

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

February 1, 2001

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RELEASE: (EP130-1)

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in the Thursday, February 1 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.*"

New Jersey's Acting Governor: Donald Who?

The new acting Governor of New Jersey – Donald DiFrancesco – is a mystery to most state residents. But while the current Senate President is largely unknown, few New Jerseyans are alarmed that an unfamiliar figure is assuming the state's highest office. And the state is nearly evenly divided over whether DiFrancesco should act as a caretaker or actively pursue his own agenda while serving as acting Governor.

These are some of the main findings of the most recent Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll, conducted by telephone with a scientific sample of 803 New Jersey residents between January 24 and 30. The sampling error for the survey is ± 3.5 percentage points.

One-in-four state residents are able to spontaneously volunteer DiFrancesco's name when asked who would become the acting governor when Whitman leaves office. Another third could recognize DiFrancesco's name, leaving four-in-ten who say they have never heard of the long-time legislator from Union County.

Garden State residents know virtually nothing about DiFrancesco—just one-in-ten say they know either "a lot" or "some" about him; another two-in-ten say they know "just a little," and a staggering 69 percent say they know even less. As a result, few New Jerseyans have an opinion of their new Chief Executive: just 9 percent say they have a favorable opinion of him, and 2 percent have an unfavorable opinion.

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

191 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

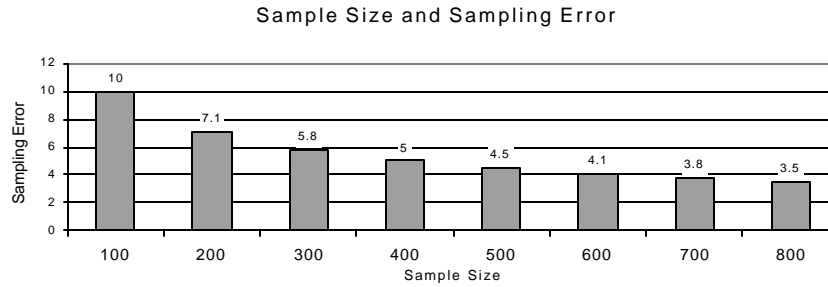
Phone: 732-932-9384 - Website: <http://slerp.rutgers.edu> - Fax: 732-932-6778

Despite his unfamiliarity, few New Jerseyans are uncomfortable with the changeover: a 44 percent plurality says they are comfortable with the idea of DiFrancesco as Governor. Only one-quarter of residents are uncomfortable with the idea, and 32 percent don't know how they feel about it. Familiarity and partisan leanings both breed comfort: 70 percent of those who know something about DiFrancesco are comfortable with his takeover, compared to 42 percent who know nothing about him. Republicans are more comfortable with the idea than are Democrats – 58 percent to 36 percent respectively.

The state is somewhat divided over how DiFrancesco should act as Governor: 47 percent think he should be an active governor pursuing his own agenda, while 43 percent would prefer that he assume more of a caretaker role.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP130-1), THURSDAY 1, FEBRUARY, 2001

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted between January 24-30 with a scientifically selected random sample of 803 New Jersey adult residents interviewed by telephone. 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 is ± 3.5 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adult residents were found to have a favorable opinion of future governor Donald DiFrancesco, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46 and 54 percent (50 ± 3.5) had all New Jersey adult residents 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 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:

When Whitman leaves office, do you know the name of the person who would become the Acting Governor? IF YES, PROBE: Who is that? (W10)

	<u>Donald DiFrancesco</u>	<u>Other/Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2001	26%	74%	100%	(803)
May 1999*	2	98	100	(623)

“The Acting Governor would be Donald DiFrancesco (Dee-Fran-Sess-Ko). Have you ever heard of him before?” (W11)

	<u>Yes, named (W10)</u>	<u>Yes, Recognized</u>	<u>No/DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2001	26%	33%	41%	100%	(803)
<u>Party Id</u>					
--Democrat	21	35	44	100	(278)
--Independent	27	31	42	100	(314)
--Republican	35	36	29	100	(179)
May 1999	2	40	58	100	(623)

* Question wording: “If Whitman won her race for the Senate, do you know the name of the person who would become the Acting Governor? IF YES, PROBE: Who is that?”

“How much do you feel you know about DiFrancesco – a lot, some, just a little, or nothing at all?” (W12)

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2001	2%	8%	21%	69%	1%	101%	(803)

“And is your opinion of DiFrancesco favorable, unfavorable or don’t you have an opinion of him?” (W13)

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>DK/No Opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2001	9%	2%	89%	100%	(803)

“Are you comfortable with the idea of Donald DiFrancesco taking over as Governor, or are you uncomfortable with this?” (W14)

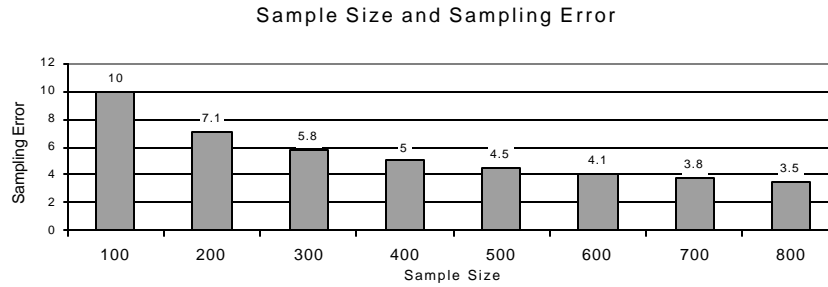
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“What do you think DiFrancesco should do as acting Governor – should he act mostly as a caretaker, overseeing the running of the state, or should he be more active and pursue his own agenda?” (W15)

	<u>Caretaker</u>	<u>More active</u>	<u>Both (vol.)</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
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