

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 Friday, April 20 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.*"

SENATE HEARINGS ON RACIAL PROFILING COMMAND WIDESPREAD ATTENTION

Many Believe Verniero Intentionally Mislead Senate And Should Step Down If Proven True

Despite recent front-page stories raising questions about acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco's business dealings and Senator Robert Torricelli's fundraising practices, it is the state Senate's hearings into racial profiling that are commanding the lion's share of attention among Garden State residents.

And that's not good news for current Supreme Court Justice and former Attorney General Peter Verniero. Not only do three-quarters of New Jersey residents say they have been paying "a lot" or "some" attention to the hearings, but a majority of these believe Verniero gave intentionally misleading statements about racial profiling to the state Senate during his Supreme Court confirmation hearings in 1999. Moreover, four-fifths of those who are familiar with the hearings feel that Verniero should no longer continue to serve on the Court if it is determined that he intentionally misled the Senate.

These are the main findings of the latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll conducted with a scientifically selected sample of 802 New Jersey adults interviewed by telephone between April 11 and 17th. The survey has a sampling error of ± 3.5 percentage points.

The Senate hearings into the New Jersey State Police's practice of racial profiling have engaged New Jerseyans to a considerably greater extent than have the troubles of DiFrancesco or Torricelli: 74 percent say they have followed news of the Senate's hearings at least somewhat closely, about twice the number who have followed the news about Torricelli's (38 percent) or DiFrancesco's (34 percent) problems.

And among the three-quarters actively following the hearings there is a clear verdict: a majority of 53 percent think Verniero made intentionally misleading statements in his testimony about racial profiling during his 1999 Supreme Court confirmation hearings. Just 18 percent believe that Verniero did not do so, while the remaining 29 percent express no opinion on the matter.

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

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Moreover, the vast majority of those following the hearings believe that Verniero should not continue to serve on the State's highest court if it can be shown that he did give intentionally misleading statements during his confirmation hearing. Among New Jerseyans who are familiar with the hearings just 12 percent believe he should continue to serve on the state Supreme Court, while 79 percent think he should no longer do so if he intentionally misled the Senate. The remaining 9 percent express no opinion.

The poll also shows that those state residents who have followed news of the hearings most closely are also the most skeptical of Verniero's veracity: 63 percent of those having heard or read "a lot" about the hearings believe Verniero intentionally gave misleading testimony during his 1999 Senate confirmation hearings, compared to 43 percent of those who have heard or read only "some."

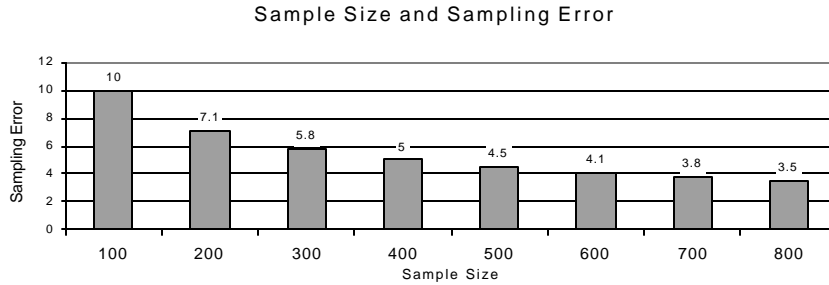
Cliff Zukin, director of the Rutgers-based survey commented: "It is an unusual occurrence in our state where the majority of residents take such an interest in a public issue. At this point it appears that Justice Verniero does not enjoy the confidence of the citizenry."

The issue of the State Police's practice of profiling is one that threatens to divide the state along racial lines. Statewide, 39 percent describe it as a "big" problem, with another 22 percent saying it is "somewhat" of a problem, leaving 31 percent who feel it is either a "small" problem or "not a problem." The remaining 8 percent express no opinion. However, 82 percent of African-American New Jerseyans view the issue as a "big problem," compared to just 31 percent of white New Jerseyans.

The issue of racial profiling also clearly cuts across party lines, with implications for the coming gubernatorial and legislative elections in November: 54 percent of Democrats describe racial profiling as a "big problem," compared to 35 percent of independent voters and just 23 percent of self-identified Republicans.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP131-2) April 20, 2001

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted by telephone from April 11-17 with a scientifically selected random sample of 802 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 believe that racial profiling was a big problem, 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:

“Do you think racial profiling – that is, when law enforcement officers stop people because of their race – is a problem in New Jersey? IF YES: Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or a small problem?” (RP2)

	<u>Big Problem</u>	<u>Somewhat of a problem</u>	<u>Small Problem</u>	<u>Not a problem</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
April 2001	39%	22%	6%	25%	8%	100%	(802)
<u>Race</u>							
-- White	31	25	7	30	7	100	(582)
-- Blacks	82	8	4	3	3	100	(101)
-- Blacks & Hispanics	73	13	4	7	3	100	(155)
<u>Party ID</u>							
-- Democrat	54	19	5	19	3	100	(285)
-- Independent	35	23	7	27	8	100	(281)
-- Republican	23	24	10	33	11	101	(182)

“How much have you heard or read about the New Jersey State Senate’s recent hearings into racial profiling by the State Police – a lot, some, not much or nothing at all?” (RP3)

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
April 2001	35%	39%	15%	10%	1%	100%	(802)
<u>Race</u>							
-- White	33	42	15	10	1	101	(582)
-- Blacks	58	28	12	3	--	101	(101)
-- Blacks & Hispanics	49	33	12	5	--	99	(155)
<u>Party ID</u>							
-- Democrat	42	37	13	7	1	100	(285)
-- Independent	32	44	13	11	--	100	(281)
-- Republican	35	39	17	8	1	100	(182)

“From what you have heard or read, do you think state Supreme Court justice, and former New Jersey Attorney General, Peter Verniero [Ver – neer – oh] did or did not give **intentionally** misleading statements about his office’s investigations into racial profiling during his 1999 Senate confirmation hearings?” (RP4)

Asked only of people who responded that they had heard or read "a lot" or "some" to QRP3.

	<u>Did</u>	<u>Did not</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
April 2001	53%	18%	29%	100%	(614)
<u>Race</u>					
-- White	50	21	29	100	(448)
-- Blacks & Hispanics	63	12	25	100	(131)
<u>Party ID</u>					
-- Democrat	60	18	22	100	(234)
-- Independent	51	14	35	100	(219)
-- Republican	48	27	25	100	(136)
<u>Heard/read about racial profiling hearings in State Senate</u>					
-- A lot	63	21	16	100	(302)
-- Some	43	16	41	100	(312)

“If Verniero **did** give intentionally misleading information on racial profiling to the state Senate during his confirmation hearings, do you think he should continue to serve on the state Supreme Court, or should he no longer serve?” (RP5)

Asked only of people who responded that they had heard or read "a lot" or "some" to QRP3.

	<u>Continue</u>	<u>No longer serve</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
April 2001	12%	79%	9%	100%	(614)
<u>Race</u>					
-- White	14	79	7	100	(448)
-- Blacks & Hispanics	7	84	10	101	(131)
<u>Party ID</u>					
-- Democrat	8	86	5	99	(234)
-- Independent	14	77	10	101	(219)
-- Republican	17	77	6	100	(136)

Composite Table

"How much have you heard or read about ...

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Federal investigations into New Jersey Senator Bob Torricelli's 1996 campaign fundraising? (QC5)	9%	29%	29%	33%	--	100%	(802)
Questions surrounding acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco's real estate and business dealings with major state contractors? (QC7)	8%	26%	25%	40%	2%	101%	(802)
The New Jersey State Senate's recent hearings into racial profiling by the State Police? (QRP3)	35%	39%	15%	10%	1%	100%	(802)