

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in the Sunday, May 9 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to *A The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll.*

ONE STATE, TWO VOICES:

RACIAL PROFILING ANGERS BLACKS; WHITES

INDIFFERENT

GOVERNOR'S JOB PERFORMANCE RATING STABLE

The controversy swirling around the State Police's use of racial profiling--which has engulfed Governor Whitman's nomination of Attorney General Peter Verniero to the Supreme Court--is viewed very differently by White and Black New Jerseyans.

Whites view the issue as a tempest in a teapot. Unfortunate and regrettable, but not that big a deal. While there have been some changes for the worse in perceptions of how fair the State Police are and in how they treat minorities, the overall image of the troopers remains decidedly positive.

For Blacks, and to a lesser extent Latinos, the issue of racial profiling is a hurricane. Great resentment and anger have come with the state's acknowledgment that some members of the state police are in fact guilty of stopping motorists based on racial characteristics. Support for the state police has dropped dramatically among minority residents over the past year. The vast majority of minorities in New Jersey say they are bothered "a lot" by this practice and want those troopers found guilty of "profiling" punished.

Both Governor Whitman and Attorney General Verniero receive lukewarm ratings for how they have handled the controversy. Yet the Governor's overall job approval rating and the rating given to the State Police remain largely intact when

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measured against earlier surveys. At this point there is little evidence that the Governor's stature has been hurt by the controversy surrounding this issue.

These are some of the main findings of the most recent Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll, conducted by telephone with 800 state residents between April 28 and May 5.

The issue of State Police conduct and use of racial profiling has clearly caught the attention of state residents--better than four-in-five (82%) say they have read or heard something about the matter. However, few in the Garden State seem taken aback to learn that the State Police have used racial characteristics in deciding who to pull over. Just one-in-five say they were Asurprised≡ by the state's admission that troopers have stopped people because of their race. There were no differences between Blacks, Whites and Latinos in responses to this question.

Whitman's job approval rating is largely unchanged from January of this year. The current survey finds 46 percent of New Jerseyans giving her clearly positive ratings of Aexcellent≡ or Agood≡ and 50 percent saying she is doing an Aonly fair≡ (34%) or Apoor≡ (16%) job as Governor. In January positive ratings outnumbered negative ones by a reversed figure of 50 to 46 percent, although the change is within the poll's margin of error. However, just one-quarter of Black New Jerseyans currently give the Governor a positive job performance rating.

Three-quarters of New Jerseyans now say the State Police are doing an Aexcellent≡ or Agood≡ job patrolling the state's major roads, down just slightly a poll conducted in May of 1998 before the controversy came to center stage. However, the overall figure masks a tremendous

difference between White and Black New Jersey citizens. By a overwhelming margin of 84 percent positive (A excellent and A good) to 13 percent negative (A only fair and A poor) White

New Jerseyans view the job the State Police are doing in favorable terms--basically unchanged from last May. However, where last May's poll found positive assessments of the State Police outnumbering negative ones by a margin of 56 to 30 percent among Blacks, there has been a sea change in perceptions over the last 12 months. This May's survey finds just 31 percent of Blacks rating the job done by the State Police positively while 63 percent offer negative assessments.

In other shifts of perception over the last year:

- Where Blacks were evenly divided in their belief that the State Police enforce the rules of the road in a fair manner last May (46% positive, 48% negative), this year's survey finds a decided judgment to the negative on this score (25% positive, 66% negative). Among whites, positive evaluations of the State Police on this score have changed little--declining slightly from 77 to 72 percent, within the poll's margin of error.
- The percentage giving positive ratings ("excellent" or "good") to the State Police for using good judgment in deciding who to pull over and ticket decreased from 28 to 10 percent among Blacks in the last year, and from 66 to 57 percent among Whites.
- The percentage of Blacks giving positive ratings to the troopers for "treating all drivers the same regardless of race, sex or age" dropped from 20 to 10 percent from last May to this. It dropped from 61 to 49 percent among Whites over the same time period.
- The percentage of Whites saying that the State Police treat minorities worse than other people doubled between May of 1998 and 1999--going from 14 to 28 percent. Among Blacks the number increased from 56 to 64 percent.

The issue of racial profiling appears to strike a nerve in Black New Jerseyans that many Whites do not feel. The acknowledgment that some state troopers pulled over motorists because of their race bothered 77 percent of Black New Jerseyans "a lot". By

way of comparison, just 41 percent of Whites report that same level of feeling. Whereas 83 percent of Black New Jerseyans want to see guilty troopers punished (11 percent do not and 6 percent are undecided), a lesser amount of White New Jerseyans are similarly inclined. While a majority--56 percent--want to see guilty troopers punished, 31 percent do not, and 13 percent are undecided.

Black and White New Jerseyans are also divided on the extent to which they believe troopers engaged in profiling and in how much confidence they have in whether the reforms of State Police practices called for in the Attorney General's report will actually bring change. Just 8 percent of Whites believe that "most" troopers are guilty of profiling, compared to 29 percent of Blacks. Two-thirds of White New Jerseyans say they have "a lot" or "some" confidence that changes mandated by the state government will result in the end of racial profiling. In contrast, fewer than half of Black New Jerseyans (47%) express this level of confidence that the state will be able to end the practice of racial profiling.

Both the Governor and Attorney General receive tepid evaluations for how they have dealt with the profiling controversy. While they appear to receive little credit for confronting the issue, they also appear to receive little blame for its handling. One-third (34%) of state residents give Governor Whitman positive marks of excellent or good for her handling of the investigation into the State Police's involvement in profiling, while 39 percent give her largely negative ones of only fair or poor. The remaining 28 percent offer no opinion. Whites are roughly evenly divided on the Governor's performance in this area, while Blacks are divided two-to-one towards the negative.

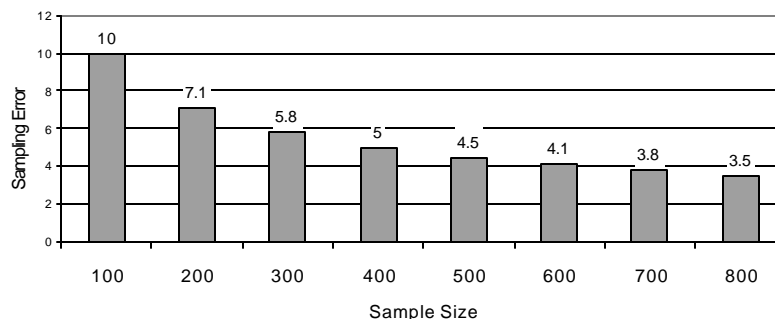
Attorney General Peter Verniero is largely unknown to New Jerseyans. When asked to name the Attorney General just 9 percent volunteered Verniero's name, although another half of all state residents said they recognized his name. The remaining 43 percent admitted they had never heard of him before. Among those able to recognize or name Verniero as the Attorney General, about one-third (30%) felt he had done an excellent or good job handling the investigation of the State Police, while a similar number (32%) rated his job performance as only fair or poor, and just under 40 percent

offered no opinion. A slight plurality of Whites gave Verniero positive evaluations; a

BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE (EP122-1) MONDAY, MAY 9, 1999

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll was conducted between April 28 and May 6 1999, when a scientifically selected random sample of 800 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 800 is ± 3.5 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 46.5 and 53.5 percent (50 ± 3.5) 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 as 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. The sampling error for the racial grouping reported in this release is as follows: White, non-Hispanic \pm percent, Black \pm percent, Black and Hispanic \pm percent

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 is reproduced in this background memo. The sample has been stratified based on county and the data have been weighted on age and education to insure an accurate proportional representation of the state.

All figures reported in this release are for people *who reported being registered to vote* in New Jersey. The data have been weighted by education and age to ensure an accurate proportional representation of the state. A separate set of weights, identified as *1996 Model Voters* has also been used in the Senate election candidate match-up questions. The data were weighted to Voter News Service exit pool data of New Jerseyans leaving the polls in the 1996 presidential election. When applied, these weights ask the question, How would vote preferences play out if the 2000 electorate looked similar to the one that actually went to the polls in 1996 in terms of party, education, age and race. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

“How would you rate the job Christie Whitman is doing as Governor—excellent, good, only fair or poor?” [Q.9]

	<u>Excellen</u> <u>t</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
April/May, 1999	9%	37%	34%	16%	4%	100%	(802)
<i>By Party</i>							
--Democratic	6	32	40	20	2	100	(270)
--Independent	6	39	33	17	5	100	(299)
--Republican	19	45	26	8	2	100	(194)
<i>By Race</i>							
--White	10	39	32	16	3	100	(573)
--Non-white (All)	7	34	38	15	6	100	(220)
--Black	4	20	48	24	4	100	(86)
PAST SURVEYS							
--January, 1999	10	40	32	14	3	99	(800)
--September, 1998	9	39	33	14	6	101	(804)
--June, 1998	11	36	34	15	4	100	(602)
--February, 1998	10	39	33	13	4	99	(802)
--October, 1997	9	34	32	21	5	101	(800)

	<u>Excellen</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	t						
--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)

"I'd like to ask you some questions about the State Police here in New Jersey. These are the people who patrol the Turnpike, Garden State Parkway and state highways like Route 78, 295, 80 and 287. This is different from your local police and the sheriffs who patrol the areas around where you live. Overall, how would you describe the job the State Police do in patrolling the state's major roads--excellent, good, only fair, or poor?" [Q.SP1]

	<u>Excellen</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	26%	48%	14%	7%	5%	100	(802)
<i>By Race</i>							
-- White	33	51	11	2	4	101	(573)
-- Black	9	22	36	27	6	100	(86)
May, 1998	30	49	12	4	6	101	(556)
<i>By Race</i>							
-- White	35	51	8	2	4	100	(378)
-- Black	8	48	23	7	14	100	(100)

"Please tell me whether you think the State Police do an excellent, good, only fair, or poor job of each of the following." [The following three questions were rotated] [Q.SP1]

A. "Enforcing the rules of the road in a fair manner"

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	20%	43%	21%	9%	6%	99%	(802)
<i>By Race</i>							
-- White	25	47	18	4	5	99	(573)
-- Black	5	20	34	32	8	99	(86)
May, 1998	25	46	20	5	5	101	(556)
<i>By Race</i>							
-- White	28	49	15	3	5	100	(378)
-- Black	13	33	36	12	6	100	(100)

B. "Using good judgment in deciding who to pull over and ticket"

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	14%	34%	22%	20%	10%	100%	(802)
<u>By Race</u>							
-- White	18	39	20	13	9	99	(573)
-- Black	2	8	27	53	11	101	(86)
May, 1998	18	40	24	10	8	100	(556)
<u>By Race</u>							
-- White	23	43	22	5	8	101	(378)
-- Black	7	21	32	34	6	100	(100)

C. "Treating all drivers the same regardless of race, sex or age."

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	14%	27%	23%	23%	13%	100%	(802)
<u>By Race</u>							
-- White	18	31	23	14	14	100	(573)
-- Black	3	7	27	59	4	100	(86)
May, 1998	19	35	22	12	12	100	(556)
<u>By Race</u>							
-- White	22	39	19	6	13	99	(378)
-- Black	6	14	36	36	9	101	(100)

"Do you think the New Jersey State Police treat minorities better, worse or the same as other people?" [Q.SP3]

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u> <u>Depends</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	2%	34%	44%	20%	100%	(802)
<u>By Race</u>						
-- White	1	28	50	21	100	(573)
-- Black	2	64	21	14	101	(86)
-- Black & Hispanic	2	55	27	16	100	(168)
May, 1998	3	21	58	18	100	(556)
<u>By Race</u>						
-- White	3	14	64	19	100	(378)
-- Black	1	56	30	13	100	(100)
-- Black & Hispanic	4	43	38	15	100	(139)

“There has been some talk lately about the practice of profiling--where police target certain cars to stop based on the race or age of people in the cars. Some people say profiling is a good idea as it stops those people in groups who are more likely to commit crimes. Others say that it is a bad idea as it unfairly discriminates against minorities who are pulled over more often than others. How about you: Do you think profiling is a good or bad tool for the State Police to use?” [Q.SP4]

	<u>Good Tool</u>	<u>Bad Tool</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	28%	58%	14%	100%	(802)
<u>By Race</u>					
-- White	31	53	15	99	(573)
-- Black	11	78	12	101	(86)
-- Black & Hispanic	19	68	13	100	(168)
May, 1998	36	55	9	100	(556)
<u>By Race</u>					
-- White	40	52	8	100	(378)
-- Black	18	75	7	100	(100)
-- Black & Hispanic	25	68	7	100	(139)

“Courts have held that racial profiling is not legal. After denying for a long time that it was taking place in New Jersey, the Attorney General’s office recently released a report admitting that some State Police officers actually have engaged in racial profiling. Have you read or heard anything about this?” [Q.SP5]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	82%	18%	100%	(802)
<u>By Race</u>				
-- White	83	17	100	(573)
-- Black	85	15	100	(86)
-- Black & Hispanic	79	21	100	(168)

“Some people were surprised that the accusations of racial profiling turned out to be true; others expected them to be true. How about you-(Are/Were) you surprised to learn that some State Police stopped people because of their race, not surprised or hadn't you really thought about it?” [Q.SP6]

	<u>Surprised</u>	<u>Not Surprised</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	22%	66%	12%	100%	(802)
<u>By Race</u>					
-- White	22	66	13	101	(573)
-- Black	22	68	10	100	(86)
-- Black & Hispanic	23	69	8	100	(168)

“And how much does it bother you that some State Police stop people because of their race-is this something that bothers you a lot, some, a little or not at all?” [Q.SP7]

	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	47%	22%	12%	15%	4%	100%	(802)

By Race

-- White	41	24	14	18	4	101	(573)
-- Black	77	10	6	5	2	100	(86)
-- Black & Hispanic	65	16	10	7	2	100	(168)

“How many of the State Police do you think are guilty of racial profiling-most, just a few, or somewhere in between?” [Q.SP8]

	<u>Most</u>	<u>A Few</u>	<u>In Between</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	12%	46%	33%	9%	100%	(802)

By Race

-- White	8	50	33	9	100	(573)
-- Black	29	29	33	9	100	(86)
-- Black & Hispanic	25	34	34	7	100	(168)

“Do you think that those State Police found to have used racial profiling should be punished, or not?” [Q.SP9]

	<u>Punished</u>	<u>Not Punished</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	62%	26%	12%	100%	(802)

By Race

-- White	56	31	13	100	(573)
-- Black	83	11	6	100	(86)
-- Black & Hispanic	82	12	6	100	(168)

“Do you happen to know the name of the Attorney General in New Jersey” IF YES, PROBE: Who is that?
 SP 11 The Attorney General is Peter Verniero (Vah-Nih-Row)-Have you ever heard of him before?”
 [Q.SP10]

	<u>Names Verniero SP 10</u>	<u>Recognized Verniero SP11</u>	<u>Doesn't Recognize</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	9%	48%	43%	100%	(802)

By Race

-- White	11	48	41	100	(573)
-- Black	8	52	40	100	(86)
-- Black & Hispanic	6	49	45	100	(168)

“How would you rate the job Verniero has been doing handling the investigation of the State Police- excellent, good, only fair, or poor-or don't you have an opinion?” [Q.SP12A]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	5%	25%	20%	12%	39%	101%	(490)*

By Race

-- White	5	26	17	11	41	100	(364)*
-- Black & Hispanic	5	21	29	14	30	99	(98)*

*Excludes those not recognizing Verniero's name

“And how would you rate the job Governor Whitman has been doing handling the investigation of the State Police excellent, good, only fair, or poor-or don't you have an opinion?” [Q.SP12B]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	5%	28%	22%	17%	28%	100%	(801)

By Race

-- White	5	29	20	18	27	99	(573)
-- Black	4	20	33	22	21	100	(86)
--Black & Hispanic	6	24	26	17	27	100	(168)

“The Attorney General's report calls for a number of changes in State Police procedures and training. How much confidence do you have in the state government to make sure that racial profiling is stopped-a lot, some, just a little or none at all?” [Q.SP13]

	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May, 1999	18%	46%	20%	12%	5%	101%	(801)

By Race

-- White	20	48	18	11	4	101	(573)
-- Black	14	33	28	20	5	100	(86)
-- Black & Hispanic	10	39	27	18	6	100	(168)