

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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THE RACE FOR GOVERNOR NARROWS SLIGHTLY BUT MCGREEVEY'S LEAD REMAINS LARGE

Republicans Tie Democrats in the Assembly Vote

The race for New Jersey Governor has tightened some over the past month, but Democrat Jim McGreevey maintains a large lead over his opponent, Republican Bret Schundler. According to a new Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll, McGreevey leads Schundler 46 percent to 31 percent among likely voters, with one in five voters still undecided. Last month McGreevey led Schundler by a slightly wider margin of 49 percent to 30 percent. When those who lean towards a candidate are included, McGreevey currently leads Schundler 51 percent to 35 percent.

The September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, after which both candidates suspended their campaigns for more than a week, do not appear to have had much effect on the governor's race so far. Voters give McGreevey his large lead despite dividing evenly over which candidate could better manage the state in a time of crisis.

On most other candidate traits, however, McGreevey dominates. Voters see McGreevey as more understanding of their concerns, as more of a leader, and as having better ideas than Schundler. The one area in which Schundler tops McGreevey is in being an "outsider." Voters again divide over which candidate is the more intelligent.

Republicans in state assembly races continue to fare better than the top of their ticket, drawing even with Democrats for the first time this year. Forty percent of likely voters say they support Democratic candidates for the assembly and 39 percent say they support Republicans. Just last month Democrats held a six-point advantage.

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted September 22 through 26 among 424 voters considered likely to vote in the November election. The poll has a

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sampling error of plus or minus five points.

The slight narrowing in the governor's race appears to be fueled by independents – a key voter group. While independent voters still give McGreevey a large lead – 46 percent to 25 percent – the gap has narrowed considerably since August when McGreevey led Schundler by a formidable 32 points among this group (50 to 18 percent). Interestingly, Schundler's gains among independents come as he continues to struggle with his base. The former Jersey City Mayor receives only 68 percent of the vote from self-described Republicans, compared to McGreevey's 83 percent from Democrats.

As Monika McDermott, the poll's associate director points out: "One of Schundler's biggest challenges is to attract and solidify support from wavering Republicans. While we usually expect Democratic and Republican voters to come home to their party's candidate in the end, Schundler hasn't had an easy time within his own party."

Schundler has also gained ground among New Jersey's male voters, but he continues to face huge deficits among women. Men who are likely to vote divide nearly evenly: 43 percent for McGreevey and 41 percent for Schundler. In August, McGreevey led Schundler 46 percent to 37 percent among men. In contrast, women continue to give McGreevey an overwhelming 28-point lead.

Geographically each candidate fares best on his home turf, but McGreevey dominates in the all-important fight for South Jersey. In both southern New Jersey and his home base of central New Jersey, McGreevey leads Schundler by over 20 points. In Schundler's home territory – northern New Jersey – McGreevey's lead is only 5 points: 42 percent to 37 percent.

Voters are no more or less confident of their votes now than they were in August. Three-quarters of each candidate's supporters continue to say they are certain of their vote while the rest reserve the right to change their minds before Election Day.

When voters are asked about a host of candidate traits, they give McGreevey the advantage on most of them:

- Forty-five percent of likely voters feel that McGreevey better understands their concerns, while only 29 percent feel that Schundler does.

- Forty-four percent see McGreevey as the more experienced candidate, compared to 20 percent who feel that Schundler is.
- McGreevey is seen as more of a leader than Schundler by 43 percent to 35 percent.
- And when asked which candidate has better ideas, 42 percent of likely voters choose McGreevey while 35 percent choose Schundler.

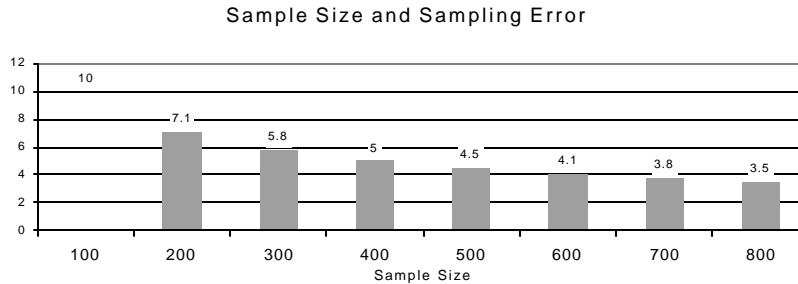
But Schundler holds his own on a few other measures. On the traits of intelligence and crisis management, voters are divided. Twenty-four percent say McGreevey is more intelligent than Schundler, but an equal number feel Schundler is the smarter. And when it comes to who could “better manage in a crisis” 34 percent choose Schundler and 33 percent choose McGreevey. And finally, at least one of Schundler’s campaign messages appears to have reached voters: by a 43 percent to 17 percent margin likely voters say Schundler is more of an outsider than McGreevey is.

Overall, voters’ views of McGreevey have tempered some since August, but views of Schundler have changed little. Currently, 41 percent of likely voters have favorable opinions of Schundler while 21 percent view him unfavorably – numbers virtually unchanged from August. In contrast, while voters still view McGreevey favorably by a margin of more than 2 ½ to one, his image has become somewhat less positive over the past month. Currently, 53 percent of likely voters have a favorable impression of McGreevey and 19 percent have an unfavorable impression. In August 58 percent viewed him favorably and only 13 percent viewed him unfavorably.

McDermott sums up: “The Governor’s race hasn’t changed much over the past month, as both voters and candidates have had more pressing concerns following the September 11 attacks. As a result, there could be a lot of movement in the few remaining weeks as the candidates and voters refocus their energies on the election.”

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP133-2) September 30, 2001

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted by telephone from September 22-26 with a scientifically selected random sample of 895 New Jersey adult residents, including 669 who reported being registered to vote. This sample yielded 424 adult residents deemed most likely to vote in the November election. The figures in this release are based on this likely voter 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 likely voters is ± 5 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey likely voters were found to support Bret Schundler for Governor, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 45 and 55 percent (50 ± 5) had all New Jersey likely 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 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:

“If the election for Governor were held today, for whom would you vote [PROGRAMMING: ROTATE CHOICES] Bret Schundler [SHUN – dler], the Republican, Jim McGreevey, the Democrat, or some other candidate for governor?” [Q4]

	<u>Schundler</u>	<u>McGreevey</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Wouldn't Vote</u>	<u>DK/ Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2001							
Likely Voters	31%	46%	3%	--	21%	101%	(424)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	2	83	1	--	15	101	(149)
--Independent	25	46	4	1	24	100	(119)
--Republican	68	8	3	--	21	100	(142)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	41	43	3	--	14	101	(208)
--Female	21	49	2	--	27	99	(216)
<u>Region</u>							
--North	37	42	1	--	20	100	(177)
--Central	25	49	3	--	22	99	(115)
--South	27	48	3	--	21	99	(130)
Previous Surveys							
August 2001							
Likely Voters	30	49	2	--	19	100	(395)
April 2001							
Registered Voters*	22	46	3	1	28	100	(632)
January 2001							
Registered Voters*	19	43	4	1	32	99	(649)
September 1997	<u>Whitman (R)</u>	<u>McGreevey (D)</u>					
Registered Voters*	45	33	3	2	17	100	(673)

	<u>Schundler</u>	<u>McGreevey</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Wouldn't Vote</u>	<u>DK/Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 1993 Likely Voters	<u>Whitman (R)</u> 37	<u>Florio (D)</u> 47	--	1	15	100	(595)
September 1989 Likely Voters	<u>Courter (R)</u> 30	<u>Florio (D)</u> 51	--	2	17	100	(712)

* previous survey sample of registered voters, compared to current sample of likely voters

ASKED OF THOSE WHO CHOSE A CANDIDATE IN Q4

“Are you very sure about voting for (FILL CANDIDATE FROM Q4); or might you change your mind before Election Day?” [Q6]

	<u>Very sure</u>	<u>Might change</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2001					
Likely Voters	73%	25%	1%	99%	(323)
<u>Probable vote</u>					
--Schundler	74	24	2	100	(130)
--McGreevey	73	26	1	100	(193)
<u>Previous Surveys</u>					
August 2001 Likely Voters	73%	26%	1%	100%	(312)

COMPOSITE VOTE WITH LEANERS

“If the election for Governor were held today, for whom would you vote [PROGRAMMING: ROTATE CHOICES] Bret Schundler [SHUN – dler], the Republican, Jim McGreevey, the Democrat, or some other candidate for governor?” [Q4]

IF UNDECIDED: “At this moment do you lean more towards Schundler or more towards McGreevey?” [Q5]

	<u>Schundler</u>	<u>McGreevey</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Wouldn't Vote</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2001							
Likely Voters	35%	51%	3%	--	12%	101%	(424)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	3	89	1	--	8	101	(149)
--Independent	29	53	4	1	13	100	(119)
--Republican	75	11	4	--	11	101	(142)
<u>Region of State</u>							
--North	41	47	1	1	11	101	(177)
--Central	30	56	4	--	11	101	(115)
--South	30	53	3	--	14	100	(130)
<u>Previous Surveys</u>							
August 2001 Likely Voters	33	54	2	--	12	101	(395)

“And if the election for State Assembly were held today, would you vote for the Republican or Democratic candidates for Assembly in your district?” [Q7]

	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Split/Other</u>	<u>DK/Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2001						
Likely Voters	40%	39%	1%	20%	100%	(424)
<i>Party ID</i>						
--Democrat	78	4	1	17	100	(149)
--Independent	42	28	2	28	100	(119)
--Republican	3	85	--	12	100	(142)
<i>Gender</i>						
--Male	34	47	--	18	99	(208)
--Female	46	31	2	21	100	(216)
<i>Region</i>						
--North	39	40	1	20	100	(177)
--Central	40	32	2	26	100	(115)
--South	42	41	1	15	99	(130)
Previous Surveys						
August 2001						
Likely Voters	40	34	2	24	100	(395)
April 2001						
Registered Voters*	42	33	2	22	99	(632)
September 1999						
Registered Voters*	34	31	5	30	100	(516)
September 1997						
Registered Voters*	33	29	--	38	100	(673)

* previous survey sample of registered voters, compared to current sample of likely voters

QUESTIONS 8 AND 9 ROTATED:

Is your opinion of Democrat Jim McGreevey favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion of him? **IF FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE:** Is that very [favorable/unfavorable] or somewhat [favorable/unfavorable]? [Q8]

	<u>Very favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat unfavorable</u>	<u>Very unfavorable</u>	<u>DK/No opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2001							
Likely Voters	24%	29%	9%	10%	27%	99%	(424)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	42	38	1	1	18	100	(149)
--Independent	24	27	10	8	32	101	(119)
--Republican	5	23	19	22	31	100	(142)
<i>Gender</i>							
--Male	19	31	14	15	21	100	(208)
--Female	29	27	6	5	33	100	(216)
Previous Surveys							
August 2001							
Likely Voters	23	35	5	8	29	100	(395)

Is your opinion of Republican Bret Schundler (SHUN – dler) favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion of him? **IF FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE:** Is that very [favorable/unfavorable] or somewhat [favorable/unfavorable]? [Q9]

	<u>Very favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat unfavorable</u>	<u>Very unfavorable</u>	<u>DK/ No opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2001							
Likely Voters	19%	22%	9%	12%	38%	100%	(424)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	2	14	16	20	48	100	(149)
--Independent	15	21	6	15	43	100	(119)
--Republican	43	33	5	1	18	100	(142)
Previous Surveys							
August 2001							
Likely Voters	15	23	9	12	40	99	(395)

"I'm going to read you a list of candidate traits, and for each one, I'd like you to tell me whether you think it describes Jim McGreevey or Bret Schundler better. First, which candidate [FILL – RANDOMIZE] – Bret Schundler or Jim McGreevey?" [Q10]

	<u>Schundler</u>	<u>McGreevey</u>	<u>Neither/Both</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2001						
Likely Voters						
"Is more intelligent"	24%	24%	13%	38%	99%	(424)
"Has more experience"	20%	44%	8%	28%	100%	(424)
"Is more of an outsider"	43%	17%	8%	32%	100%	(424)
"Has better ideas"	35%	42%	6%	17%	100%	(424)
"Understands the concerns you face in day-to-day life"	29%	45%	9%	17%	100%	(424)
"Is more of a leader"	35%	43%	4%	18%	100%	(424)
"Could better manage in a crisis"	34%	33%	5%	28%	100%	(424)

"How much do you feel you know about (Bret Schundler/Jim McGreevey – CANDIDATE ORDER ROTATED) -- a lot, some, just a little, or nothing at all?" [Q12, Q13]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2001							
SCHUNDLER—Likely Voters	19%	44%	25%	11%	2%	101%	(424)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	9	44	31	14	3	101	(149)
--Independent	18	39	26	14	3	100	(119)
--Republican	31	47	16	6	1	101	(142)
MCGREEVEY—Likely Voters	29%	46%	18%	6%	1%	100%	(424)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	32	44	18	3	2	99	(149)
--Independent	27	49	17	6	--	99	(119)
--Republican	28	43	20	8	1	100	(142)

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>Previous Surveys</u>							
August 2001							
SCHUNDLER—Likely Voters	12	41	30	17	--	100	(395)
MCGREEVEY—Likely Voters	19	53	22	6	1	101	(395)
September 1997							
WHITMAN—Registered Voters*	18	57	24	--	--	99	(673)
MCGREEVEY—Registered Voters*	4	17	60	19	--	100	(673)
September 1993							
WHITMAN—Likely Voters	9	42	44	5	--	100	(590)
FLORIO—Likely Voters	41	45	13	1	1	100	(590)
September 1989							
COURTER—Likely Voters	6	29	46	18	--	99	(707)
FLORIO—Likely Voters	16	33	47	4	--	100	(707)

* previous survey sample of registered voters, compared to current sample of likely voters

“How closely have you been following the campaign for Governor -- very closely, somewhat closely, or not very closely so far?”[23]

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Somewhat closely</u>	<u>Not very closely</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2001						
Likely Voters	17%	57%	25%	1%	100%	(424)
<i>Party ID</i>						
--Democrat	16	58	25	--	99	(149)
--Independent	16	55	28	1	100	(119)
--Republican	18	57	23	1	99	(142)
<u>Previous surveys</u>						
August 2001	19	59	22	--	100	(395)

“In your opinion, how much of a difference will the outcome of the election make in the way the New Jersey government is run over the next few years—a great deal of difference, some, or not very much difference?” [Q24]

	<u>Great Deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not very much</u>	<u>No difference at all</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2001								
Likely Voters	37%	41%	17%	1%	1%	2%	99%	(424)
<i>Party ID</i>								
--Democrat	46	38	14	1	--	1	100	(149)
--Independent	34	42	21	1	1	1	100	(119)
--Republican	31	45	17	1	2	4	100	(142)
<u>Previous Surveys</u>								
August 2001	34	48	13	1	1	2	99	(395)