

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 Sunday, March 10th *Star-Ledger*. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to “**The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.**”

NO RELIEF FOR TORRICELLI POST-INVESTIGATION *But Potential Opponents Have Uphill Battles of Their Own*

Views of Senator Robert Torricelli and his fundraising activities have not improved since last spring, even after the five-year federal investigation into his 1996 campaign finally drew to a close in January with no charges filed against him. Despite the lack of charges, most New Jerseyans who know about the investigations still believe Torricelli did something wrong – if not illegal, then unethical. According to a new *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll, only 19 percent of those who have heard or read about the Torricelli probe and its conclusion think he did not do anything seriously wrong, a number virtually unchanged from last April when the investigation was in full swing. Perhaps as a result, 43 percent of Garden State residents and 45 percent of registered voters would like to send somebody else to the United States Senate this November.

The good news for Torricelli is that his prospective Republican opponents have yet to build up any real name recognition in the state. None of the Republican primary candidates has made an impression with more than one in five New Jerseyans statewide. Diane Allen is the best known and the most well-liked with 15 percent viewing her favorably and two percent viewing her unfavorably. Still, an overwhelming 83 percent say they do not have an opinion of her.

The *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted by telephone among 803 New Jersey adults from February 28th through March 6th. The margin of sampling error for the survey is ± 3.5 percentage points.

Monika McDermott, interim director of the Rutgers-based poll, sums up Torricelli's dilemma: “Torricelli faces a real challenge, but not from his potential opponents, from himself. The end of the investigation did not bring him the absolution

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he might have hoped for – New Jerseyans still believe he did something wrong in 1996, and many would like a new senator.”

Forty-four percent of New Jerseyans say they have heard or read at least “some” about the investigation, and among them a total of three-quarters believe Torricelli did something wrong. Fifty-six percent believe Torricelli did something unethical, but nothing illegal. Nineteen percent now believe Torricelli did something illegal, nearly twice the 10 percent that thought so last April. Despite this, most claim that the investigation and its conclusion have not changed their opinions of the Senator.

Among those who have heard or read about the investigation and its conclusion, 61 percent say their opinions of Torricelli are unchanged. But nearly one third of those (31 percent) who have paid attention to the news say their opinion is less favorable as a result. And these numbers know no partisan boundaries – 28 percent of Democrats and 31 percent of Republicans view Torricelli less favorably now. Overall, six percent of New Jerseyans view Torricelli more favorably. Among those who have not heard much or anything about the investigation, 60 percent say they are unaffected by the information that he was investigated but no charges were filed, while 17 percent view him less favorably and eight percent more favorably as a result.

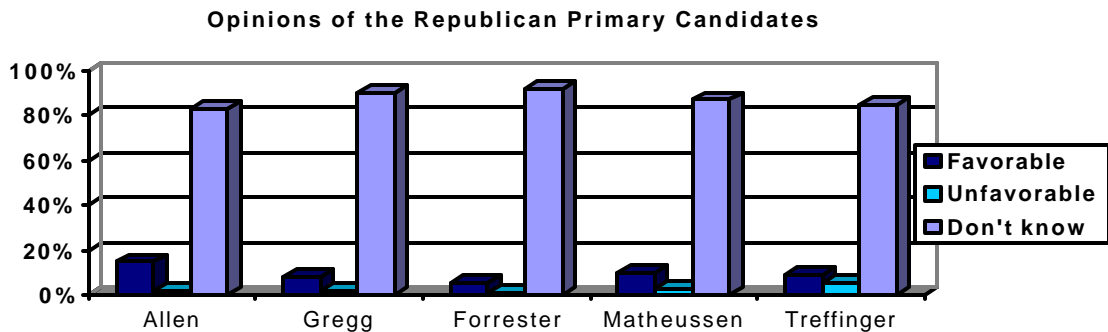
New Jerseyans’ opinions of Torricelli are still positive overall, but unfavorable views of him have increased slightly more than favorable views since last year. Currently 29 percent of New Jerseyans view him favorably and 22 percent view him unfavorably. Last April, his favorable rating was 24 percent, to 14 percent unfavorable.

In the general election campaign, Torricelli’s eventual opponent may find the investigation too lucrative a topic to pass up – among those who have heard or read the most about it, opinions of the Senator are decidedly less favorable than among the general population. Among New Jerseyans who say they have heard or read “a lot” about the investigation and its conclusion, 51 percent view Torricelli unfavorably, and 63 percent would like to see someone else elected.

Overall, only 28 percent of New Jerseyans would like to see Torricelli reelected, while 43 percent would like to see someone else elected. Twenty-nine percent have yet to form an opinion. Even within Torricelli’s Democratic base opinions are divided – only

37 percent of Democrats would like to see him reelected while 34 percent would prefer someone else.

Perceptions of Torricelli’s job performance may also be colored somewhat by the investigation. While Torricelli gets positive marks overall for job performance, his numbers compare unfavorably with New Jersey’s junior senator Jon Corzine. Forty-one percent of New Jerseyans approve of the job Torricelli is doing, while 23 percent disapprove. Thirty-six percent do not have an opinion. In contrast, 49 percent of residents approve of Corzine’s job performance, while only 16 percent disapprove.

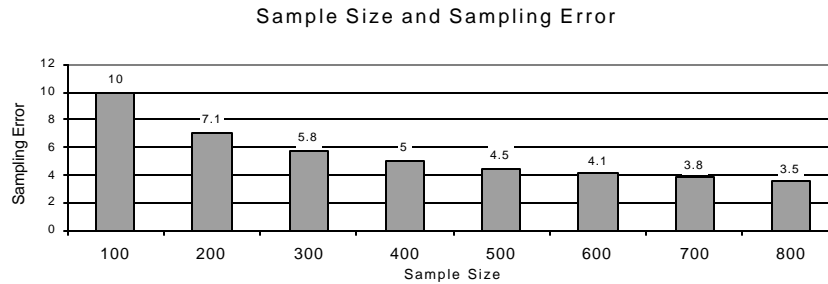


A bright spot for Torricelli is that all of his potential Republican challengers start out with substantial disadvantages in recognition. Diane Allen is the most well known of the group, with Jim Treffinger following closely behind. Nine percent have a favorable impression of Treffinger, six percent have an unfavorable impression, and 85 percent have yet to form an opinion. Douglas Forrester is the least known with 92 percent saying they have no opinion of him, and only six percent viewing favorably and one percent unfavorably. Guy Gregg is viewed favorably by eight percent, unfavorably by two percent, and 90 percent have no opinion. John Matheussen has similar numbers – ten percent favorable, three percent unfavorable, and 87 percent not expressing an opinion.

McDermott concludes: “Because New Jersey is dominated by the New York and Philadelphia media markets, it is very difficult for newcomers to statewide politics to gain popular recognition. This is why we frequently see candidates running more successful statewide campaigns on their second try. Torricelli can take some comfort in this as all of his potential challengers are starting out virtually unknown.”

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP136-2) March 10, 2002

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted by telephone from February 28 to March 6 with a scientifically selected random sample of 803 New Jersey adults. 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 residents were found to have a favorable opinion of Torricelli, 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 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:

“Now I’m going to ask you about some political figures in New Jersey. For each person, please tell me if your opinion is favorable, unfavorable, or if you don’t really have an opinion of them. Is your opinion of ...**[FILL – RANDOMIZE]** (All: B. Bob Torricelli, C. Jon Corzine)(Half sample: D. Diane Allen, E. Douglas Forrester, F. Jim Treffinger)(Half sample: G. Guy Gregg, H. John Matheussen) favorable or unfavorable, or don’t you really have an opinion of [him/her]?
[RT1]

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>DK/No Opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>BOB TORRICELLI</u>					
March 2002	29%	22%	49%	100%	(803)
<u>Party ID</u>					
-- Democrat	38	11	51	100	(275)
-- Independent	25	22	53	100	(275)
-- Republican	23	38	39	100	(201)
<u>Registered Voters</u>	31	24	44	99	(645)
<u>Knowledge of investigation from RT6</u>					
--A lot	32	51	17	100	(127)
--Some	36	31	33	100	(259)
--Not much / Nothing	25	10	64	99	(398)
<u>Previous Surveys</u>					
-- April 2001	24	14	61	99	(802)

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>DK/No Opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>JON CORZINE</u>					
March 2002	37%	17%	46%	100%	(803)
<i>Party ID</i>					
-- Democrat	46	11	43	100	(275)
-- Independent	36	13	51	100	(275)
-- Republican	27	30	43	100	(201)
<u>Previous Surveys</u>					
-- April 2001	27	15	58	101	(802)
<u>DIANE ALLEN</u>					
March 2002	15%	2%	83%	100%	(403)
<i>Registered Voters</i>	18	1	81	100	(328)
<u>DOUGLAS FORRESTER</u>					
March 2002	6%	1%	92%	99%	(403)
<i>Registered Voters</i>	7	1	92	100	(328)
<u>JIM TREFFINGER</u>					
March 2002	9%	6%	85%	100%	(401)
<i>Registered Voters</i>	10	6	84	100	(318)
<u>GUY GREGG</u>					
March 2002	8%	2%	90%	100%	(401)
<i>Registered Voters</i>	8	2	90	100	(318)
<u>JOHN MATHEUSSEN</u>					
March 2002	10%	3%	87%	100%	(401)
<i>Registered Voters</i>	10	3	88	101	(318)

[RT2 AND RT3 ROTATED]

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bob Torricelli is handling his job as Senator?” [RT2]

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2002	41%	23%	36%	100%	(803)
<u>Party ID</u>					
-- Democrat	51	15	33	99	(275)
-- Independent	37	23	40	100	(275)
-- Republican	34	37	29	100	(201)
<u>Knowledge of investigation from RT6</u>					
--A lot	40	52	8	100	(127)
--Some	48	30	22	100	(259)
--Not much / Nothing	39	13	48	100	(398)
<i>Registered Voters</i>	42	26	32	100	(645)

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way Jon Corzine is handling his job as Senator?” [RT3]

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2002	49%	16%	36%	101%	(803)
<u>Party ID</u>					
-- Democrat	58	9	33	100	(275)
-- Independent	50	14	36	100	(275)
-- Republican	40	26	34	100	(201)

“Bob Torricelli will be up for RE-election as United States Senator from New Jersey this November. Would you like to see Bob Torricelli re-elected, or would you rather see someone else elected?” [RT5]

	<u>Torricelli reelected</u>	<u>Someone else elected</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2002	28%	43%	29%	100%	(803)
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	37	34	29	100	(275)
--Independent	27	42	31	100	(275)
--Republican	20	57	23	100	(201)
<u>Knowledge of investigation from RT6</u>					
--A lot	30	63	8	101	(127)
--Some	26	54	20	100	(259)
--Not much / Nothing	29	33	39	101	(398)
<i>Registered Voters</i>	30	45	26	101	(645)

“How much have you heard or read about federal investigations into Torricelli’s 1996 campaign fundraising – a lot, some, not much, or nothing at all?” [RT6]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not Much</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2002	14%	30%	26%	28%	3%	101%	(803)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	12	27	29	29	3	100	(275)
--Independent	14	34	23	27	2	100	(275)
--Republican	20	30	24	25	1	100	(201)
<i>Registered Voters</i>	17	32	26	24	2	101	(645)
<u>Previous Surveys</u>							
April, 2001	9	29	29	33	1	101	(802)

[ASKED OF THOSE WHO HEARD/READ "A LOT" OR "SOME" IN RT6.]

“As you may know, federal investigators recently concluded their investigation of Torricelli’s fundraising and decided NOT to bring any charges against him. Which of the following statements best describes YOUR view of Torricelli’s 1996 fundraising activities: Torricelli did something illegal, OR he did something unethical but nothing illegal, OR he did not do anything seriously wrong?” [RT7]

	<u>Illegal</u>	<u>Unethical</u>	<u>Nothing wrong</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2002	19%	56%	19%	6%	100%	(386)
<i>Registered Voters</i>	20	57	18	5	100	(340)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	8	59	26	7	100	(118)
--Independent	20	59	16	5	100	(146)
--Republican	30	50	17	3	100	(106)
<u>Previous Surveys</u>						
April, 2001**	10	55	16	18	99	(333)

**Question wording: “Which of the following statements best describes your view of Torricelli’s 1996 fundraising activities: Torricelli did something illegal, OR he did something unethical but nothing illegal, OR he did not do anything seriously wrong?” (no intro)

[ASKED OF THOSE WHO HEARD/READ "A LOT" OR "SOME" IN RT6]

“Has the investigation and its conclusion had any effect on your opinion of Torricelli, or not? IF YES: Has it made your opinion of him more favorable, or less favorable?” [RT8]

	<u>Yes, more favorable</u>	<u>Yes, less favorable</u>	<u>No impact</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2002	6%	31%	61%	3%	%	(386)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	10	28	58	4	100	(118)
--Independent	3	32	63	1	99	(146)
--Republican	6	31	60	3	100	(106)
<i>Registered Voters</i>	7	32	59	2	100	(340)

[ASKED OF THOSE WHO HEARD/READ “NOT MUCH” OR “NOTHING” IN RT6]

“As you may know, federal investigators recently concluded an investigation of Torricelli’s 1996 fundraising and decided NOT to bring any charges against him. Does the investigation and its conclusion have any impact on your opinion of Torricelli, or not? Does it make your opinion of him more favorable, or less favorable?” [RT9]

	<u>Yes, more favorable</u>	<u>Yes, less favorable</u>	<u>No impact</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March 2002	8%	17%	60%	15%	100%	(417)
<i>Registered Voters</i>	9	19	63	10	101	(305)