

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

NEW JERSEY GOES FOR GORE

Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore has helped himself tremendously among all but Republicans in New Jersey, solidifying his democratic base, and increasing his appeal to Independents and even male voters. Gore now holds a solid 13-point lead over Republican candidate George W. Bush among registered voters and a 10-point lead among likely voters.

These are some of the main findings of the latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll, conducted by telephone between September 6 and 13 with 670 registered voters. Among the 542 respondents deemed most likely to actually vote in November's election, Gore leads Bush by a margin of 46 to 36 percent, with 12 percent undecided. Third party candidates are not a factor in the Garden State. Green party candidate Ralph Nader polled just 3 percent and Reform party candidate Pat Buchanan just 1 percent; another one percent say they plan to vote for someone else.

In June, before the two parties held their nominating conventions and before either candidate had chosen his running mate, Gore led Bush by only 3 percentage points among likely voters.

The current survey shows that opinions about both presidential candidates are now fully formed, with Al Gore having become extremely popular among Garden State

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

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residents. Favorable opinions about Gore now outnumber unfavorable ones by better than two-to-one--a margin of 63 to 30 percent. Only 6 percent now offer no opinion of the Vice President. In June, favorable opinions of Gore ran ahead of unfavorable ones by only 46 to 28 percent, with one-quarter offering no view.

New Jerseyans' opinions have also solidified about Texas Governor Bush, but they are far more mixed: 50 percent favorable, 42 percent unfavorable, 8 percent no opinion. In June, Bush's numbers were 40 percent favorable to 30 percent unfavorable, with a large 30 percent offering no opinion.

Cliff Zukin, director of the Rutgers-based survey, commented "One measure of how well Gore is doing is that his favorability ratings now run ahead of both Bill Clinton's and Christie Whitman's. Through his performance at the convention, and perhaps through his selection of Joe Lieberman, New Jerseyans are finding a great deal they like about him."

An analysis of shifts in the two-way vote between June and September indicate that Gore has strengthened his base among Democrats and made inroads among Independents and males. Here are some of the significant changes:

- Gore led Bush among Independents by 6 percentage points in June (44% to 38%); he now leads by 13 points (46% to 33%). Gore also increased his lead by 7 points among Democrats.
- Gore's lead among those with a high school education or less was only 4 percentage points in June; it is now 20 points (53% to 33%).
- Gore has picked up strong support among men to go with his already considerable advantage among women. Gore now runs slightly ahead of Bush among men (47% to 42%). This 5-percentage-point advantage was an 8-point disadvantage in June. Gore's lead among women increased from 16 to 21 percentage points (53% to 32%).
- Gore has increased his lead among liberals and taken a clear lead among the state's moderate voters. In June liberals preferred Gore over Bush by a 47 percent margin. This has now expanded to 70 points (80% to 10%) in the current survey. And

perhaps more significantly, Gore is now preferred over Bush by a margin of 53 to 33 percent among the large group of moderate voters in New Jersey. Last June, Gore and Bush split this group evenly.

Looking at the subset of registered voters deemed most likely to actually vote in the election on November 7, the Rutgers-based survey added together those who chose one of the candidates with those who initially report being undecided but acknowledging they either “lean” toward one Gore or Bush. By this count 51 percent intend to vote for Gore and 41 for Bush, with the remainder not even leaning.

In summing up the results Zukin commented, "It looks like New Jersey is now Gore's to lose. While it's possible that Bush could significantly improve his standing with an impressive showing in the first presidential debate scheduled for October 3, at least for now New Jersey has moved from a toss-up state into the Democratic column."

When asked to look into their crystals balls and predict the winner of the November 7th presidential election, a plurality of New Jersey registered voters pick Gore (44%), a third pick Bush (31%), and a quarter refuse to speculate. According to a national CBS News/NY Times Poll that was conducted at approximately the same time as the latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll, nationally registered voters are more divided in their predictions—40% pick Gore and 38% pick Bush, with 21% saying that they don't know. Understandably, those in New Jersey who plan to vote for Gore are more likely than Bush voters to foresee a Gore win in November, and vice versa. However, Gore supporters in New Jersey are slightly more confident that their man will win than are Bush supporters. Seven-in-ten Gore supporters expect Gore to win; six-in-ten Bush supporters expect Bush to win.

Poll analysts note that 3/5ths of registered voters in New Jersey currently report having “a lot” of interest in the upcoming presidential election. This means that

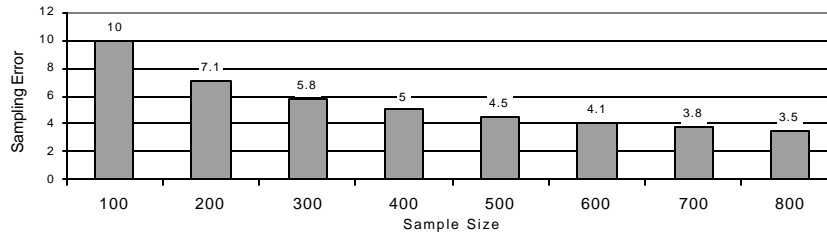
registered voters are about as interested in this election as they were in September of 1992 and 1996--the past two presidential election years. Interest in the 2000 election has risen since June when half of registered voters said that they had “a lot” of interest in the election.

A little over a third of registered voters believe that the outcome of the presidential election will make a “great deal of difference” in the way that “the government is run over the next few years.” This is the same percentage of New Jersey registered voters who believed that the outcomes of the 1992 and 1996 elections would make a great deal of difference in the way the government was handled in the years following those elections.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP127-2), MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2000

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted between September 6-13 with a scientifically selected random sample of 916 New Jersey adult residents interviewed by telephone. This sampling yielded a total of 670 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.

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 to insure an accurate proportional representation of the state. In this release we also refer to 'likely voters.' These figures are based on the 58% 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 interest do you have in this election--a lot, some, a little or none at all?” (Q4)

	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little/None</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Registered Voters						
Sept. 2000	61%	25%	13%	--	99%	(707)
--June 2000	52	30	16	2	100	(618)
--Sept. 1996	61	28	10	1	100	(627)
--Sept. 1992	64	22	13	1	100	(663)
--Sept. 1988	48	33	18	1	100	(505)
By Party						
--Democrat	57	26	16	1	100	(268)
--Independent	57	28	15	--	100	(194)
--Republican	73	20	7	--	100	(169)
Vote Intention						
--Bush	67	28	5	1	101	(229)
--Undecided	57	29	13	--	99	(87)
--Gore	61	25	14	--	100	(317)

In your opinion, how much of a difference will the outcome of this election make in the way the government is run over the next few years—a great deal of difference, some, or not very much difference? (Q5)

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not very much</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Registered Voters							
Sept. 2000	36%	35%	23%	4%	2%	100%	(707)
--Sept. 1996	36	36	24	--	4	100	(627)
--Sept. 1992	34	34	25	--	7	100	(663)
--Sept. 1988	28	40	24	--	8	100	(505)
<u>By Party</u>							
--Democrat	42	34	19	3	2	100	(268)
--Independent	28	38	27	4	3	100	(194)
--Republican	40	37	18	4	1	100	(169)
Likely Voters	44	35	15	4	2	100	(542)

For the following questions, 'Registered Voters' refers to those who reported being registered to vote and when asked on a scale of 1 to 10 to rate their chance of voting in the upcoming election in November (10 representing a person who definitely will vote and 1 representing a person who definitely will not vote), they rated their chance of voting as 4 or better. Those registered voters who rated their chance as 1 to 3 (who make up only 5 percent of registered voters in the state) are excluded from the following questions.

"Now, suppose the 2000 presidential election were being held TODAY. If you had to choose between [ROTATE ITALICS] *Al Gore, the Democrat; George W. Bush, the Republican; Pat Buchanan, of the Reform Party; and Ralph Nader, of the Green Party* — who would you vote for?" (Q8)

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Gore</u>	<u>Buchanan</u>	<u>Nader</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided/ DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Sept. 2000 Registered Voters	34%	47%	1%	4%	1%	13%	100%	(670)
<u>By Party</u>								
--Democrat	8	83	1	3	--	6	101	(256)
--Independent	30	41	2	8	1	19	101	(182)
--Republican	84	6	2	1	1	7	101	(163)
Likely Voters	36	46	1	3	1	12	99	(542)

Suppose there were only two major candidates for president and you had to choose between Al Gore, the Democrat; and George W. Bush, the Republican. Who would you vote for? (Q11)

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Gore</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Registered Voters					
September 2000	36%	13%	50%	99%	(633)
--June 2000	40	16	44	100	(578)
--March 2000	41	15	44	100	(601)
Likely Voters	39	13	49	101	(513)
<u>By Party</u>					
--Democrat	8	6	86	100	(247)
--Independent	33	21	46	100	(163)
--Republican	87	7	6	100	(158)
<u>By Education</u>					
--High School or less	33	15	53	101	(169)
--Some College	39	10	51	101	(165)
--College Graduate	37	14	49	100	(296)
<u>By Race</u>					
--White	41	13	46	100	(483)
--Black and Hispanic	17	11	72	100	(105)
<u>By Gender</u>					
--Male	42	11	47	100	(288)
--Female	32	15	53	100	(345)
<u>By Region</u>					
--North	37	13	51	101	(260)
--Central	34	13	54	101	(168)
--South	38	16	46	100	(194)
<u>By Age</u>					
--18-29	33	6	61	100	(70)
--30-49	37	13	50	100	(237)
--50-64	38	14	48	100	(167)
--65+	33	20	47	100	(131)
<u>By Ideology</u>					
--Liberal	10	10	80	100	(112)
--Moderate	33	15	53	100	(362)
--Conservative	66	10	24	100	(145)

Change in Two-Way Vote Intention for Gore Since June

	<u>Gore Advantage over Bush in June</u>	<u>Gore Advantage over Bush in September</u>	<u>Change in Gore Advantage over Bush</u>
Registered Voters September 2000	4%	14%	10%
Likely Voters	3	10	7
<u>By Party</u>			
--Democrat	71	78	7
--Independent	6	13	7
--Republican	-80	-81	1
<u>By Education</u>			
--High School or less	4	20	16
--Some College	7	12	6
--College Graduate	3	12	9
<u>By Race</u>			
--White	-5	5	10
--Black and Hispanic	39	55	16
<u>By Gender</u>			
--Male	-8	5	13
--Female	16	21	5
<u>By Region</u>			
--North	6	14	8
--Central	5	20	15
--South	1	8	7
<u>By Age</u>			
--18-29	14	28	14
--30-49	3	13	10
--50-64	3	10	7
--65+	5	14	9
<u>By Ideology</u>			
--Liberal	47	70	23
--Moderate	0	20	20
--Conservative	-35	-42	-7

NEW JERSEY-NATIONAL COMPARISON TWO WAY VOTE CHOICE*

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Gore</u>	<u>Total %</u>	<u>(n)</u>
National Likely Voters, CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll, September 4-6, 2000	47%	5%	48%	100%	(777)
New Jersey Likely Voters, Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll, September 6-13, 2000	41	7	51	99	(513)

NEW JERSEY-NATIONAL COMPARISON FOUR WAY VOTE CHOICE*

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Gore</u>	<u>Buchanan</u>	<u>Nader</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided/ DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
National Likely Voters, CBS News/ NY Times Poll - Sept. 9-11, 2000**	39%	42%	2%	4%	--	13%	100%	(843)
New Jersey Likely Voters, Star-Ledger/ Eagleton- Rutgers Poll, September 6-13, 2000	34	47	1	4	1	13	100	(670)

*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.

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

(1) "Suppose there were only two major candidates for president and you had to choose between Al Gore, the Democrat; and George W. Bush, the Republican. Who would you vote for? (Q11) IF RESPONDENT CHOSE A CANDIDATE, (2) "Are you very sure about voting for (Bush/Gore), or might you change your mind before the election?"(Q10). IF RESPONDENT WAS UNDECIDED, (3): "At this moment do you lean more towards Bush or more towards Gore?"(Q9).

	<u>Initially Undecided</u>					<u>Picks Gore, but may change</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>				
Registered Voters									
September 2000	28%	8%	3%	7%	3%	11%	40%	100%	(633)
--June 2000	26	13	3	9	3	14	30	98	(578)
<u>Party ID</u>									
--Democrat	5	3	1	2	3	10	75	99	(247)
--Independent	23	10	6	9	6	15	30	99	(163)
--Republican	73	13	3	4	1	3	3	100	(158)
Likely Voters	31	7	3	7	3	9	39	99	(513)
<u>1996 Comparison</u>						<u>Picks Clinton, but may change</u>	<u>Sure about Clinton</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Registered Voters	<u>Sure about Dole</u>	<u>Picks Dole, but may change</u>	<u>Leans Dole</u>	<u>Does Not Lean</u>	<u>Leans Clinton</u>				
September 1996	23	6	1	5	2	15	42	100	(627)

And who do you expect to actually win the election--Gore or Bush? (Q12)

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Gore</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Registered Voters						
September 2000	31%	44%	--	24%	99%	(670)
<u>Vote Intention</u>						
--Gore	10	72	--	18	100	(317)
--Bush	62	14	--	23	99	(229)
--Undecided	26	16	--	58	100	(87)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	15	64	--	20	99	(256)
--Independent	29	43	--	28	100	(182)
--Republican	57	19	1	23	100	(163)
Likely Voters	31	45	--	24	100	(542)
CBS News/NY Times Poll - Sept. 9-11, 2000						
Registered Voters	38	40	1	21	100	(843)

**The CBS News/NY Times Poll asked "Regardless of how you intend to vote, do you expect Al Gore or George W. Bush to finally win the Presidential election in November 2000?" The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll asked, "And who do you expect to actually win the election-Gore or Bush?"

CATI RANDOMIZE QUESTION 17:

“I’d like to learn a little more about your opinions of the candidates. After I read each name, please tell me if your general impression of him is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don’t really have an opinion about him. First (RANDOMIZE...) Favorable or unfavorable? **(IF FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE, PROBE: Is that very (favorable/unfavorable) or somewhat (favorable/ unfavorable)?**” (Q17)

	<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							
Registered Voters							
September 2000	24%	26%	18%	24%	8%	100%	(670)
--June 2000	12	28	16	14	30	100	(618)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	5	15	28	41	10	99	(256)
--Independent	20	32	20	23	5	100	(182)
--Republican	60	33	4	1	1	99	(163)
Likely Voters	27	23	17	25	7	99	(542)
 Gore							
Registered Voters							
September 2000	35%	28%	15%	15%	6%	99%	(670)
--June 2000	14	32	14	14	25	99	(618)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	60	29	4	2	5	100	(256)
--Independent	28	34	23	12	3	100	(182)
--Republican	9	22	24	41	4	100	(163)
Likely Voters	36	26	16	18	5	101	(542)
<u>Past Election</u>							
<u>Registered Voters</u>							
DOLE							
September 1996	14	26	26	26	8	100	(627)
CLINTON							
September 1996	26	36	15	19	4	100	(627)

Candidates' Favorability Ratings

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Favorable Rating*</u>
 Gore				
Registered Voters				
--September 2000	63%	30%	6%	33%
--June 2000	46	28	25	18
Democrat				
September 2000	89	6	5	83
--June 2000	73	8	18	65
Independent				
--September 2000	62	35	3	27
--June 2000	44	26	29	18
Republican				
--September 2000	31	65	4	-34
--June 2000	19	58	23	-39
 Bush				
Registered Voters				
--September 2000	50%	42%	8%	8%
--June 2000	40	30	30	10
Democrat				
--September 2000	20	69	10	-49
--June 2000	18	49	34	-31
Independent				
--September 2000	52	43	5	9
--June 2000	36	33	30	3
Republican				
--September 2000	93	5	1	88
--June 2000	75	6	19	69

* The Favorable rating represents the percent favorable minus the percent unfavorable.

Now I'm going to name some other political figures. Just quickly tell me whether your general impression is favorable, unfavorable, or if you have no opinion. First (RANDOMIZE) (Q28)

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Registered Voters					
September 2000					
Christie Whitman	51%	37%	12%	100	(670)
Bill Clinton	50	42	8	100	(670)
Ralph Nader	46	18	36	100	(670)
Patrick Buchanan	18	53	29	100	(670)