointed with Bradley's decision not to run for a fourth term. While 39 percent of state residents say they are very (10%) or somewhat (29%) disappointed with Bradley's decision, 55 percent say they are not too (19%) or not at all (36%) disappointed with his decision not to run, and 6 percent have no opinion. Democrats (55%) are much more likely to be at least somewhat disappointed with Bradley's decision, when compared to independents (34%) and Republicans (32%).

THE RACE FOR BRADLEY'S SEAT

A number of politicians have announced their intentions to seek Bill Bradley's U.S. Senate seat in 1996, while others have been mentioned as potential candidates. The *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll asked about early impressions of six possible contenders: Congressman Dick Zimmer, Passaic Freeholder Dick DuHaime, state Senator Dick LaRossa, and Congresswoman Marge Roukema on the Republican side; and Congressman Robert Torricelli and former Governor Jim Florio on the Democratic side.

With the exception of Florio, most New Jerseyans have not yet formed impressions of these potential candidates at this early stage of the selection process. Among the four Republicans, 69 percent do not have an overall impression of Dick Zimmer, compared to 21 percent who have a favorable impression and 10 percent who have an unfavorable impression. Seventy-one percent have no opinion of Marge Roukema, while her favorable impressions are 17 percent versus 12 percent unfavorable. Seventy-five percent have no opinion of Dick LaRossa, while his favorable impressions are 16 percent versus 9 percent unfavorable. Finally, 85 percent have no opinion of Dick DuHaime, while his favorable impressions are 7 percent versus 8 percent unfavorable.

On the Democratic side, 85 percent of New Jerseyans have an impression of former governor Jim Florio, with 38 percent reporting favorable opinions compared to 47 percent who have unfavorable impressions, and 15 percent have no opinion. Six-in-ten residents have no opinion of Robert Torricelli while his favorable impressions are 24 percent versus 15 percent unfavorable.

The New Jersey Senate election is more than a year away, and New Jerseyans are not yet familiar with most of the possible Republican and Democratic nominees. However, when asked about their current preferences in this future election, more residents favor Dick Zimmer over the suggested Democratic choices. It is very important to keep in mind that these early preferences are expressed before the campaigns have even started, and before most voters have formed an impression of the possible candidates.

If the election were today with Zimmer as the Republican nominee and the Democrats represented by Torricelli, Zimmer would have a 34 to 29 percent advantage over Torricelli. However, not surprisingly, almost 4-in-10 New Jerseyans (37%) say they do not know who they would vote for in this contest. As one would expect, there are partisan differences in

these early selections for U.S. Senate. Three-quarters of Republicans (73%) say they would support Zimmer and 19 percent are undecided, while Torricelli gets 54 percent of the Democratic vote and 35 percent undecided. About half of independents (46%) are undecided about either candidate, with the remaining half split evenly between Zimmer (28%) and Torricelli (27%).

In a contest between Zimmer and Florio, at this time Zimmer is favored by a margin of 42 to 39 percent over Florio. Nineteen percent do not know how they would vote if these were the two nominees. In this race, more than three-quarters of Republicans (77%) support Zimmer and 11 percent are undecided, while Florio is chosen by 72 percent of Democrats with 15 percent undecided. In a Zimmer-Florio race, Zimmer is currently the favorite among independents by a margin of 43 percent to 34 percent, with 23 percent undecided.

Note: Patrick Murray, Research Associate, *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll assisted with the text and analysis for this release.

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The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagle* Poll was conducted between September 6 and September 13, 1995, when a random sample of 804 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.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE SL/EP54-1 (EP104-1), FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1995

"Is your general impression of Governor Christie Whitman favorable or unfavorable, or don't you have an opinion about her? PROBE: IS THAT VERY (FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE) OR SOMEWHAT (FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE)?" [Q.2]

	<u>Very</u> <u>Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>Very</u> <u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No</u> <u>Opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995							
--Total	17%	30%	12%	12%	29%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	18	31	12	13	27	101	(707)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	8	19	15	22	36	100	(214)
--Independent	12	32	15	12	29	100	(328)
--Republican	35	40	5	4	16	100	(232)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
September, 1994	19	29	10	8	33	99	(801)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	10	29	14	10	36	99	(245)
--Independent	18	28	11	9	35	101	(323)
--Republican	37	36	3	5	20	101	(203)
February, 1994	17	19	7	4	53	100	(801)

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

<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only</u> <u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
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September, 1995

--Total	8%	40%	36%	10%	6%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	8	40	36	10	5	99	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	2	28	45	17	8	100	(214)
--Independent	5	40	37	11	7	100	(328)
--Republican	19	54	24	2	2	101	(232)

PAST SURVEYS

May, 1995	11	42	29	11	7	100	(802)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	7	36	35	18	5	101	(247)
--Independent	10	39	31	11	9	100	(326)
--Republican	17	56	18	5	5	101	(203)
February, 1995	13	43	28	12	4	100	(801)
September, 1994	12	40	33	9	6	100	(801)
June, 1994	11	39	29	7	14	100	(801)
February, 1994	9	28	28	5	31	101	(801)

"How would you rate the job the New Jersey state legislature is doing -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?" [Q.4]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995							
--Total	3%	31%	45%	9%	11%	99%	(804)
--Registered Voters	3	31	46	10	10	100	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	3	28	51	10	8	100	(214)
--Independent	4	26	45	12	13	100	(328)
--Republican	2	43	41	4	10	100	(232)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
May, 1995	2	30	43	12	13	100	(802)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	2	25	49	12	12	100	(247)
--Independent	1	27	41	15	16	100	(326)
--Republican	2	42	40	7	9	100	(203)
September, 1994	2	27	49	8	14	100	(801)
February, 1993	1	27	51	13	8	100	(801)
April, 1992	--	19	50	23	8	100	(800)
September, 1991	2	20	46	17	15	100	(800)
July, 1990	4	28	42	16	11	101	(800)
March, 1989	2	34	41	12	10	99	(800)
October, 1987	3	41	38	4	14	100	(1000)
October, 1986	3	39	34	6	18	100	(800)
August, 1985	5	40	37	6	13	101	(800)

"There will be an election for the State Assembly this November. Do you think you will vote for the Democratic or Republican candidates from your district?" [Q.5]

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995						
--Total	29%	31%	3%	36%	99%	(804)
--Registered Voters	31	32	3	34	100	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>						
--Democrat	72	2	--	25	99	(214)
--Independent	17	26	6	51	100	(328)
--Republican	3	77	4	16	100	(232)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>						
May, 1995	31	27	4	38	100	(802)
October, 1993*	38	40	1	22	101	(801)
November, 1991*	34	40	5	22	101	(539)
June, 1989	37	27	5	31	100	(647)
October, 1987*	41	31	2	25	99	(722)
October, 1983*	42	30	3	24	99	(568)

* For these polls, the following question was asked, "If the election were held today, would you vote for the Democratic or Republican candidates for State Assembly." The results are also based on likely voters.

"How would you rate the job Bill Clinton is doing as President--excellent, good, only fair or poor?" [Q.6]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995							
--Total	5%	34%	39%	21%	1%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	5	34	40	20	1	100	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	11	51	31	7	--	100	(214)
--Independent	4	36	41	18	1	100	(328)
--Republican	2	12	44	42	--	100	(232)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
February, 1995	4	28	41	25	1	99	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	9	45	36	10	1	101	(220)
--Independent	3	24	48	23	1	99	(323)
--Republican	1	18	37	43	1	100	(231)
September, 1994	6	33	38	20	2	99	(801)
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)

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

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995							
--Total	13%	40%	31%	9%	6%	99%	(804)
--Registered Voters	13	41	31	10	5	100	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	21	46	25	4	4	100	(214)
--Independent	14	40	29	11	7	101	(328)
--Republican	4	36	43	14	4	101	(232)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
June, 1994	9	41	30	7	13	100	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	13	44	25	5	12	99	(272)
--Independent	8	38	32	9	13	100	(272)
--Republican	3	41	36	9	10	99	(215)
February, 1994	11	36	29	7	17	100	(801)
February, 1993	14	42	26	10	7	99	(801)
April, 1992	11	39	33	12	5	100	(800)

"How would you rate the job Frank Lautenberg is doing as Senator – excellent, good, only fair or poor?" [Q.8]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995							
--Total	6%	36%	36%	11%	11%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	6	37	36	11	9	99	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	8	45	33	6	9	101	(214)
--Independent	6	37	35	10	11	99	(328)
--Republican	3	27	42	19	9	100	(232)
PAST SURVEYS							
June, 1994	6	35	31	8	19	99	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	10	41	27	5	17	100	(272)
--Independent	3	32	36	9	20	100	(272)
--Republican	4	34	31	13	19	101	(215)
February, 1994	5	34	32	7	22	100	(801)
February, 1993	7	35	34	8	15	99	(801)
April, 1992	6	33	34	13	13	99	(800)

"How much have you read or heard about Bill Bradley's decision not to run for re-election to the U.S. Senate in 1996--a great deal, some, not much, or nothing at all?" [Q.9]

	<u>A 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>
September, 1995							
--Total	20%	44%	22%	13%	2%	101%	(804)
--Registered Voters	22	44	21	12	1	100	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	20	43	25	12	--	100	(214)
--Independent	18	42	23	15	3	101	(328)
--Republican	26	48	18	8	1	101	(232)

"How do you feel about Bill Bradley's decision not to run for Senate in 1996, are you very disappointed, somewhat disappointed, not too disappointed, or not at all disappointed?" [Q.10]

	<u>Very Disappointed</u>	<u>Somewhat Disappointed</u>	<u>Not Too Disappointed</u>	<u>Not At All Disappointed</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995							
--Total	10%	29%	19%	36%	6%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	10	31	18	36	5	100	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	18	37	19	22	4	100	(214)
--Independent	8	26	18	41	6	99	(328)
--Republican	5	27	19	46	4	101	(232)

"Since Bill Bradley announced that he will not run for re-election, a number of different people have been suggested as possible candidates." [Q.11]

"I'd like to get your general impression of some possible Republican candidates for U.S. Senate. For each name I read, please tell me if your general impression of him or her is favorable or unfavorable. If you don't have an opinion on a candidate, just say so." [Q.11A]

"First, is your general impression of **(READ NAME)** FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE? [**PROBE:** Would that be very or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable)?]"

	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Don't Know	Total	(n)
DICK ZIMMER							
September, 1995							
--Total	5%	16%	6%	4%	69%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	5	17	6	4	69	101	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	1	15	7	8	69	100	(214)
--Independent	3	17	6	3	71	100	(328)
--Republican	13	15	5	1	66	100	(232)
DICK DUHAIME							
September, 1995							
--Total	1%	6%	5%	3%	85%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	1	7	5	3	85	101	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	1	6	5	4	84	100	(214)
--Independent	--	6	7	3	83	99	(328)
--Republican	1	6	4	1	87	99	(232)
DICK LAROSSA							
September, 1995							
--Total	2%	14%	6%	3%	75%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	2	15	6	3	74	100	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	1	15	6	4	74	100	(214)
--Independent	1	16	6	3	74	100	(328)
--Republican	3	13	5	2	78	101	(232)
MARGE ROUKEMA							
September, 1995							
--Total	4%	13%	7%	5%	71%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	5	13	8	4	71	101	(707)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	4	12	8	6	70	100	(214)
--Independent	4	14	5	5	72	100	(328)
--Republican	4	14	11	3	67	99	(232)

"Now I'd like to get your general impression of some possible Democratic candidates for U.S. Senate. For each name I read, please tell me if your general impression of him or her is favorable or unfavorable. If you don't have an opinion on a candidate, just say so." [Q.11B]

"First, is your general impression of (READ NAME) FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE? [**PROBE:** Would that be very or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable)?]"

	<u>Very Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Unfavorable</u>	<u>Very Unfavorable</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
ROBERT TORRICELLI							
September, 1995							
--Total	5%	19%	8%	7%	60%	99%	(804)
--Registered Voters	6	18	9	8	59	100	(707)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	10	21	7	6	56	100	(214)
--Independent	4	19	6	5	65	99	(328)
--Republican	3	19	13	14	52	101	(232)

JIM FLORIO							
September, 1995							
--Total	14%	24%	16%	31%	15%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	14	23	16	33	13	99	(707)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	18	37	14	20	12	101	(214)
--Independent	16	22	16	28	18	100	(328)
--Republican	5	12	19	52	11	99	(232)

"Even though the next New Jersey Senate election is not until 1996, could you tell me, if the election were held today, would you vote for Dick Zimmer, the Republican, or Jim Florio the Democrat?" [Q.12A]

	<u>Zimmer</u>	<u>Florio</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995					
--Total	42%	39%	19%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	43	39	18	100	(707)
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	13	72	15	100	(214)
--Independent	43	34	23	100	(328)
--Republican	77	12	11	100	(232)

"How about Dick Zimmer, the Republican, or Robert Torricelli, the Democrat?" [Q.12B]

	<u>Zimmer</u>	<u>Torricelli</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995					
--Total	34%	29%	37%	100%	(804)
--Registered Voters	34	29	36	99	(707)
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	11	54	35	100	(214)
--Independent	28	27	46	101	(328)
--Republican	73	8	19	100	(232)