

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

February 11, 2001

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RELEASE: (EP130-5)

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in the Sunday, February 11 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "The Star-Ledger /Eagleton-Rutgers Poll."

NEW JERSEYANS ARE INCREASINGLY BOTHERED BY RACIAL PROFILING

But State Troopers' Job Ratings Remain High

While the overall job performance rating of the State Police has remained stable over the last two years, the number of New Jerseyans who think minorities are treated worse than others has continued to climb, and for the first time a majority of state residents say they are bothered "a lot" by the practice of racial profiling – the stopping of motorists based on racial characteristics.

Statewide, seven-in-ten New Jerseyans give the State Police positive ratings of "excellent" or "good" for the job they are doing patrolling the state's major roads. One quarter offer negative assessments of "only fair" (19 percent) or "poor" (6 percent), with the remaining five percent offering no opinion. However, assessments are sharply divided along racial lines and paint a stark contrast in black and white. Among whites, positive assessments outnumber negative ones by a wide margin of 79 to 16 percent. But among African Americans, negative assessments outnumber positive ones by 58 to 38 percent.

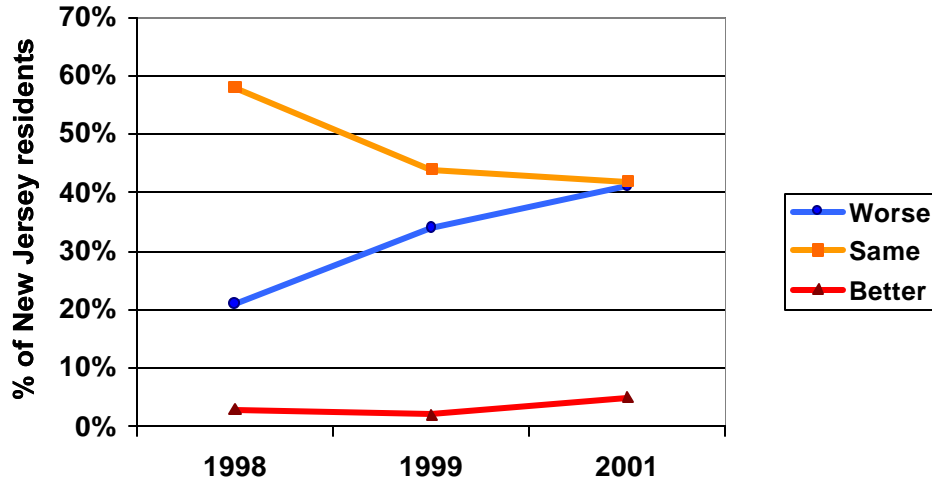
The practice of racial profiling came front and center about three years ago when Troopers shot at a van carrying four minority youths, wounding three of them, in an incident on the New Jersey Turnpike in April of 1998. The state settled the lawsuit brought by those victims to the tune of nearly 13 million dollars on February 2, 2001. Just after the incident, in May of 1998, just 21 percent of New Jerseyans thought that the State Police treated minorities worse than others. This figure grew to 34 percent in May of 1999, and has continued to increase, now reaching 41 percent in the latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.

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

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Perceived Police Treatment of Minorities

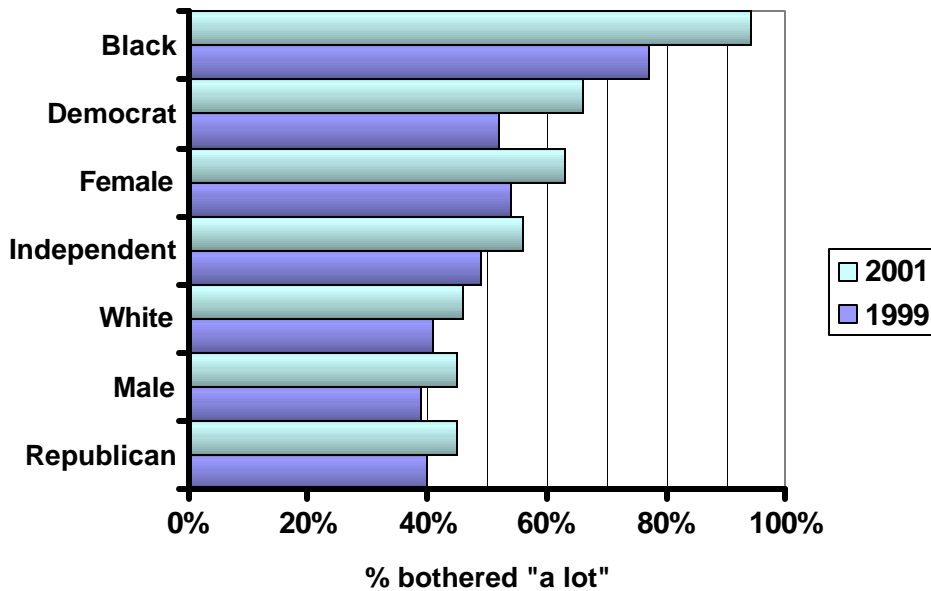


The current survey, conducted by telephone with a scientifically selected sample of 803 Garden State residents interviewed between January 24 and 30 of this year, also finds New Jerseyans becoming increasingly bothered by the practice of racial profiling in their state. In May of 1999, 47 percent said they were bothered “a lot” by the practice of racial profiling. Currently, 55 percent say they are bothered this much, with another 18 percent saying they are bothered “some,” and 8 percent “a little.”

But there are huge differences in the extent to which various groups of New Jerseyans are bothered by the State Police’s admitted practice of racial profiling. These differences extend beyond race to encompass gender, political party, ideology and age.

- Almost all black residents of New Jersey (94 percent) say they are bothered “a lot” by racial profiling. This compares to only 46 percent of white New Jerseyans.
- Two-thirds of Democrats say that racial profiling is a practice that bothers them “a lot.” And a clear majority of the state’s independent voters (56 percent) are bothered to this extent. However, in stark contrast, barely over one-third of Republicans (35 percent) are similarly troubled by the practice of racial profiling.

WHO'S BOTHERED BY RACIAL PROFILING?

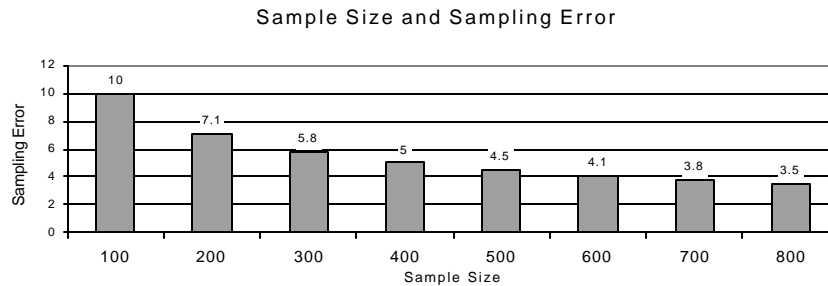


- Some 63 percent of women report being bothered “a lot” by racial profiling; just 45 percent of men feel similarly.
- Profiling raises the hackles of 66 percent of self-identified liberals, but just 45 percent of conservatives. Moderates are in the middle, with 57 percent saying that racial profiling bothers them “a lot.”

Cliff Zukin, director of the Rutgers-based Poll commented, “Despite the state’s efforts to resolve the issue of racial profiling, it seems to have actually become more of a front-burner issue over the last two years. The issue has penetrated through the barrier of race to the larger political fabric of partisanship. We may well see the state’s handling of racial profiling become an issue in this fall’s gubernatorial election.”

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP130-5) FEBRUARY 11, 2001

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted by telephone from January 24-30 with a scientifically selected random sample of 803 New Jersey adult residents. 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 the state police, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.5 and 53.5 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:

“I’d like to ask you some questions about the STATE POLICE here in New Jersey. These are the people who patrol the state highways, not like your local police and the sheriffs who patrol the area around where you live.

Overall, how would you describe the job the State Police do in patrolling the state’s major roads – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?” (QJB2)

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don’t Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2001	26%	45%	19%	6%	5%	101%	(803)
<u>By Race</u>							
-- White	31	48	12	4	4	99	(579)
-- Black	8	30	41	17	5	101	(98)
May 1999	26	48	14	7	5	100	(802)
<u>By Race</u>							
-- White	33	51	11	2	4	101	(573)
-- Black	9	22	36	27	6	100	(86)
May 1998	30	49	12	4	6	101	(556)
<u>By Race</u>							
-- White	35	51	8	2	4	100	(378)
-- Black	8	48	23	7	14	100	(100)

“Do you think the New Jersey State Police treat minorities better, worse, or the same as they treat other people?” (QJB3)

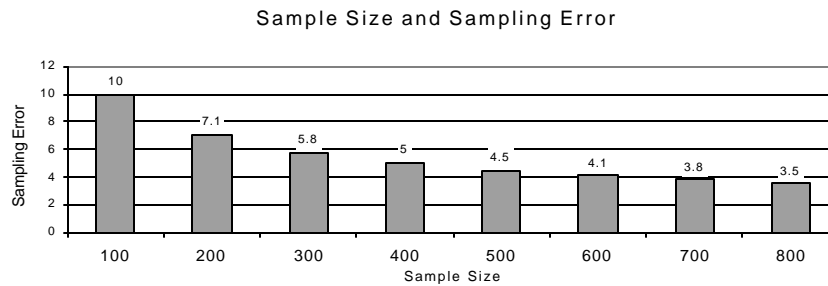
	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Don't Know/ Depends</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2001	5%	41%	42%	12%	100%	(803)
<i><u>By Race</u></i>						
-- White	4	33	49	15	101	(579)
-- Black	4	81	10	5	100	(98)
-- Black & Hispanic	5	69	18	8	100	(159)
<i><u>By Party</u></i>						
-- Democrat	3	53	31	13	100	(278)
-- Independent	5	40	43	12	100	(314)
-- Republican	5	27	57	10	99	(179)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
-- North	4	47	36	14	101	(361)
-- Central	6	37	45	13	101	(212)
-- South	5	36	49	10	100	(219)
May 1999	2	34	44	20	100	(802)
<i><u>By Race</u></i>						
-- White	1	28	50	21	100	(573)
-- Black	2	64	21	14	101	(86)
-- Black & Hispanic	2	55	27	16	100	(168)
<i><u>By Party</u></i>						
-- Democrat	3	40	37	19	99	(270)
-- Independent	1	36	45	18	100	(299)
-- Republican	2	27	53	19	101	(194)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
-- North	2	37	39	23	101	(365)
-- Central	2	33	45	19	99	(215)
-- South	1	32	50	16	99	(214)
May 1998	3	21	58	18	100	(556)
<i><u>By Race</u></i>						
-- White	3	14	64	19	100	(378)
-- Black	1	56	30	13	100	(100)
-- Black & Hispanic	4	43	38	15	100	(139)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
-- North	4	28	52	16	100	(260)
-- Central	2	15	59	24	100	(148)
-- South	2	15	66	17	100	(148)

“In New Jersey there has been a finding that some State Police have been stopping cars based on the race or age of the people in the cars. How much does it bother you that some State police stop people because of their race – is this something that bothers you a lot, some, a little, or not at all?” (QJB4)

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2001	55%	18%	8%	14%	5%	100%	(803)
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<u>By Age</u>							
-- 18-29	67	17	10	6	0	100	(156)
-- 30-49	56	21	8	13	2	100	(345)
-- 50+	46	15	9	19	10	99	(270)
May 1999	47	22	12	15	4	100	(802)
<u>By Race</u>							
-- White	41	24	14	18	4	101	(573)
-- Black	77	10	6	5	2	100	(86)
-- Black & Hispanic	65	16	10	7	2	100	(168)
<u>By Party</u>							
-- Democrat	52	24	9	14	1	100	(270)
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<u>By Age</u>							
-- 18-29	47	28	14	9	2	100	(141)
-- 30-49	50	22	12	15	2	101	(360)
-- 50+	44	17	13	18	8	100	(288)

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