

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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CONTACT: CLIFF ZUKIN

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A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in the Friday, June 16 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*"

THE 2000 NEW JERSEY SENATE ELECTION:

CORZINE EMERGES FROM PRIMARIES WITH EARLY LEAD

The 2000 New Jersey senate race between Democrat Jon Corzine and Republican Bob Franks starts off looking quite competitive, with Corzine holding an early lead, although a "soft" one.

While Corzine emerged from the primary better known, and holding a 7 to 10 percentage point lead over Franks, a greater number of New Jersey voters hold more negative as well as positive opinions of the retired Goldman Sachs CEO.

Corzine leads Franks by 43 to 33 percent, with 23 percent undecided among all New Jersey registered voters in the race to succeed retiring U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg. However, among those that poll analysts consider the most likely to vote in the election, the margin is a narrower 7 percentage points: 43 to 36 percent, with 20 percent undecided.

The latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted by telephone between June 8 and 13 with a scientifically selected sample of 802 New Jersey adult residents, 618 of whom reported being registered to vote. The sampling error associated with this number of registered voters is ± 4 percentage points.

Cliff Zukin, director of the Rutgers-based poll commented, "Neither candidate is well known by the New Jersey electorate, which means there is a lot of potential for movement before the election. Our current survey simply shows where the candidates

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191 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

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

are at the start of the general election campaign.”

Indeed, better than four-in-ten of those initially choosing each man say they might change their mind before Election Day. Statewide, just 23 percent say they are “very sure” they will be voting for Corzine in November, while 19 percent are very sure of voting for Franks.

The electorate now clearly reflects the difference in spending by the two candidates in their primary election campaigns. Corzine is estimated to have spent about 34 million dollars in his primary election contest against former Gov. Jim Florio, about 20 times what Franks spent in winning the Republican nomination.

About half (49%) of registered voters feel they know “a lot” or “some” about Corzine. In comparison, just over a quarter (28%) say they know that much about Franks. While half say they know “just a little” or “nothing at all” about Corzine, Franks is a largely a mystery to a much larger 78 percent of the state’s registered voters. Franks’ numbers are comparable to poll figures recorded about both candidates in June of 1996, when now-Senator Bob Torricelli and Dick Zimmer ran for the open seat of retiring U.S. Senator Bill Bradley; Corzine’s numbers are significantly higher.

Corzine has made a generally positive first impression on New Jersey, even while accumulating some baggage. Among registered voters, favorable opinions outnumber unfavorable ones by a margin of 36 to 20 percent, with 44 percent offering no opinion. Favorable impressions outnumber unfavorable ones by 45 to 14 percent among Democrats and by 38 to 18 percent among Independents. Republican opinion about Corzine is divided—27 percent are favorable and 30 percent are unfavorable.

Congressman Franks has yet to make a first impression among the majority of New Jersey's registered voters, but is well regarded among the minority having formed an opinion. Statewide, favorable opinions of Franks outnumber unfavorable ones by a margin of 26 to 6 percent, with two-thirds not venturing an opinion of him. Far more Republicans have a positive than negative opinion of Franks, by a margin of 42 to 6 percent; Independents are also quite positive--by a margin of 26 to 5 percent. Most Democrats express no opinion of Franks (78%), with favorable opinions outnumbering unfavorable ones by 13 to 9 percent among the rest.

The strength of each candidate is clearly rooted in his partisan base. Two-thirds of Republicans say they would vote for Franks "if the election for Senate was held today." Some 17 percent would defect to Corzine, while 15 percent are undecided. An identical two-thirds of Democrats say they would vote for Corzine, with 12 percent crossing over to vote for Franks and 18 percent undecided. Among the critical group of Independent voters, who made up about one-third of those going to the polls in the 1996 election, Corzine holds an early lead of 43 to 27 percent over Franks, with 30 percent undecided.

In looking at breakdowns of the electorate, The *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll identified a number of other interesting vote divisions. Among the most significant are:

- *Race*: The race is dead even among whites: 39 percent Corzine, 38 percent Franks. Corzine holds a commanding 61 to 14 percent lead among Blacks and Hispanics.
- *Gender*: The election is also a toss-up among men: 40 percent for Corzine and 39 percent for Franks. But among women, who made up the majority of the 1996 presidential electorate in New Jersey, Corzine leads Franks by 46 to 27 percent.
- *Region*: Corzine leads Franks by 46 to 30 percent in the northern area of the state. His lead in central New Jersey is a narrower 42 to 35 percent. Southern New Jersey is a toss-up, tipping to Corzine by 39 to 36 percentage points.

- *Age*: Corzine does best among those who vote least: Among 18 to 29 year olds he leads Franks by a margin of 47 to 26 percent. This 21-point gap narrows to 12 points among those 30 to 49 and 10 points among those between 50 and 64. Among seniors, Corzine polls 44 percent to 39 percent for Franks.
- *Ideology*: Most voters in New Jersey describe themselves as moderate—54 percent according to the exit poll conducted at the last presidential election. Corzine holds a 41 to 33 percent lead among this group. Self-identified conservatives and liberals are roughly the same size. Franks holds a commanding lead of 50 to 29 percent among self-identified conservatives; Corzine holds a larger 63 to 19 percent among those calling themselves “liberals.”

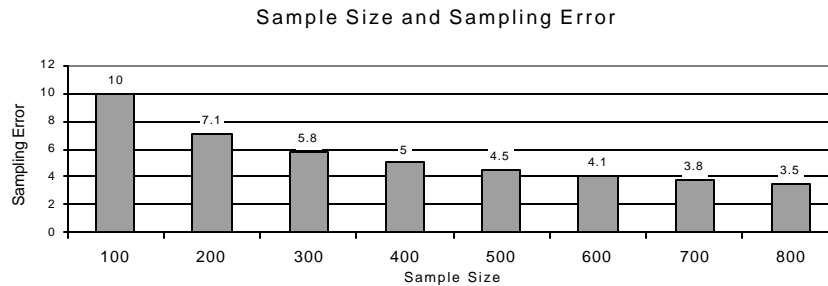
In assessing the overall findings, Zukin commented, “Democrat Jon Corzine starts out with a lead, based on two things: First, there are slightly more Democrats than Republicans in the state, and the high visibility of a presidential contest tends to bring out more lower socio-economic status voters, who tilt Democratic. Second, because of the different primary election campaigns in the Democratic and Republican parties and Corzine’s spending, he is better known to the electorate than is Franks, and its first impression of him is generally favorable.

Much of this we can expect to be equalized as Franks closes the name-recognition gap and becomes more visible to voters through his television advertising. However, as it was in the Democratic primary, this election may well turn on how expensive it is to communicate with voters in New Jersey. And here Corzine may have a decided advantage.

Finally, the senate election will take place in the context of the presidential campaign. The fortunes of Al Gore and George Bush will likely have much to say about whether Franks or Corzine is elected to be the next Senator from New Jersey.”

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP126-1), FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2000

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted between June 8-13 with a scientifically selected random sample of 802 New Jersey adult residents interviewed by telephone. This sampling yielded a total of 618 respondents who reported being registered to vote. The figures in this release are based on this sample size. 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 registered voters is ± 4 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey registered voters were found to have a favorable opinion of Democratic Senate Candidate Jon Corzine, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46 and 54 percent (50 ± 4) had all New Jersey registered voters 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 Republicans, Independents or Democrats, 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 is reproduced in this background memo. The sample has been stratified based on county. In this release we also refer to 'likely voters.' These figures are based on the 55% of the eligible New Jersey electorate deemed most likely to vote based on a combination of reported voting intention, reported past voting behavior and interest in the election. Turnout in the 1996 Presidential election was approximately 51% of those eligible (or 72% of all those registered) and was 56% in 1992. Turnout in 2000 may of course be somewhat higher or lower. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

“There will also be an election for the U.S. Senate in New Jersey. How much interest do you have in this election--a lot, some, a little, or none at all?” (QS1)

	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>None at All</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total %</u>	<u>(n)</u>
--June 2000, Registered Voters	37%	36%	15%	11%	1%	100%	(618)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	36	34	17	12	--	99	(207)
--Independent	40	39	12	8	1	101	(181)
--Republican	35	38	16	11	1	101	(167)
<u>Vote Intention</u>							
--Franks	47	31	14	7	1	100	(192)
--Undecided	27	39	19	15	--	100	(136)
--Corzine	36	43	14	6	--	99	(251)

"If the election for the Senate was held today, Would you vote for (CATI RANDOMIZE NAMES IN ITALICS) *Bob Franks, the Republican*; or *Jon Corzine (KORE-ZIGN), the Democrat*?"(QS2)

	<u>Corzine</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Franks</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June 2000, Registered Voters	43%	23%	33%	99%	(579)
By Party					
--Democrat	69	18	12	99	(195)
--Independent	43	30	27	100	(171)
--Republican	17	15	68	100	(161)
By Education					
--High School or less	40	27	32	99	(161)
--Some College	46	25	29	100	(191)
--College Graduate	44	19	37	100	(223)
By Race					
--White	39	23	38	100	(442)
--Black and Hispanic	61	26	14	101	(109)
By Gender					
--Male	40	21	39	100	(287)
--Female	46	26	27	99	(292)
By Region					
--North	46	23	30	99	(265)
--Central	42	23	35	100	(156)
--South	39	25	36	100	(154)
By Age					
--18-29	47	27	26	100	(73)
--30-49	42	28	30	100	(236)
--50-64	46	17	36	99	(138)
--65+	44	17	39	100	(115)
By Ideology					
--Liberal	63	18	19	100	(129)
--Moderate	41	27	33	101	(317)
--Conservative	29	21	50	100	(116)
Likely Voters	43	20	36	99	(442)

THIS TABLE IS A COMPOSITE OF RESPONSES TO THREE QUESTIONS:

(1)“If the election for the Senate was held today, Would you vote for (CATI RANDOMIZE NAMES IN ITALICS) *Bob Franks, the Republican*; or *Jon Corzine (KORE-ZIGN), the Democrat?* (QS2). (IF RESPONDENT CHOSE A CANDIDATE, (2) “Are you very sure about voting for (Franks/Corzine), or might you change your mind before the election?”(QS4). (IF RESPONDENT WAS UNDECIDED, (3): “At this moment do you lean more towards Franks or more towards Corzine?”(QS3).

Initially Undecided

	<u>Sure about Corzine/ (Dem Cand)</u>	<u>Picks Corzine/ Dem Cand, but may change</u>	<u>Leans Corzine/ (Dem Cand)</u>	<u>Does Not Lean</u>	<u>Leans Franks/ (Rep Cand)</u>	<u>Picks Franks/ (Rep Cand), but may change</u>	<u>Sure About Franks/ (Rep Cand)</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June 2000, Registered Voters	23%	20%	5%	16%	2%	14%	19%	99	(574)
<u>Party ID</u>									
--Democrat	44	26	5	11	2	6	6	100	(193)
-Independent	22	21	6	20	4	15	12	100	(171)
--Republican	3	14	1	11	3	21	46	99	(159)
Likely Voters	25	18	4	15	2	13	23	100	(438)
<u>Past Elections</u>									
June 1996	19	22	2	22	3	18	15	101	(614)
June 1994	28	33	4	10	1	12	13	101	(649)

CATI ROTATE QUESTIONS QS5A and QS5B:

“How much do you think you know about Bob Franks/John Corzine-- a lot, some, just a little, or nothing at all?” (QS5A and QS5B)

	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total %</u>	<u>(n)</u>
CORZINE							
June 2000, Registered Voters	10%	39%	29%	21%	--	99%	(618)
Party ID							
--Democrat	11	41	27	21	--	100	(207)
--Independent	11	37	31	21	--	100	(181)
--Republican	10	37	32	20	1	100	(167)
FRANKS							
June 2000, Registered Voters	6	22	29	43	--	100	(618)
Party ID							
--Democrat	4	17	24	55	--	100	(207)
--Independent	4	19	30	46	--	101	(181)
--Republican	10	29	34	27	--	100	(167)
<u>Past Elections</u>							
ZIMMER-DEM*							
June 1996, Registered Voters	3	11	29	56	--	101	(614)
TORRICELLI-REP*							
June 1996, Registered Voters	4	14	28	53	--	99	(614)

** In 1994 and 1996, a screening question was asked of respondents prior to the question on knowledge of the candidates. The question in both years was as follows: “Do you know who the (Republican/Democratic) candidate for Senator is? ASKED OF THOSE NOT NAMING CANDIDATE (in '96, for example): The (Republican/Democratic) candidate is Dick Zimmer/Bob Torricelli—have you ever heard of him before?” Only those respondents who could name or recognize the candidates in 1994 and 1996 were asked to report their level of knowledge about the candidates. In 2000, we asked all registered voters about their level of knowledge about the candidates. In addition, the level of knowledge question in 1994 and 1996 that corresponds to the following question in 2000 was worded slightly differently. In previous years, respondents were given three response categories for level of knowledge: ‘a lot, some or just a little.’ Because we asked all registered voters this question in 2000, we added the response category ‘nothing at all.’

CATI RANDOMIZE QUESTIONS S6 AND S7:

“Is your general impression of Bob Franks/John Corzine favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion about him? **(IF FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE, PROBE: Is that very (favorable/unfavorable) or somewhat (favorable/ unfavorable)?**” (QS6 and QS7)

	<u>Very Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Unfavorable</u>	<u>Very Unfavorable</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
CORZINE							
June 2000-Registered Voters	8%	28%	11%	9%	44%	100%	(618)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	14	31	6	8	41	100	(207)
--Independent	8	30	8	10	45	101	(181)
--Republican	4	23	20	10	43	100	(167)
Likely Voters	10	29	12	11	38	100	(464)
FRANKS							
June 2000-Registered Voters	7	19	4	2	68	100	(618)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	3	10	7	2	78	100	(207)
--Independent	4	22	2	3	69	100	(181)
--Republican	14	28	5	1	53	101	(167)
Likely Voters	8	22	5	3	63	101	(464)