

# The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

**EMBARGOED – NOT FOR RELEASE UNTIL: THURSDAY, OCTOBER, 24, 1996**

RELEASE: SL/EP 59-2 (EP 109-2)

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

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 under-represents the larger group of voters who might change their minds prior to, or even on, Election Day.

All of the percentages in this release are based on New Jersey residents who report they are currently registered to vote.

The *Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll* web address: <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~eaglepol>

## **NEW JERSEYANS ASSESS 1996 POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS**

The impressions New Jersey's registered voters have of the tone of the Presidential campaign are very different from what they think about the U.S. Senate race. Half of the voters say that, in general, this year's Presidential campaign has been positive. In comparison, half say the U.S. Senate race has been negative. In both elections, the Republican campaigns are viewed as being more negative than the Democrats'.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll* conducted by telephone between October 10 and 20 with 810 registered New Jersey voters also found that, in general, the overall negative or positive tone of the campaign has not made a difference in voters' plans to go out and vote.

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## ***THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN***

A majority of registered New Jersey voters say that they feel this year's Presidential campaign has been positive. Overall, while 55 percent view the campaign as positive, 33 percent say it is negative, 8 percent report it is both positive and negative (5%) or neither (3%), and 5 percent do not give an opinion. More Clinton supporters than Dole voters say the race has been positive. Sixty-two percent of the voters who are firm in their selection of Bill Clinton as President say the race has been positive compared to 51 percent of those who are firm for Dole who feel this way. Among those voters who do not have a firm commitment to either candidate, 49 percent say the race has been positive compared to 36 percent who say it has been negative.

Among those voters who say the campaign has been negative, about three times more New Jersey voters feel that the Dole has been more negative than the Clinton campaign, by a margin of 62 to 18 percent. In addition, 13 percent say both campaigns have been negative and 6 percent do not have an opinion. More voters who are firm in their selection of the Republican candidate are more likely than those who are firm in their selection of Clinton see their own candidate's campaign as negative. Among firm Dole supporters, 48 percent say Clinton's campaign has been negative and 23 percent view their own candidate's campaign as negative. In comparison, among firm Clinton supporters just 4 percent say their own candidate's campaign is more negative and 85 percent say Dole's is more negative. Voters who are not firm in their selection of a Presidential candidate are three times more likely to say the Dole campaign (62%) has been more negative than the Clinton campaign (18%), while 10 percent both have been equally negative.

Overall, for 77 percent of the voters, their impression of the way that the Presidential campaign has been conducted has not made a difference in their decision to go out and vote,

compared to 19 percent who say they are more likely to vote and 4 percent who are less likely. By a margin of 24 to 12 percent, New Jersey voters whose view of the Presidential campaign is positive are twice as likely as those whose views are negative to say that they are more likely to go out and vote; and those who see the campaign as negative (8%) are more likely than those who say it is positive (2%) to say they are less likely to vote.

### ***THE SENATORIAL CAMPAIGN***

New Jersey voters' impressions of the U.S. Senate race between Democrat Bob Torricelli and Republican Dick Zimmer are very different from their opinions about the Presidential campaign. A majority of registered New Jersey voters say that they feel this year's Senatorial campaign has been negative. Overall, while 55 percent view the campaign as negative, 17 percent say it is positive, and 3 percent report it is both positive and negative (2%) or neither (1%). In addition, underscoring the lower visibility of the U.S. Senate race, 25 percent do not have an opinion about the overall tone of this campaign.

About 6-in-10 of both firm Zimmer (62%) and Torricelli (62%) supporters say the race has been negative compared to about 1-in-5 who say it has been positive. Among those voters who do not have a firm commitment to either candidate, 49 percent say the race has been negative, compared to 16 percent who say it has been positive and 33 percent who do not have an opinion about the Senate campaign.

Among those voters who say the campaign has been negative, more New Jersey voters feel that the Zimmer campaign has been more negative than the Torricelli campaign, by a margin of 38 to 22 percent. In addition, 26 percent say both campaigns have been negative and 15 percent do not have an opinion. More voters who are firm in their selection of the Zimmer than those who are firm in their selection of Torricelli see their candidate's own campaign as negative. Among firm Zimmer supporters, 43 percent say Torricelli's campaign

has been negative, 17 percent view their own candidate's campaign as negative, 30 percent say both campaign's have been equally negative, and 10 percent do not have an opinion. In comparison, among firm Torricelli supporters who view the campaign as negative, just 7 percent say their own candidate's campaign is more negative, 70 percent say Zimmer's is more negative, 19 percent say both are equally negative, and 4 percent do not have an opinion. Voters who are not firm in their selection of a Senate candidate and who see the campaign as negative are more likely to say the Zimmer campaign (32%) has been more negative than the Torricelli campaign (19%), while 26 percent say both have been equally negative and 23 percent do not have an opinion.

Overall, for 76 percent of the voters, their impression of the way that the Senatorial campaign has been conducted has not made a difference in their decision to go out and vote, compared to 10 percent who say they are more likely to vote and 10 percent who are less likely. By a margin of 21 to 10 percent, New Jersey voters whose view of the Senatorial campaign is positive are twice as likely as those whose views are negative to say that they are more likely to go out and vote. Those who see the campaign as negative (16%) are more likely than those who see it as positive (3%) to say they are less likely to vote.

Bob Torricelli's relationship with South Korean businessman Harvard Jee is one specific campaign issue that has been used by the Zimmer campaign. However, at this time, this issue does not seem to have had any impact on the choice for U.S. Senate. Overall, 62 percent of New Jersey voters have not heard about Harvard Jee. Among the 38 percent who have heard about it, 20 percent say it will not make any difference in their vote choice, 9 percent say it will make them more likely to vote for Zimmer, 2 percent say it will make them more likely to vote for Torricelli, and 7 percent say they do not know what the impact will be.

Among those who have not yet firmly committed to either Senate candidate, 71 percent had not heard about Harvard Jee, and 29 percent had heard about it. Sixteen

percent of the uncommitted voters who had heard about it say it will not make any difference in their vote choice and 5 percent say it will make them more likely to vote for Dick Zimmer. About half of the voters who are firm in their choice of Zimmer (52%) and Torricelli (53%) have not heard of Harvard Jee. Among firm Zimmer voters who have heard, 28 percent say this information will make them more likely to vote for their candidate compared to 14 percent who say it will not make any difference. In comparison, 32 percent of firm Torricelli voters who have information about Harvard Jee say it will not make any difference in their vote choice while 7 percent say they are more likely to vote for Torricelli and 1 percent say they are more likely to support Zimmer.

### ***INTERNET USE***

The 1996 election is the first where there is a range of different information available to voters on the Internet. Among New Jersey voters, 6 percent have used the Internet to get information about the current political campaign, compared to 34 percent who have use of the Internet but have not used it for the political campaign, and 60 percent who do not use the Internet. The group that is most likely to use the Internet are voters in households with over \$70,000 annual family income (11%). Among supporters for the Presidential candidates, firm Clinton supporters (8%) are more likely than firm Dole supporters (4%) and those who are not firm in their choice of a candidate (3%) to get information about the campaign on the Internet.

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The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll was conducted between October 10 and 20, 1996, when a random sample of 810 New Jersey registered voters, 18 years and older, was interviewed by telephone. Figures based on this sample size are subject to a sampling error of about  $\pm 3.5$  percent at a 95 percent confidence interval.

The survey was conducted in two waves: 403 interviews were conducted October 10-15 (between the first and second Presidential debates) and 407 interviews were conducted between October 17-20 (after the final Presidential debate).

This release of the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll includes two classifications of registered voters based on their support for a candidate: 1) "Vote Choice - Traditional" refers to the initial preference for a candidate in a particular election. This group classification includes both firm and soft supporters of a candidate and groups of people who lean toward a candidate with undecided voters; 2) "Vote Choice - Firm" refers to how firmly voters support a candidate. A firm voter selects a candidate and says they are very sure about their choice and will not change their mind before the election. A not firm voter either selects a candidate and says they might change their mind or is initially undecided in their vote choice. Only voters who are firm are allocated to a specific candidate while all others are referred to as not firm. A 1993 Eagleton post-election study showed that the "Vote Choice - Traditional" underrepresents the group of voters who might change their minds prior to or even 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.

**Note: The percentages in this release are based on registered voters.**

**BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP59-2 (EP109-2), OCTOBER 24, 1996**

"Based upon what you have seen or heard of the Presidential campaign, would you say that in general this year's campaign has been positive or negative?" [Q.27]

	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1996 Total</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(810)</b>
<i>Vote Choice - Firm</i>							
--Firm Dole	51	33	4	4	9	101	(190)
--Not Firm	49	36	6	4	6	101	(199)
--Firm Clinton	62	30	5	2	2	101	(380)

"[IF "NEGATIVE" OR "BOTH" in Q.27] In your view, whose campaign has been more negative, [Clinton's] or [Dole's]?" [Q.27A]

	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Dole</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1996 Total</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>(306)</b>

*Vote Choice - Firm*

--Firm Dole	48	23	20	9	100	(69)
--Not Firm	18	62	10	11	101	(84)
--Firm Clinton	4	85	10	2	101	(132)

“Has the way this year’s Presidential campaign been conducted made you more likely or less likely to go out and vote, or hasn’t it made a difference?” [Q.27B]

	<u>More Likely</u>	<u>Less Likely</u>	<u>No Difference</u>	<u>Don’t Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1996 Total</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(810)</b>
<i><u>Vote Choice - Firm</u></i>						
--Firm Dole	16	2	81	1	100	(190)
--Not Firm	16	6	77	1	100	(199)
--Firm Clinton	23	3	74	--	100	(380)
<i><u>View of Campaign</u></i>						
--Positive	24	2	74	--	100	(444)
--Negative/Both	12	8	79	1	100	(306)

“Based upon what you have seen or heard of the Senate campaign, would you say that in general this year’s campaign has been positive or negative?” [Q.48]

	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>Don’t Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1996 Total</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(810)</b>
<i><u>Vote Choice - Firm</u></i>							
--Firm Zimmer	19	62	2	2	16	101	(169)
--Not Firm	16	49	1	1	33	100	(410)
--Firm Torricelli	19	62	2	1	16	100	(190)

“[IF “NEGATIVE” OR “BOTH” in Q.48] In your view, whose campaign has been more negative, [Zimmer’s] or [Torricelli’s]?” [Q.48A]

	<u>Zimmer</u>	<u>Torricelli</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Don’t Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1996 Total</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(455)</b>
<i><u>Vote Choice - Firm</u></i>						
--Firm Zimmer	17	43	30	10	100	(107)
--Not Firm	32	19	26	23	100	(205)
--Firm Torricelli	70	7	19	4	100	(121)
<i><u>Vote Choice - Traditional</u></i>						
--Zimmer	21	38	29	12	100	(166)
--Undecided	19	18	31	31	99	(77)
--Torricelli	63	8	19	10	100	(190)

“Has the way this year’s Senate campaign been conducted made you more likely or less likely to go out and vote, or hasn’t it made a difference?” [Q.48B]

	<u>More Likely</u>	<u>Less Likely</u>	<u>No Difference</u>	<u>Don’t Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1996 Total</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(810)</b>
<u>Vote Choice - Firm</u>						
--Firm Zimmer	11	7	76	6	100	(169)
--Not Firm	7	11	78	4	100	(410)
--Firm Torricelli	18	7	75	1	101	(190)
<u>View of Campaign</u>						
--Positive	21	3	76	--	100	(138)
--Negative/Both	10	16	73	2	101	(455)

“Have you heard anything about Bob Torricelli’s relationship with South Korean businessman Harvard Jee [GEE] which has been mentioned in some campaign ads and the press? [IF “YES,” PROBE: Does what you know about this relationship make you more likely to vote for Torricelli or more likely to vote for Zimmer, or does it make no difference in your vote choice for Senate?]” [Q.X48C]

	<u>Yes-- More Likely Torricelli</u>	<u>Yes-- More Likely Zimmer</u>	<u>Yes-- No Difference</u>	<u>Don’t Know Impact</u>	<u>Not Heard Of</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1996 Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(784)</b>
<u>Vote Choice - Firm</u>							
--Firm Zimmer	--	28	14	7	52	101	(166)
--Not Firm	--	5	16	8	71	100	(395)
--Firm Torricelli	7	1	32	7	53	100	(184)

“And have you used an on-line service or the Internet to get information about the current political campaign?” [Q.55A]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Do Not Use The Internet</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1996 Total</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(810)</b>
<u>Gender</u>					
--Male	7	34	59	100	(387)
--Female	4	34	62	100	(423)
<u>Age</u>					
--18 - 29	8	48	44	100	(112)
--30 - 49	9	43	48	100	(358)
--50 - 64	3	30	67	100	(175)
--65+	1	8	91	100	(147)
<u>Income</u>					
--Less than \$30,000	4	13	83	100	(156)
--\$30,000 to \$50,000	4	32	63	99	(178)
--\$50,000 to \$70,000	6	41	52	99	(128)
--Over \$70,000	11	50	39	100	(225)
<u>Vote Choice - Firm</u>					
--Firm Dole	4	33	63	100	(190)
--Not Firm	3	32	65	100	(199)
--Firm Clinton	8	34	57	99	(380)