

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

JUNE 21, 1998 CONTACT: CLIFF ZUKIN
RELEASE: SL/EP 69-2 (EP119-2)

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in the Sunday, June 21 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll."

IMPRESSIONS OF NEW JERSEY'S MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURES: 20 YEARS OF POSITIVE FEELINGS LED BY BILL BRADLEY

JOB PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Governor: Stable and Mixed President : Down but Still Positive

There have been seven major figures in New Jersey's recent political history--people who have run for and won statewide office, serving as Governor or U.S. Senator during the last two decades. And all seven are popular with New Jersey's citizens. But one stands head and shoulders over the rest in terms of public regard--former Senator Bill Bradley, who retired in 1996. Bradley is thinking about running for President in the year 2000.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll asked a random sample of the New Jersey public for their impressions of the seven statewide winners: Bradley, current Senators Frank Lautenberg and Bob Torricelli, Governor Christie Whitman and former Governors Jim Florio, Tom Kean and Brendan Byrne. The findings suggest New Jerseyans feel they have been well served by their leaders. Each of the seven received more favorable than unfavorable evaluations from Garden State citizens.

Positive evaluations of Bradley outnumbered negative ones by a remarkable 77 to 7 percent; fully 40 percent of the public reported having a "very" favorable opinion of the former three-term Senator. Bradley was first elected to the Senate in 1978, defeating Jeff Bell, who in turn had defeated incumbent Republican Senator Clifford Case a primary election earlier that year.

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll • Eagleton Institute of Politics

191 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Phone: 732-932-9384 - Website: <http://slerp.rutgers.edu> - Fax: 732-932-6778

Also dear to the heart of New Jersey is former Republican Governor Thomas Kean. Sixty-five percent have a favorable impression of Kean, who led state tourism commercials intoning "New Jersey and You: Perfect Together." Only 11 percent have an unfavorable impression of Kean, who is now president of Drew University in Madison. Kean was elected in 1981 by a razor thin margin of less than 2,000 votes over Florio. Four years later Kean won a landslide reelection by almost 800,000 votes over Democratic opponent Peter Shapiro.

Former Democratic Governor Jim Florio, who followed Kean in office, is the most controversial of the New Jersey 7. Half of citizens in the state (49 percent) hold Florio in positive regard, but 39 percent say they have an unfavorable view of him. The remaining 11 percent express no opinion. Vilified on talk radio as architect of a 2.8 billion dollar tax hike, angry voters gave Republicans veto-proof majorities of both legislative houses in 1991, midway through Florio's term. Florio almost rehabilitated himself in voters' minds, narrowly losing reelection to Christie Whitman by 26,000 votes in 1993.

Whitman herself is well-liked--in fact her overall image rating runs well ahead of her job performance rating. Favorable impressions of the Republican Governor run ahead of unfavorable ones by a margin of two-to-one--64 percent to 32 percent. Only four percent have no impression of the current Governor, who barely won reelection over Democrat Jim McGreevy last year also by a margin of about 26,000 votes.

The June poll finds 47 percent giving the Governor positive marks of "excellent" (11 percent) or "good" (36 percent) for her performance in office, while 49 percent give her generally negative ratings of "only fair" (34 percent) or "poor" (15 percent). The Governor's job performance rating is basically unchanged from February of this year. Negative job performance ratings of Whitman outnumber positive ones by a margin of 59 to 37 percent among Democrats and by 52 to 42 percent among Independents. This trend is reversed among New Jersey self-identified Republicans, where positive job ratings outnumber negative ones by a healthy 68 to 30 percent margin, with the remainder expressing no opinion.

New Jersey's two U.S. Senators--Lautenbrg and Torricelli--are viewed similarly. Favorable evaluations outnumber unfavorable ones for both Senators among state residents, although significantly fewer venture opinions of Torricelli, who was first elected to Bradley's former seat in 1996. Lautenberg captured his Senate seat by besting Republican Millicent Fenwick in 1982. Favorable impressions of Lautenberg outnumber negative ones by a margin of 60 to 15 percent, with 25 percent expressing no opinion. Favorable impressions of Torricelli outnumber negative ones by 48 to 13 percent, with 38 percent expressing no opinion of the first term Senator.

Former democratic Governor Brendan Byrne, who was first elected in 1973 and served two terms, is starting to fade in the state's political memory, much as his name has been removed from what is now "Continental Arena" in the Meadowlands. A large slice of the public--44 percent--have no impression of the former judge who presided over the great income tax battles of the early 1970s in his first term in office, as well as development of the Meadowlands and gambling in Atlantic City. Byrne is fondly remembered by 38 percent, while 18 percent hold an unflattering view of him.

Cliff Zukin, director of the Rutgers-based poll commented, "New Jerseyans appear to well satisfied with the quality people they have elected to statewide office. And for pretty good reason. Those who have served the state appear to have done so with integrity and as genuine public servants. There has not been a serious scandal since Harrison Williams left office due to the ABSCAM scandal in the late 1970s."

Statewide assessment of President Bill Clinton has cooled somewhat from its peak in February, when all groups in the electorate rallied to support him in the wake of allegations that he had a sexual relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky, but remain decidedly positive. Currently 61 percent give him positive marks of excellent or good for his handling of the Presidency while 37 percent give him negative ratings of only fair or poor. In February, positive assessments outnumbered negative ones by a wider margin of 69 to 29 percent, with the remainder undecided.

The small drop in Clinton's overall job performance rating masks a more significant change in the *intensity* of New Jerseyans feelings about the President. In

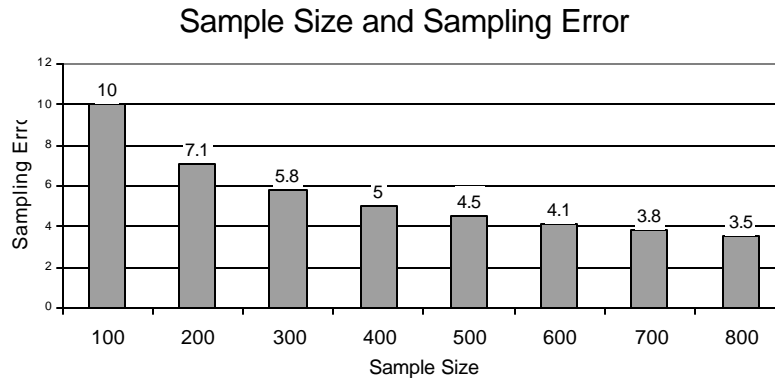
February, the 69 percent giving him positive evaluations was comprised of 27 percent who said he was doing an "excellent" job and 42 percent who said he was doing a "good" job. The division of June's 61 percent positive job rating is much different--just 14 percent say he is doing an "excellent" job while 47 percent give him a job performance rating of "good." The percentage of Democrats saying Clinton is doing an "excellent" job dropped from 44 to 18 percent between February and June. Independents dropped from 24 to 15 percent, while the number of Republicans offering this extremely positive assessment was unchanged--9 percent in February and 7 percent in the current survey.

The poll was conducted with a random sample of 600 residents interviewed by telephone between June 8 and 11. The poll's margin of error is plus or minus 4 percent.

Copyright June 21, 1998, The Eagleton Institute and The Star-Ledger.

BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP69-2 (EP119-2), SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 1998

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll was conducted between June 8 and 11, 1998, when a scientifically selected random sample of 602 New Jersey adult residents was interviewed by telephone. All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error for the total sample size of 602 is just over ± 4 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jerseyans were found to have a favorable opinion of the Governor, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46 and 54 percent (50 ± 4) had all New Jerseyans been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such separate figures reported for men and women, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. The following chart shows the relationship between sample size and sampling error.



Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects. The verbatim wording of all questions asked are reproduced in this background memo. The sample has been stratified based on county and the data have been weighted education to insure an accurate proportional representation of the state. Two versions of the questionnaire were used in this study. Not all questions were on both versions.

How would you rate the job Christie Whitman is doing as Governor, excellent, good, only fair or poor? [Q2]

	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	DK	Total	(n)
June, 1998	11%	36%	34%	15%	4%	100%	(602)
Party ID							
Democrat	7	30	42	17	4	100	(195)
Independent	7	35	34	18	6	100	(213)
Republican	23	45	24	6	2	100	(156)

PAST SURVEYS

February, 1998	10	39	33	13	4	99	(802)
October, 1997	9	34	32	21	5	101	(800)
September, 1997	10	37	32	16	5	100	(800)
June, 1997	9	40	29	17	5	100	(800)
February, 1997	10	42	29	15	5	101	(800)
September, 1996	12	41	29	12	6	100	(808)
February, 1996	9	40	34	15	3	101	(804)
November, 1995	9	43	32	10	6	100	(803)
September, 1995	8	40	36	10	6	100	(804)
May, 1995	11	42	29	11	7	100	(802)
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 Bill Clinton is doing as President, excellent, good, only fair or poor? [Q3]

	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	DK	Total	(n)
June, 1998	14%	47%	27%	10%	3%	101%	(602)
<i>Party ID</i>							
Democrat	18	64	16	1	1	100	(195)
Independent	15	44	26	11	5	101	(213)
Republican	7	32	40	21	1	101	(156)
PAST SURVEYS							
February, 1998	27	42	19	10	2	100	(802)
<i>Party ID</i>							
Democrat	44	42	10	2	1	99	(242)
Independent	24	43	20	10	2	99	(335)
Republican	9	38	33	18	2	100	(186)
February, 1997	8	43	34	13	1	99	(800)
October, 1996	9	46	30	14	2	101	(808)

I'm going to read you the names of some political figures and would like you to tell me if your opinion of each is very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable. If you don't have an opinion, just say so. First, how about [Q4]

Current New Jersey U.S. Senator Bob Torricelli [Q4A]

	Favorable		Unfavorable		No Opinion	Total	(n)
	Very	Some	Some	Very			
June, 1998	11%	37%	8%	5%	38%	99%	(602)
<i>Party ID</i>							
Democrat	17	42	5	2	33	99	(195)
Independent	9	38	10	6	37	100	(213)
Republican	7	33	8	11	41	100	(156)

Current New Jersey U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg [Q4B]

	Favorable		Unfavorable		No Opinion	Total	(n)
	Very	Some	Some	Very			
June, 1998	19%	41%	9%	6%	25%	100%	(602)
<i>Party ID</i>							
Democrat	24	43	9	0	24	100	(195)
Independent	16	40	7	9	27	99	(213)
Republican	18	41	12	9	20	100	(156)

New Jersey Governor Christie Whitman [Q4C]

	Favorable		Unfavorable		No Opinion	Total	(n)
	Very	Some	Some	Very			
June, 1998	22%	42%	18%	14%	4%	100%	(602)
February, 1998	17	29	13	14	27	100	(802)
<i>Party ID</i>							
Democrat	13	44	24	16	3	100	(195)
Independent	14	45	20	16	6	101	(213)
Republican	47	38	9	6	0	100	(156)

Former Governor Thomas Kean [Q4D]

	Favorable		Unfavorable		No Opinion	Total	(n)
	Very	Some	Some	Very			
June, 1998	24%	41%	8%	3%	24%	100%	(304)
<i>Party ID</i>							
Democrat	16	41	11	4	28	100	(97)
Independent	22	41	8	3	27	101	(109)
Republican	40	40	1	2	16	99	(76)

Former Governor Brendan Byrne [Q4E]

	Favorable		Unfavorable		No Opinion	Total	(n)
	Very	Some	Some	Very			
June, 1998	11%	27%	13%	5%	44%	100%	(304)
<i>Party ID</i>							
Democrat	9	24	15	3	50	101	(97)
Independent	14	30	10	5	41	100	(109)
Republican	8	32	13	8	40	101	(76)

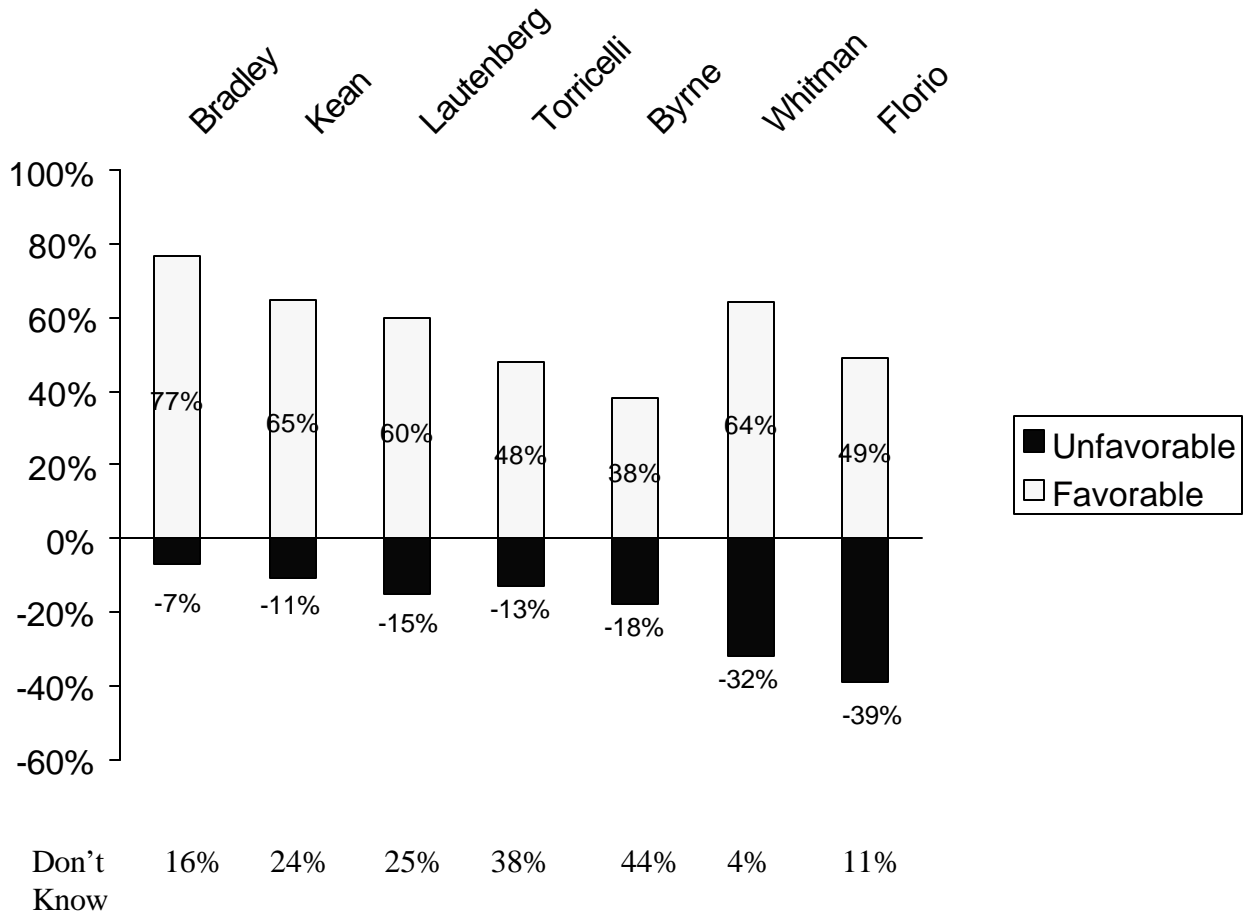
Former U.S. Senator Bill Bradley [Q4F]

	Favorable		Unfavorable		No Opinion	Total	(n)
	Very	Some	Some	Very			
June, 1998	40%	37%	4%	3%	16%	100%	(298)
<i>Party ID</i>							
Democrat	57	30	2	0	12	101	(98)
Independent	34	39	5	3	19	100	(104)
Republican	29	45	7	7	12	100	(80)

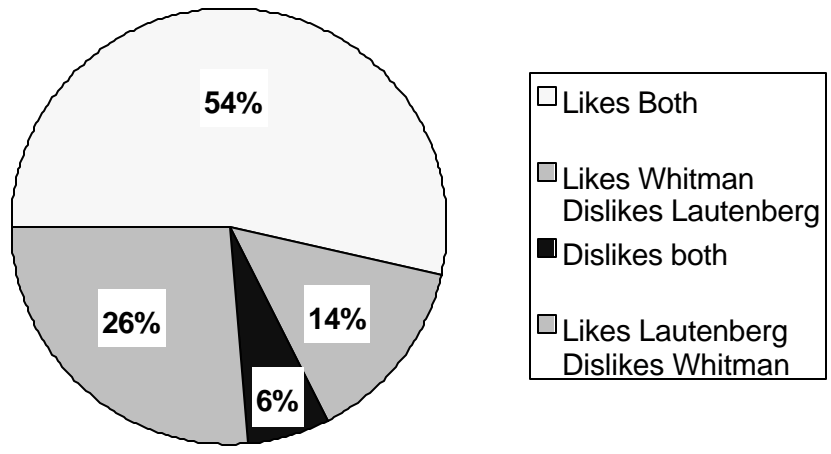
Former Governor Jim Florio [Q4G]

	Favorable		Unfavorable		No Opinion	Total	(n)
	Very	Some	Some	Very			
June, 1998	15%	34%	18%	21%	11%	99%	(298)
<i>Party ID</i>							
Democrat	24	42	13	10	11	100	(98)
Independent	16	33	23	15	13	100	(104)
Republican	6	28	18	42	7	101	(80)

Politician Popularity



Lautenberg & Whitman



Torricelli & Lautenberg

