

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*."

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NEW JERSEYANS' FAVOR A THIRD POLITICAL PARTY BRADLEY AND POWELL ATTRACTIVE AS THIRD PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Six-in-ten of New Jerseyans favor the formation of a third political party to challenge Democrats and Republicans for President, Congress and state offices. A majority of state residents would consider voting for Senator Bill Bradley (58%) or General Colin Powell (56%) if they ran as third party presidential candidates in 1996, but are less likely to support third party candidacies of Ross Perot or Jesse Jackson.

New Jerseyans agree that the formation of a third party would be beneficial to the political system. A majority of New Jerseyans think that having a third party would make government more responsive to the needs of people; make candidates less tied to special interests; make people more interested in government and politics; and make government run more efficiently.

However, New Jerseyans still depend on the existing two-party system. About 6-in-10 say there is a difference between Democrats and Republicans, and two-thirds of state 's

residents consider the party of the candidate an important consideration in their voting decision.

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The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll was conducted by telephone with 804 New Jerseyans 18 years old or older from September 6 to September 13, 1995.

“New Jerseyans want to fix government and a third party is a tempting solution,” commented Janice Ballou, Director of the Poll. “Therefore, third party candidates can attract attention and be seriously considered as contenders for elected offices”.

SUPPORT FOR A THIRD PARTY

There is interest in a third party in New Jersey. Close to 6-in-10 state residents strongly (31%) or mildly (25%) favor the formation of a third political party that would run candidates for President, Congress and state offices against the Republican and Democratic candidates. In comparison, thirty-two percent say they mildly (13%) or strongly (19%) oppose a third party. Twelve percent of residents are not sure how they feel about such a change to the current party system.

Not surprisingly, independents are more likely to support a third party than those who identify with either of the two parties. Sixty-eight percent of independents favor a third party, compared to 48 percent of Democrats and 46 percent of Republicans.

Younger New Jerseyans are much more open than older residents to a third political party to challenge the existing parties. Sixty-seven percent of those under 30 years of age favor the formation of a third party compared to only 26 percent of those residents over the age of 64.

Also, those who say there are no differences between the two parties (62%) are more likely to favor the formation of a third political party than are those who feel there are important differences between the Democrats and Republicans (54%).

Overall, 3-in-4 state residents feel that a vote for a third party candidate “sends a message that the political system needs to change” compared to 1-in-5 who say a vote for a

third party candidate is “throwing away your vote because that person doesn’t have a chance to win.” When registered voters in New Jersey were asked the same question in September of 1992, during Perot’s run for the presidency, two-thirds felt a third party vote sent a message while one-quarter considered it a wasted vote.

Independents (85%) are more likely than Democrats (77%) or Republicans (63%) to say a third party vote sends a message. Also, people who say they voted for Perot in 1992 (95%) are more likely than Clinton (79%) or Bush voters (70%) to feel this way. Residents under 30 years of age (82%) are more likely than those over 64 (62%) to say a third party vote sends a message.

About 4-in-10 of those opposed to a third party say voting for a third party candidate is just throwing your vote away while only 6 percent of those favoring a third party feel the same way.

IMPACT OF A THIRD PARTY ON THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

A majority of New Jerseyans view a third party as a way to make beneficial changes to the political system. Almost 7-in-10 New Jerseyans (68%) agree that a third party would “make government more responsive to the needs of people like you.” Independents (76%) are more likely than Democrats (67%) or Republicans (61%) to agree with this statement. Also, those who favor the formation of a third party (87%) are much more likely than those opposed to a third party (37%) to believe that government would be more responsive to citizens if a third party were created.

More than 6-in-10 New Jerseyans agree that a third party would “make people more interested in government and politics” (62%). Independents (68%) are somewhat more likely

than Democrats (58%) and Republicans (57%) to agree that a third party would increase political interest. Also, those who favor the formation of a third party (79%) are much more likely than those opposed to a third party (36%) to say that a third party would make people more interested in politics.

More than half of New Jerseyans also believe that a third party would "make candidates less tied to special interests" (55%) and "make government run more efficiently" (53%). Independents (62%) are more likely than Democrats (52%) or Republicans (44%) to believe a third party would make government run more efficiently. Again, those who favor the formation of a third party are more likely than those opposed to believe these would be benefits of a third party.

SUPPORT FOR POSSIBLE THIRD PARTY CANDIDATES

New Jerseyans support for four possible third party presidential candidates in 1996 varies with the specific candidate mentioned. Senator Bill Bradley (58%), who has announced that he will not run for re-election in 1996, and General Colin Powell (56%) are favored by more than half of the state's residents. Ross Perot and Jesse Jackson receive support from less than 1-in-3 New Jerseyans. About 6-in-10 New Jerseyans would be very (20%) or somewhat (38%) likely to support Senator Bill Bradley if he ran as a third party candidate.

Apparently, many New Jerseyans are not disappointed in Bill Bradley's decision not to run for re-election to the Senate in 1996 because they would like to see him run for President. Among those who are not disappointed, 43 percent say they are very or somewhat likely to vote for him if he ran as a third party candidate for President. Eighty-four

percent of those who are disappointed in the Senator's decision would vote for him for President if he ran as a third party candidate.

If General Colin Powell ran as a third party candidate, 56 percent of New Jerseyans would be very (20%) or somewhat (36%) likely to vote for him.

New Jerseyans are less likely to vote for Ross Perot or Jesse Jackson if they ran as third party candidates. Three-in-ten say they are very (10%) or somewhat (18%) likely to vote for Ross Perot.

Among those who voted for him in the 1992 presidential election, 74 percent say they are very (46%) or somewhat (28%) likely to vote for him again if he ran as a third party candidate.

Jesse Jackson receives support from 25 percent of New Jerseyans who say they are very (8%) or somewhat (17%) likely to vote for him if he ran as a third party candidate.

THE CURRENT PARTY SYSTEM

Presently in New Jersey, 28 percent of residents identify with the Democratic party, 26 percent say they are Republicans, and 42 percent say they are independents. Most people who identify with a party say their choice is based on some issue or party philosophy.

Among Democrats, 41 percent say they identify with their party because of its position on some issue or the general philosophy and values the party stands for. The party's position on issues or the general philosophy and values of the party is the main reason why 60 percent of Republicans identify with their party.

Other major reasons given by Democrats for identifying with the party are that the party is in tune with the people (22%) and that they identify with the party because of some type of family tradition (15%).

Ten 10 percent of Republicans say family tradition is a reason they identify with the party, while only 2 percent mention the party is in tune with the people as their reason for being Republican.

The main reason independents give for not identifying with a party is that they vote based on who is the better candidate, regardless of party (32%). Twenty-four percent make negative comments about the existing parties and another 15 percent say they prefer to make up their own minds about political questions.

Overall, a majority of New Jerseyans believe there are important differences between the Democrat and Republican parties (59%). However, almost four-in-ten residents consider the parties to be largely the same (36%).

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Among those who identify with a political party, Republicans (73%) see greater differences between the parties than Democrats (64%). Independents (48%) are less likely to say there are important differences between the parties.

Residents with more education are more likely to say there are important differences between the parties. About seven-in-ten residents with more than a high school education (70%) see differences between the parties compared to less than half of those with a high school education or less (50%).

Two-thirds of New Jerseyans say that knowing a candidate's political party is very (31%) or somewhat (36%) important when they decide who to vote for. The remaining third of the state's residents say that the candidate's party is either not too important (17%) or not important at all (15%) in their voting decision.

Democrats (85%) are more likely than Republicans (76%) to say the candidate's party is at least somewhat important in their voting decision. Among

independents, almost half (48%) consider the candidate's party label as very or somewhat important in their voting decision.

The importance of the candidate's party in one's voting decision is similar across all age and education groups.

New Jerseyans who say there are differences between the parties (74%) are more likely than those who do not see any differences (55%) to consider the party of the candidate as very or somewhat important in their vote choice.

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

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BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE SL/EP54-2 (EP104-2), SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1995

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* 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.

"Do you think there are important differences between the Democrat and Republican parties or are both parties largely the same?" [Q.13]

	Important Differences <u>Between Parties</u>	No Differences <u>Between Parties</u>	<u>Depends</u>	Don't Know	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995	59%	36%	2%	3%	100%	(804)
<u>Party ID</u>						
-- Democrat	64	32	2	2	100	(214)
-- Independent	48	47	2	3	100	(328)
-- Republican	73	24	2	1	100	(232)
<u>1992 Vote</u>						
-- Bush (269)		69	26	2	3	100
-- Clinton	58	36	3	3	100	(291)
-- Perot (78)		52	43	4	1	100
<u>Ideology</u>						
-- Liberal	66	31	2	1	100	(139)
-- Moderate	54	40	3	3	100	(418)
-- Conservative	64	33	1	2	100	(208)
<u>Education</u>						
-- Less than High School (54)		47	47	2	5	101
-- High School Graduate	51	43	3	3	100	(225)
-- More than High School (525)		70	27	1	2	100
<u>Age</u>						
-- 18 to 29	58	37	2	3	100	(117)
-- 30 to 49	61	36	1	2	100	(377)
-- 50 to 64	60	35	2	3	100	(170)
-- 65 and over	53	39	4	4	100	(120)
<u>Registered to Vote</u>						
-- Yes (707)		60	35	2	2	99
-- No	49	41	1	9	100	(90)

"When deciding who to vote for, how important is it for you to know the political party the candidate belongs to -- is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?" [Q.14]

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not Too Important</u>	<u>Not Important at All</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995	31%	36%	17%	15%	1%	100%	(804)
<u>Party ID</u>							
-- Democrat	43	42	7	6	3	101	(214)
-- Independent	22	26	27	24	1	100	(328)
-- Republican	31	45	15	9	--	100	(232)
<u>1992 Vote</u>							
-- Bush (269)		26	40	20	14	--	100
-- Clinton	34	39	14	12	2	101	(291)
-- Perot (78)		12	35	29	24	--	100
<u>Education</u>							
-- Less than High School (54)		47	23	16	10	4	100
-- High School Graduate (225)		27	38	17	17	1	100
-- More than High School (525)		27	39	18	16	--	100
<u>Age</u>							
-- 18 to 29	37	36	15	12	--	100	(117)
-- 30 to 49	26	35	19	19	1	100	(377)
-- 50 to 64	29	34	20	16	--	99	(170)
-- 65 and over	35	34	14	14	3	100	(120)
<u>Differences between Parties</u>							
-- Important differences (501)		34	40	14	10	1	99
-- No differences	25	30	22	23	--	100	(268)

"Would you favor or oppose the formation of a third political party that would run candidates for President, Congress and State offices against the Republican and Democratic candidates? Is that strongly or mildly (favor/oppose)?" [Q.15]

	<u>Strongly Favor</u>	<u>Mildly Favor</u>	<u>Mildly Oppose</u>	<u>Strongly Oppose</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995	31%	25%	13%	19%	12%	100%	(804)
<u>Party ID</u>							
-- Democrat	26	22	15	24	13	100	(214)
-- Independent	40	28	12	8	12	100	(328)
-- Republican	22	24	15	30	9	100	(232)
<u>1992 Vote</u>							
-- Bush (269)		26	23	18	26	8	101
-- Clinton	31	26	13	17	13	100	(291)
-- Perot (78)		62	20	3	9	5	99
<u>Ideology</u>							
-- Liberal	34	25	13	16	12	100	(139)
-- Moderate	33	28	15	16	9	101	(418)
-- Conservative	30	21	9	26	14	100	(208)
<u>Age</u>							
-- 18 to 29	33	34	12	7	13	99	(117)
-- 30 to 49	41	25	11	11	12	100	(377)
-- 50 to 64	27	26	8	31	9	101	(170)
-- 65 and over	13	13	26	37	11	100	(120)
<u>Differences between Parties</u>							
-- Important differences (501)		30	24	14	23	10	101
-- No differences	35	27	12	13	13	100	(268)

"Which of these two statements best describes your opinion:

Voting for a third party candidate is throwing away your vote because that person doesn't have a chance to win;

OR

Voting for a third party candidate sends a message that the political system needs to change." [Q.16]

	<u>Throw Vote Away</u>	<u>Sends A Message</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995	18%	76%	--	6%	100%	(804)
-- Registered Voters	19%	76%	--	6%	101%	(707)
<u>Party ID</u>						
-- Democrat	19	77	--	4	100	(214)
-- Independent	10	85	--	5	100	(328)
-- Republican	31	63	--	6	100	(232)
<u>1992 Vote</u>						
-- Bush		26	70	--	4	100 (269)
-- Clinton	16	79	--	5	100	(291)
-- Perot		4	95	--	1	100 (78)
<u>Age</u>						
-- 18 to 29	12	82	--	6	100	(117)
-- 30 to 49	14	81	--	5	100	(377)
-- 50 to 64	21	76	--	3	100	(170)
-- 65 and over	27	62	--	11	100	(120)
<u>Formation of Third Party</u>						
-- Strongly/Mildly Favor	6	92	--	2	100	(491)
-- Strongly/Mildly Oppose	39	55	--	6	100	(229)
Past Surveys						
September, 1992						
-- Registered Voters	25%	66%	4%	5%	100%	(663)

"Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements. Do you agree or disagree that having a third party would ...? Is that strongly or mildly agree/disagree?" [Q.17A - D]

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total (n)</u>
a. make government run more efficiently	32%	21%	17%	21%	9%	100%(804)
<u>Party ID</u>						
-- Democrat	32	20	18	22	8	100 (214)
-- Independent	37	25	17	14	7	100 (328)
-- Republican	27	17	18	30	8	100 (232)
<u>Formation of Third Party</u>						
-- Strongly/Mildly Favor	41	28	18	6	7	100 (491)
-- Strongly/Mildly Oppose	22	8	17	49	4	100 (229)
b. make government more responsive to the needs of people like you	46%	22%	11%	17%	4%	100%(804)
<u>Party ID</u>						
-- Democrat	46	21	10	20	3	100 (214)
-- Independent	53	23	9	11	4	100 (328)
-- Republican	38	23	16	21	2	100 (232)
<u>Formation of Third Party</u>						
-- Strongly/Mildly Favor	60	27	6	6	2	101 (491)
-- Strongly/Mildly Oppose	28	9	21	40	2	100 (229)
c. make people more interested in government and politics		39%	23%	17%	17%	5% 101% (804)
<u>Party ID</u>						
-- Democrat	36	22	17	21	4	100 (214)
-- Independent	44	24	17	10	5	100 (328)
-- Republican	36	21	15	22	6	100 (232)
<u>Formation of Third Party</u>						
-- Strongly/Mildly Favor	50	29	13	6	2	100 (491)
-- Strongly/Mildly Oppose	22	14	22	37	5	100 (229)
d. make candidates less tied to special interests	33%	22%	19%	18%	7%	99% (804)
<u>Party ID</u>						
-- Democrat	33	25	18	16	7	99 (214)
-- Independent	37	18	19	18	7	99 (328)
-- Republican	27	28	16	23	6	100 (232)
<u>Formation of Third Party</u>						
-- Strongly/Mildly Favor	42	24	18	14	2	100 (491)
-- Strongly/Mildly Oppose	24	19	21	27	9	100 (229)
"Some people are now being considered as possible third party candidates for president in 1996. Would you be very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely to vote for ... if he ran as a third party candidate? [Q.18A - D]						
	<u>Very Likely</u>	<u>Somewhat Likely</u>	<u>Not Too Likely</u>	<u>Not at All Likely</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total (n)</u>
a. Ross Perot	10%	18%	20%	49%	2%	99% (804)
-- Registered Voters	10	17	20	50	2	99 (707)

<u>Party ID</u>							
-- Democrat	9	14	22	54	2	101	(214)
-- Independent	13	22	20	42	3	100	(328)
-- Republican	7	18	19	56	1	101	(232)
<u>1992 Vote</u>							
-- Bush	5	15	22	58	1	101	(269)
-- Clinton	4	12	22	60	2	100	(291)
-- Perot	46	28	10	15	--	99	(78)
<u>Formation of Third Party</u>							
-- Strongly/Mildly Favor	15	22	23	38	1	99	(491)
-- Strongly/Mildly Oppose	4	12	16	67	1	100	(229)
b. General Colin Powell	20%	36%	15%	22%	7%	100%	(804)
-- Registered Voters	20	36	15	22	7	100	(707)
<u>Party ID</u>							
-- Democrat	20	30	16	27	7	100	(214)
-- Independent	24	38	12	18	9	101	(328)
-- Republican	17	38	18	23	3	99	(232)
<u>Formation of Third Party</u>							
-- Strongly/Mildly Favor	25	44	13	12	6	100	(491)
-- Strongly/Mildly Oppose	13	24	19	38	6	100	(229)
c. Senator Bill Bradley	20%	38%	13%	25%	3%	99%	(804)
-- Registered Voters	21	39	11	26	3	100	(707)
<u>Party ID</u>							
-- Democrat	26	44	9	18	3	100	(214)
-- Independent	24	39	11	22	4	100	(328)
-- Republican	10	33	19	37	1	100	(232)
<u>Formation of Third Party</u>							
-- Strongly/Mildly Favor	23	43	13	18	2	99	(491)
-- Strongly/Mildly Oppose	14	32	15	37	2	100	(229)
<u>Disappointed in Bradley's Decision</u>							
-- Very/Somewhat Disappointed ³⁷		47	7	7	3	101	(332)
-- Not too/Not at all Disappointed		10	33	17	38	2	100
		(434)					

d. Jesse Jackson	8%	17%	19%	54%	2%	100%	(804)
-- Registered Voters	8	17	19	54	2	100	(707)
<u>Party ID</u>							
-- Democrat	11	19	25	42	2	99	(214)
-- Independent	9	20	16	52	3	100	(328)
-- Republican	1	10	18	70	1	100	(232)
<u>Formation of Third Party</u>							
-- Strongly/Mildly Favor	9	20	20	50	1	100	(491)
-- Strongly/Mildly Oppose	6	13	18	62	2	101	(229)

"What is the main reason you consider yourself a Democrat?" [Q.XD1A]
 "What is the main reason you consider yourself a Republican?" [Q.XD1B]
 "What is the main reason you consider yourself an Independent?" [Q.XD1C]*

Democrats (n=188)

Agree with party on issues/philosophy/values	41%
Party more in tune with people	22
Tradition	15
Anti-Republican	8
Candidates/politicians in party	5
Other	<u>9</u>
Total	100%

Republicans (n=213)

Agree with party on issues/philosophy/values	60%
Tradition	10
Anti-Democrat/Anti-Clinton	7
Anti-government	6
Candidates/politicians in party	4
Party more in tune with people	2
Other	<u>10</u>
Total	100%

Independents (n=254)

Vote for better candidates	32%
Anti-party	24
Prefer to make up own mind`	15
Moderate philosophy	9
Vote for both parties	6
Vote on issues	5
Other	<u>9</u>
Total	100%

"In politics as of today, do you consider yourself a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or something else?" [Q.D1]

	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Other/ DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1995	28%	42%	26%	4%	100%	(804)
<u>Ideology</u>						
-- Liberal	55	36	7	2	100	(139)
-- Moderate	27	46	22	5	100	(418)

* Figures represent the first response given to this question.

-- Conservative	15	34	51	1	101	(208)
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Education

-- Less than High School	35	45	15	5	100	(54)
-- High School Graduate	28	40	29	3	100	(225)
-- More than High School	26	41	28	4	99	(525)

Age

-- 18 to 29	30	48	15	7	100	(117)
-- 30 to 49	26	44	27	3	100	(377)
-- 50 to 64	27	43	28	2	100	(170)
-- 65 and over	33	30	35	3	101	(120)

Income

-- Under \$30,000	34	41	21	4	100	(153)
-- \$30,000 to \$50,000	26	46	23	4	99	(201)
-- \$50,000 to \$70,000	25	43	31	1	100	(151)
-- Over \$70,000	26	42	31	2	101	(227)

Gender

-- Male (403)		23	43	30	4	100
-- Female	34	40	22	4	100	(401)

Race

-- White	24	42	31	3	100	(637)
-- Non-white	41	42	10	6	99	(156)

Region

-- North (388)		29	39	27	4	99
-- Central	30	39	27	5	101	(203)
-- South (213)		25	48	23	4	100

Type of Residence

-- Major urban center	43	34	15	8	100	(63)
-- Urban center and surrounds	34	40	25	2	101	(121)
-- Older town and suburb	29	37	29	5	100	(194)
-- Newer suburb	25	44	27	3	99	(279)
-- Rural (134)		20	51	26	3	100