

# 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, June 18 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*"

## **NEW JERSEY'S REACTION TO THE BIG-MONEY CORZINE CAMPAIGN:**

### **(NO) BIG DEAL**

#### ***Spending Backlash is Small, Although Noticeable***

Democratic senatorial candidate Jon Corzine hit New Jersey with an air war the likes of which has never been seen in the Garden State, or for that matter in any state except perhaps California. Spending about 34 million, mostly from his own personal fortune, Corzine dropped over 3,700 air bombs in the form of commercials on the New Jersey electorate during the recently completed primary campaign, according to one media-watch group.

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was curious to find out how New Jerseyans felt about this unprecedented level of campaign spending. Would they resent Corzine's tactics? Would they think he was trying to "buy" the election? The answer is, in a word, "Nope." The prevailing opinion in the state seems to be, "*If he wants to spend his money this way, let him.*"

Statewide, a majority of registered voters (52%) say Corzine's spending over 30 million dollars doesn't bother them at all. On the other hand, three-in-ten (31%) say they are bothered "a lot" by this amount of spending, and another 12 percent acknowledge being bothered "some." The remainder are bothered to a lesser extent.

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

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Among the main findings of the survey are the following:

- Most feel Corzine spent money to communicate his ideas to Democrats and that voters responded to those ideas; just over one-third feel that Corzine “bought” the election.
- The majority is not troubled by a candidate spending as much as Corzine did, since it is his own money.
- Voters are evenly divided as to whether he had to spend as much money as he did to become known, or whether he spent more than he had to, giving him an unfair advantage.
- Most do not see money as the most important factor in determining who wins and loses elections.
- Far more New Jerseyans are concerned with *who* contributes money to a candidate than are concerned with *how much* money a candidate spends.

The latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted with a scientifically selected statewide sample of 802 New Jersey residents interviewed by telephone between June 8 and 13<sup>th</sup>, 618 of whom reported being registered to vote. The sampling error for registered voters is  $\pm 4$  percentage points.

New Jersey voters have just come through a primary campaign that has been unusually visible. Three-quarters of registered voters report having seen a commercial for one of the candidates; half say they received at least one piece of mail from a Senate candidate. Democrat Corzine topped the exposure list in both instances.

Cliff Zukin, director of the poll commented, “Both of these figures are more typical of a general election campaign than a primary. Primary elections in New Jersey generally take place ‘under the radar,’ with most citizens not really aware they are taking place. Corzine’s unprecedented spending is almost certainly responsible for the increased turnout in the Democratic primary this year.”

Yet New Jerseyans seem quite underwhelmed in their concern about the role of money in politics. Just one-quarter of both non-registered and registered voters alike feel that money is the most important factor in determining who wins and loses elections. Another 42 percent cite money as one of many important factors, and 30 percent feel that money is not as important as other factors in determining election winners and losers.

Twice as many Garden State residents say they are more concerned with “who contributes money” to candidates (54%) than with “how much money a candidate spends” (25%). The remaining 21 percent are split between those who are concerned about both, those who are concerned about neither, and those who voice no opinion on the question.

While the majority of New Jersey’s registered voters are not bothered by Corzine’s spending, a significant number do express reservations on a variety of counts.

- While 50 percent believe that “As a political newcomer, Corzine had to spend heavily to get known,” a large 42 percent feel “Corzine spent more than he had to, giving him an unfair advantage.”
- While 56 percent agreed with the statement “I am not bothered by a candidate spending as much as Corzine did since it is his own money and he is not beholden to special interest contributors,” 41 percent say “the idea of one candidate spending that much money bothers me no matter where the money comes from” better represents their view.
- Just over one-third (36%) feel “Jon Corzine ‘bought’ the Democratic senate nomination—it was because of the money.” In contrast, 53 percent more closely identify with the statement, “While Corzine may have spent more than his opponent, he communicated what he wanted to do to voters of his party and they responded to those ideas.”

An analysis of who is most “bothered” by Corzine’s spending finds seniors at the top of the list. Statewide, 31 percent say they are bothered “a lot” by the Democrats’ spending in the primary. However, this figure encompasses just 9

percent of those under 30 (who are the least likely to vote in the general election), 25 percent of those between 30 and 49, 37 percent of those between 50 and 64, and fully 49 percent of those over 65. Also, women (36%) are more likely to be bothered “a lot” than are men (26%); far more whites (35%) express this level of concern than do Blacks and Hispanics (18%). And, 42% of those who say they expect to vote for Corzine’s Republican opponent Bob Franks say they are bothered “a lot,” compared to just 23 percent of those intending to vote for Corzine, and 30 percent of those who have not yet made up their minds about how to vote in the Senate election in November.

Zukin commented, “Corzine’s spending in the Democratic primary clearly paved his way to victory over former Governor Jim Florio, who began the campaign as a very popular figure among Democrats. But this victory has not been without costs among Democrats and other voters as well. There does appear to be some backlash to Corzine’s spending, even if the majority of voters find it acceptable.”

Interestingly, the poll shows that reactions to Corzine’s spending do *not* cut across party lines, where Republicans are bothered and Democrats are not. Despite the fact that a majority of registered voters are not bothered by Corzine’s level of spending, a significant portion of all groups--44 percent of Democrats, 47 percent of Independents and 46 percent of Republicans--report being bothered either “a lot” or “some” by how much Corzine spent during the primary.

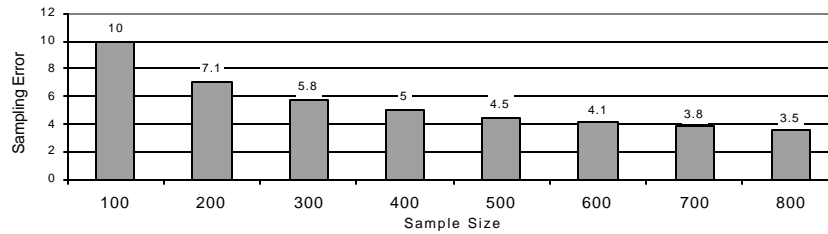
- Among those bothered either “a lot” or “some,” unfavorable opinions of Corzine outnumber favorable ones by a margin of 34 to 26 percent, with the remaining 40 percent expressing no opinion. Franks has a 42 to 36 percent lead among this group, with 22 percent undecided.

- Among those either “not bothered” or bothered “just a little” favorable opinions of Corzine outnumber unfavorable ones by 40 to 8 percent, with 52 percent voicing no opinion. Corzine leads Franks by 48 to 26 percent among this smaller group, with the remaining 26 percent undecided.

**BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP126-2), SUNDAY, JUNE 18, 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. Most of 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  $\pm 4$  percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey registered voters were found to be more concerned with who contributes money to a campaign, rather than with how much money is spent, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46 and 54 percent ( $50 \pm 4$ ) 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.

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. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

“The primary election for the US Senate that just ended was the most expensive in New Jersey=s history. I have a couple of quick questions about that. How important do you think money is in determining who wins and loses elections--Is it the most important factor, one of many important ones, or not as important as others?” (QMP5)

	<u>Most Important</u>	<u>One of Many Important Ones</u>	<u>Not as Important as Others</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total %</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>Statewide, June 2000</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(802)</b>
Registered Voters	25	43	29	3	100	(618)
Vote Intention						
--Franks	34	38	26	1	99	(192)
--Undecided	18	42	34	5	99	(136)
--Corzine	21	49	26	4	100	(251)

“Which concerns you more: how much money a candidate spends, or who contributes money to the candidate?” (QMP6)

	<b>How Much is Spent</b>	<b>Who Contributes Money</b>	<b>Both (volunteered response)</b>	<b>Neither (volunteered response)</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Total %</b>	<b>(n)</b>
<b>Statewide, June 2000</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(802)</b>
Registered Voters	26	55	6	7	6	100	(618)
<u>Vote Intention</u>							
--Franks	26	53	9	6	6	100	(192)
--Undecided	28	49	6	6	11	100	(136)
--Corzine	22	62	4	8	4	100	(251)

“As you might know, Jon Corzine spent over 30 million dollars--almost all was his own money-- in his campaign for the Democratic Senate nomination. Does his spending this much bother you, or not? IF BOTHERS, PROBE: How much does it bother you --a lot, some, or just a little?” (QMP6B)

	<b><u>Bothers Lot</u></b>	<b><u>Bothers Some</u></b>	<b><u>Bothers A Little</u></b>	<b><u>Doesn't Bother</u></b>	<b><u>Don't Know</u></b>	<b><u>Total %</u></b>	<b><u>(n)</u></b>
<b>Registered Voters, June 2000</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(618)</b>
<b><u>Party ID</u></b>							
--Democrat	30	13	4	50	3	100	(207)
--Independent	34	13	3	50	--	100	(181)
--Republican	34	11	4	50	1	100	(167)
<b><u>Vote Intention</u></b>							
--Franks	42	13	2	41	1	99	(192)
--Undecided	30	9	3	55	4	101	(136)
--Corzine	23	14	6	57	1	101	(251)
<b><u>Opinion Corzine</u></b>							
--Favorable	19	14	6	59	1	99	(223)
--No Opinion	24	13	2	58	2	99	(273)
--Unfavorable	69	8	2	21	--	100	(122)
<b><u>Age</u></b>							
--18-29	9	6	6	77	2	100	(77)
--30-49	25	15	4	55	1	100	(251)
--50-64	37	14	4	43	2	100	(148)
--65+	49	9	2	38	3	101	(124)
<b><u>Region of State</u></b>							
--North	23	13	5	57	2	100	(278)
--Central	30	13	2	53	2	100	(164)
--South	42	10	4	43	1	100	(171)
<b><u>Race</u></b>							
--White	35	13	4	47	1	100	(475)
--Black and Hispanic	18	10	2	67	3	100	(111)
<b><u>Gender</u></b>							
--Male	26	13	3	56	1	99	(309)
--Female	36	12	4	47	2	101	(309)



“I=am going to read you some pairs of statements about spending by the Corzine campaign. Please let me know if statement 1 or statement 2 comes closer to your views, even if neither one captures exactly how you feel:” (RANDOMIZE MP7A-C; ROTATE STATEMENTS 1 & 2; READ STATEMENTS 1 & 2 ONLY) (QMP7A-C)

Statement One: “As a political newcomer, Corzine had to spend heavily to get known.”  
 OR  
 Statement Two: “Corzine spent more than he had to, giving him an unfair advantage.”  
 (QMP7A)

	<u>Statement One</u>	<u>Statement Two</u>	<u>Both (volunteered response)</u>	<u>Don't Know/Won't Choose</u>	<u>Total %</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>Registered Voters, June 2000</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(618)</b>
Vote Intention						
--Franks	47	50	1	2	100	(192)
--Undecided	50	38	1	11	100	(136)
--Corzine	55	37	2	6	100	(251)

Statement One: “I am not bothered by a candidate spending as much as Corzine did since it is his own money and he is not beholden to special interest contributors.”  
 OR

Statement Two: “The idea of one candidate spending that much money bothers me no matter where the money comes from.” (QMP7B)

	<u>Statement One</u>	<u>Statement Two</u>	<u>Don't Know/Won't Choose</u>	<u>Total %</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>Registered Voters, June 2000</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(618)</b>
Vote Intention					
--Franks	46	52	2	100	(192)
--Undecided	58	38	4	100	(136)
--Corzine	66	32	1	99	(251)

Statement One: “Jon Corzine BOUGHT the Democratic Senate nomination—it was because of the money.”

OR

Statement Two: “While Corzine may have spent more than his opponent, he communicated what he wanted to do to voters of his party and they responded to those ideas.” (QMP7C)

	<u>Statement One</u>	<u>Statement Two</u>	<u>Both (volunteered response)</u>	<u>Don't Know/Won't Choose</u>	<u>Total %</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>Registered Voters, June 2000</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(618)</b>
<u>Vote Intention</u>						
--Franks	52	38	--	9	99	(192)
--Undecided	32	52	--	16	100	(136)
--Corzine	23	69	2	6	100	(251)

“Did you see any ads on TV for any of the candidates?” (QMP1)

	<u>Yes, Saw TV Ads</u>	<u>No, Didn't See TV Ads (or Don't Know)</u>	<u>Total %</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>Statewide, June 2000</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(802)</b>
Registered Voters	75	25	100	(618)

“I=am going to read you the names of some candidates. For each one please just tell me Yes or No--if you saw a TV ad for him. (RANDOMIZE NAMES) Yes or no?” (QMP2A-F)

**% WHO SAW TV ADS FOR EACH CANDIDATE**

<u>Senate Candidate</u>	<u>Statewide, June 2000</u>	<u>Registered Voters, June 2000</u>	<u>Registered Democrats</u>	<u>Registered Republicans</u>
<b>Jim Florio</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>73%</b>
Jon Corzine	67	71	71	78
Bill Gormley	37	38	42	38
Murray Sabrin	13	14	16	13
Jim Treffinger	10	12	13	12
Robert Franks	31	36	34	43
<b>(n)</b>	<b>(802)</b>	<b>(618)</b>	<b>(252)</b>	<b>(189)</b>

“Did you receive literature at your home sent by any of the candidates, or not?” (QMP3)

	<u>Yes, Got Mail</u>	<u>No, Didn't Get Mail (or Don't Know)</u>	<u>Total %</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>Statewide, June 2000</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(802)</b>
Registered Voters	52	48	100	(618)

“For each candidate I name please just tell me if you got mail from him. Yes or no.  
(RANDOMIZE NAMES) Yes or no?” (QMP4A-F)

**% WHO GOT MAIL FROM EACH CANDIDATE**

<b><u>Senate Candidate</u></b>	<b><u>Statewide, June 2000</u></b>	<b><u>Registered Voters</u></b>	<b><u>Registered Democrats**</u></b>	<b><u>Registered Republicans**</u></b>
<b>Jim Florio</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>41%</b>	
Jon Corzine	33	41	50	
Bill Gormley	18	22		36
Murray Sabrin	8	10		15
Jim Treffinger	11	14		27
Robert Franks	18	22		42
<b>(n)</b>	<b>(802)</b>	<b>(618)</b>	<b>(252)</b>	<b>(189)</b>

\*\*Numbers reported only for the candidate's party.