

The Star-Ledger/**Eagleton-Rutgers Poll**

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RELEASE: (EP126-3)

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in the Thursday, June 22 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*"

THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTON:

NEW JERSEY IS A TOSS-UP

Democrat Al Gore leads Republican George W. Bush by a razor thin margin of 44 to 41 percent among likely New Jersey voters, according to the latest Star-ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers poll. The 3-point gap between the candidates falls within the poll's margin of error, meaning the race for New Jersey's coveted 15 electoral votes is a statistical dead heat.

Cliff Zukin, director of the poll, commented, "As has so often been the case, New Jersey is a swing state, with about equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans. The new survey shows that either candidate could easily win here, marking the state as a key battleground arena in the November election."

The survey was conducted by telephone between June 8 and 13 with a random sample of 802 New Jerseyans, 618 of whom said they were registered to vote. Some findings are based on the 441 people identified as most likely to vote in the general election. The sampling error for the 618 registered voters is ± 4 percent, increasing to ± 5 percent for the likely voter group.

At about the same time the Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers survey finds a three-point lead for Gore in New Jersey, a national survey conducted by the Gallup

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

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Organization for CNN/USA Today finds Bush with a 4-point lead, meaning that New Jersey tilts about 7 percentage points more Democratic than the nation as a whole.

The New Jersey survey also shows a tremendous gender gap, with men favoring the Texas Governor by a margin of 46 to 38 percent, while women prefer the Vice-President by an even more lopsided margin of 50 to 34 percent.

In other breakdowns of registered voters:

- Gore receives the support of 80 percent of Democrats; Bush is supported by a slightly higher 86 percent of Republicans. Among the critical group of independent voters, who made up one-third of those going to the polls in the 1996 presidential election, Gore leads Bush by 44 to 38 percent.
- Self-identified liberals prefer Gore by a wide margin of 67 to 20 percent, conservatives cast their ballots for Bush by the slightly lesser majority of 63 to 28 percent. Moderates—the largest group in the New Jersey electorate—are evenly divided at 41 percent each.
- President Bill Clinton’s widespread popularity in New Jersey helps Gore tremendously. Gore leads Bush by 59 to 25 percent among the vast majority who approve of the job Clinton is doing as President; Bush holds an incredible 89 to 2 percent lead among the minority—mostly Republicans—who disapprove of the job he is doing as President.
- Bush leads among white New Jerseyans—45 to 40 percent. Gore does well among racial and ethnic minorities in the state, leading by 63 to 24 percent among Blacks and Hispanics.
- Gore leads by 6 percentage points in the northern area of the state, by 5 in the central region, and by just 1 point in southern Jersey.

Ironically, despite New Jerseyans’ high regard for Clinton, the qualities that many fault him for are at the top of the list in what voters say is the “most important personal quality” they look for in a president. Invited to give any answer they want, a majority—54 percent—say that qualities such as “honesty,” “integrity,” and “trustworthiness” are the most important characteristic for the next president to have. This includes 66 percent

of those intending to vote for Bush, 45 percent of those saying they will vote for Gore, and 53 percent of those currently undecided. No other specific quality or characteristic was mentioned by more than one person in eight.

New Jerseyans are, by and large, satisfied with their choice of candidates. Among the state's registered voters, 59 percent say they are either "very" (11%) or "somewhat" (48%) satisfied with their options. Another quarter say they are "not too satisfied," and 13 percent are "not at all" satisfied. There is, however, some significant dissatisfaction in each candidate's camp. Among those now saying they intend to vote for Bush or Gore, about one-third complain they are not satisfied, indicating a great potential for vote switching in the coming months, or perhaps receptiveness to a third-party candidate.

At this early point in the campaign, New Jerseyans feel positively about both Bush and Gore, although neither is wildly popular. Favorable opinions about Gore outnumber unfavorable ones by 46 to 28 percent among registered voters, with the remaining quarter offering no opinion of him. About three-quarters of Democrats offer favorable assessments, compared to just one-fifth of Republicans. Among independents, more feel positively than negatively about the Vice President by a margin of 44 to 26 percent, with 29 percent venturing no opinion.

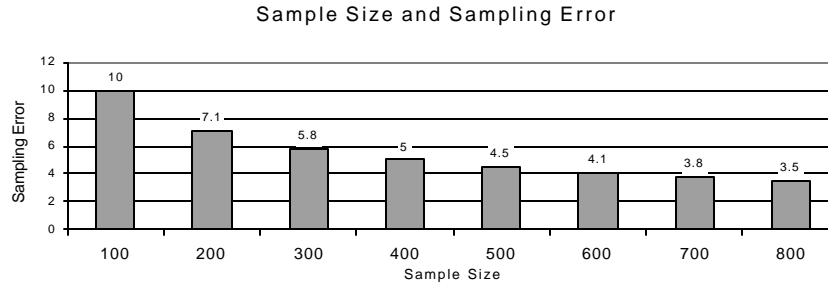
Favorable opinions about Bush run ahead of unfavorable ones by a slightly slimmer margin of 40 to 30 percent, with the remaining 30 percent offering no assessment. As with Gore, Bush is viewed through a heavily partisan prism: about three-quarters of Republicans offer favorable assessments, but just one-fifth of Democrats do so. Opinions are divided among independents—36 percent favorable, 33 percent unfavorable, and 30 percent with no opinion.

The presidential contest has yet to command the widespread attention of New Jersey's registered voters. Just under half--48 percent--say they have given "a lot" of thought to the upcoming presidential election. This figure is identical to the number found in a national survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press in May, indicating New Jerseyans are no more or less engaged in the presidential contest than are people living elsewhere in the United States, despite the fact that Garden State voters played no role in the nomination phase of the campaign.

Just over half of registered voter--52 percent--report having "a lot" of interest in the upcoming election; another 30 percent say they have "some" interest, while the remaining fifth is largely uninterested in following the election.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP126-3), THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 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 Presidential candidate George W. Bush, 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 58% in 1992. Turnout in 2000 may, of course, be somewhat higher or lower. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

“As you know, there will be an election for President this fall. How much thought have you given to the coming presidential election: quite a lot or only a little?” (Q.4)

| | Quite a <u>Lot</u> | Some (volunteered <u>response</u>) | Only a <u>Little</u> | None (Volunteered <u>response</u>) | Don't <u>Know</u> | <u>Total %</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|---|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Statewide, June 2000 | 44% | 6% | 44% | 6% | -- | 100% | (802) |
| Nationwide, May 2000, Pew Research Center | 39 | 4 | 50 | 6 | 1 | 100 | (1,303) |
| Registered New Jersey Voters, June 2000 | 48 | 7 | 41 | 4 | 1 | 101 | (618) |
| Registered Voters Nationwide, May 2000, Pew Research Center | 48 | 4 | 42 | 5 | 1 | 100 | (940) |

If the election for President was held today and you had to choose right now--Would you vote for (CATI RANDOMIZE NAMES IN ITALICS) *George W. Bush, the Republican*; or *Al Gore, the Democrat*? (Q.10)

| | <u>Bush</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Gore</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| June 2000, Registered Voters | 40% | 16% | 44% | 100% | (578) |
| Likely Voters | 41 | 15 | 44 | 100 | (441) |
| March 2000, Registered Voters | 41 | 15 | 44 | 100 | (601) |
| <u>By Party</u> | | | | | |
| --Democrat | 9 | 10 | 80 | 99 | (203) |
| --Independent | 38 | 19 | 44 | 101 | (162) |
| --Republican | 86 | 8 | 6 | 101 | (158) |
| <u>By Education</u> | | | | | |
| --High School or less | 40 | 17 | 44 | 101 | (156) |
| --Some College | 40 | 13 | 47 | 100 | (193) |
| --College Graduate | 40 | 17 | 43 | 100 | (224) |
| <u>By Race</u> | | | | | |
| --White | 45 | 15 | 40 | 100 | (443) |
| --Black and Hispanic | 24 | 13 | 63 | 100 | (105) |
| <u>By Gender</u> | | | | | |
| --Male | 46 | 16 | 38 | 100 | (286) |
| --Female | 34 | 16 | 50 | 100 | (292) |
| <u>By Region</u> | | | | | |
| --North | 38 | 18 | 44 | 100 | (258) |
| --Central | 40 | 15 | 45 | 100 | (155) |
| --South | 43 | 13 | 44 | 100 | (160) |
| <u>By Age</u> | | | | | |
| --18-29 | 38 | 10 | 52 | 100 | (69) |
| --30-49 | 40 | 17 | 43 | 100 | (239) |
| --50-64 | 40 | 16 | 43 | 99 | (134) |
| --65+ | 40 | 14 | 45 | 99 | (119) |
| <u>By Ideology</u> | | | | | |
| --Liberal | 20 | 12 | 67 | 99 | (129) |
| --Moderate | 41 | 18 | 41 | 100 | (316) |
| --Conservative | 63 | 10 | 28 | 101 | (115) |
| <u>Clinton Rating*</u> | | | | | |
| Approve of Clinton | 25 | 16 | 59 | 100 | (424) |
| Disapprove of Clinton | 89 | 9 | 2 | 100 | (132) |

*Clinton rating is based on (Q. 2): "How would you rate the job Bill Clinton is doing as President—excellent, good, only fair or poor?" Those who answered 'excellent' or 'good' were considered approving, while those who answered 'poor' were considered disapproving. Those who answered 'only fair' were asked a follow-up question: (Q. 3) "So overall, do you approve or disapprove of the job he is doing as President?"

NEW JERSEY-NATIONAL COMPARISON*

| | <u>Bush</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Gore</u> | <u>Total %</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|---|-------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| National Likely Voters, CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll, June 6-7, 2000 | 48% | 7% | 44% | 99% | (522) |
| New Jersey Likely Voters, Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll, June 8-13, 2000 | 44 | 9 | 47 | 100% | (441) |

*In this table, those who initially said they were undecided but then "leaned" toward one of the candidates are included with those who initially chose each candidate.

"And, how much interest do you have in this election--a lot, some, a little, or none at all?" (Q5)

| | <u>A Lot</u> | <u>Some</u> | <u>A Little/None at All</u> | <u>DK</u> | <u>Total %</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|---|--------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| --June 2000, Registered Voters | 52% | 30% | 16% | 2% | 100% | (618) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | | | |
| --Democrat | 45 | 29 | 24 | 2 | 100 | (272) |
| --Independent | 41 | 35 | 23 | 1 | 100 | (235) |
| --Republican | 56 | 28 | 15 | 1 | 100 | (194) |
| <u>Vote Intention</u> | | | | | | |
| --Bush | 56 | 30 | 14 | -- | 100 | (231) |
| --Undecided | 53 | 30 | 17 | 1 | 101 | (91) |
| --Gore | 52 | 32 | 14 | 2 | 100 | (256) |

THE FOLLOWING TABLE IS A COMPOSITE OF RESPONSES TO THREE QUESTIONS:

(1)“If the election for President was held today, would you vote for (CATI RANDOMIZE NAMES IN ITALICS) George Bush, *the Republican*; or Al Gore, *the Democrat*? (Q10) IF RESPONDENT CHOSE A CANDIDATE, (2) “Are you very sure about voting for (Bush/Gore), or might you change your mind before the election?”(Q12). IF RESPONDENT WAS UNDECIDED, (3): “At this moment do you lean more towards Bush or more towards Gore?”(Q11).

| | <u>Initially Undecided</u> | | | | | | <u>Sure About Gore</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | <u>Sure about Bush</u> | <u>Picks Bush, but may change</u> | <u>Leans Bush</u> | <u>Does Not Lean</u> | <u>Leans Gore</u> | <u>Picks Gore, but may change</u> | | | |
| June 2000, Registered Voters | 26% | 13% | 3% | 9% | 3% | 14% | 30% | 98% | (578) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| --Democrat | 5 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 20 | 61 | 100 | (203) |
| -Independent | 21 | 17 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 19 | 25 | 100 | (162) |
| --Republican | 64 | 22 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 101 | (158) |
| Likely Voters | 29 | 12 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 11 | 33 | 100 | (441) |
| | | <u>Picks Dole, but may change</u> | | <u>Does Not Lean</u> | <u>Leans Clinton</u> | <u>Picks Clinton, but may change</u> | <u>Sure about Clinton</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
| June 1996 Registered Voters | <u>Sure about Dole</u> | | <u>Leans Dole</u> | | | | | | |
| | 25 | 11 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 18 | 38 | 101 | (620) |

CATI ROTATE QUESTIONS Q13A and Q13B:

“How much do you think you know about George Bush/Al Gore-- a lot, some, just a little, or nothing at all?” (Q13A and Q13B)

| | <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> |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| BUSH | | | | | | | |
| June 2000, Registered Voters | 23% | 49% | 21% | 6% | 1% | 100% | (618) |
| Party ID | | | | | | | |
| --Democrat | 22 | 48 | 18 | 12 | 1 | 101 | (207) |
| --Independent | 16 | 56 | 25 | 3 | -- | 100 | (181) |
| --Republican | 31 | 48 | 18 | 2 | 1 | 100 | (167) |
| GORE | | | | | | | |
| June 2000, Registered Voters | 33 | 47 | 15 | 4 | -- | 99 | (618) |
| Party ID | | | | | | | |
| --Democrat | 34 | 49 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 100 | (207) |
| --Independent | 26 | 50 | 21 | 3 | -- | 100 | (181) |
| --Republican | 41 | 43 | 14 | 3 | -- | 101 | (167) |
| June '96 | | | | | | | |
| <u>Registered Voters</u> | | | | | | | |
| DOLE | 26 | 47 | 20 | 6 | 1 | 100 | (646) |
| CLINTON | 47 | 40 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 101 | (646) |

** In 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 President is? ASKED OF THOSE NOT NAMING CANDIDATE (in '96, for example): The (Republican/Democratic) candidate is Bob Dole/Bill Clinton—have you ever heard of him before?” Only those respondents who could name or recognize the candidates 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 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 14A AND 14B:

“Is your general impression of George Bush/Al Gore 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)?**” (Q14A and Q14B)

| | <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> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| BUSH | | | | | | | |
| June 2000-Registered Voters | 12 | 28 | 16 | 14 | 30 | 100 | (618) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | | | | |
| --Democrat | 4 | 14 | 20 | 29 | 34 | 101 | (207) |
| --Independent | 7 | 29 | 23 | 10 | 30 | 99 | (181) |
| --Republican | 31 | 44 | 4 | 2 | 19 | 100 | (167) |
| Likely Voters | 14 | 29 | 17 | 16 | 25 | 101 | (464) |
| GORE | | | | | | | |
| June 2000-Registered Voters | 14 | 32 | 14 | 14 | 25 | 99 | (618) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | | | | |
| --Democrat | 31 | 42 | 5 | 3 | 18 | 99 | (207) |
| --Independent | 8 | 36 | 16 | 10 | 29 | 99 | (181) |
| --Republican | 2 | 17 | 25 | 33 | 23 | 100 | (167) |
| Likely Voters | 16 | 31 | 15 | 17 | 21 | 100 | (464) |
| <u>Past Election</u> | | | | | | | |
| DOLE | | | | | | | |
| June 1996-Registered Voters | 13 | 24 | 19 | 16 | 26 | 99 | (646) |
| CLINTON | | | | | | | |
| June 1996-Registered Voters | 18 | 35 | 17 | 18 | 13 | 101 | (646) |

“Thinking about the presidential candidates, would you say you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the choices?” (Q.15)

| | <u>Very Satisfied</u> | <u>Somewhat Satisfied</u> | <u>Not too Satisfied</u> | <u>Not at All Satisfied</u> | <u>Don't Know</u> | <u>Total %</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Registered Voters, June 2000 | 11% | 48% | 26% | 13% | 2% | 100% | (618) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | | | | |
| --Democrat | 13 | 51 | 23 | 11 | 2 | 100 | (207) |
| --Independent | 7 | 44 | 30 | 18 | 2 | 101 | (181) |
| --Republican | 14 | 50 | 23 | 11 | 2 | 100 | (167) |
| <u>Vote Intent</u> | | | | | | | |
| --Bush | 13 | 51 | 26 | 8 | 3 | 101 | (231) |
| --Undecided | 7 | 36 | 39 | 17 | 2 | 101 | (91) |
| --Gore | 12 | 54 | 23 | 11 | 1 | 101 | (256) |

“What is the most important personal quality that you look for in a President?” (Q.16)

| <u>Personal Quality</u> | VOTE INTENTION | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| | <u>All Registered Voters</u> | <u>Bush Voters</u> | <u>Gore Voters</u> | <u>Undecided Voters</u> |
| Honesty/Integrity/Trustworthiness | 54 | 66 | 45 | 53 |
| Experience/Background | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Intelligence | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Compassion/Warmth | 2 | -- | 4 | -- |
| Religiosity/Belief in God | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Leadership/Inspirational Qualities | 11 | 8 | 13 | 12 |
| Toughness | 1 | 1 | -- | 1 |
| Able to Attract Talented People around Him | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Sincerity | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Moral Values | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Agree with Him on Issues | 3 | 1 | 5 | -- |
| Party Affiliation | -- | -- | 1 | -- |
| Other | 14 | 12 | 14 | 14 |
| Don't Know | 6 | 4 | 6 | 9 |
| Total % | 101 | 100 | 101 | 99 |
| (n) | (618) | (231) | (256) | (91) |