

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

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ISSUES IN THE 2002 SENATE CAMPAIGN

NOTHING IN PLAY OR "THE SEINFELD ELECTION"

Even though incumbent Senator Robert Torricelli has withdrawn from the 2002 Senate election in New Jersey he still casts a big shadow. The race that once so was singularly focused on his ethics and integrity is now about, well, nothing.

Somewhat incredibly, with the national economy in freefall and with Congress having given the President license to attack Iraq, neither of these issues appear as more than a small blip on the state's radar screen as voters prepare to replace Torricelli with Democrat Frank Lautenberg or Republican Douglas Forrester in the November 5 election, just two weeks from now.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* asked 800 potential voters—those who said they either would "definitely" or "probably" vote in the election—to name the most important issue to them in determining for whom to vote. No single issue was named by more than 15 percent. Taxes, ethics and honesty, education and the economy were each cited as primary concerns by about one-in-ten. The potential of war with Iraq and questions about

Percentage naming each as most important:

Taxes/tax reform	14%
Morals/Ethics/Integrity	11%
Education	10%
The Economy/stocks	9%
Health Care	5%
Abortion/Choice	5%
Social Security	4%
Iraq/National Security	4%
Gun Control	2%
Environment	2%

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

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domestic security were mentioned only by about one in twenty as their first concern in deciding for whom to vote in the Senate election.

Cliff Zukin, director of the Rutgers-based poll commented, “In many ways the election is still being dominated by Torricelli. The campaign first centered on his ethical conduct and then on the appropriateness of his being replaced on the ballot with Lautenberg. At this point voters do not seem to have a clear idea of what the election is about.”

With no issue dominating, the election may turn on who can do a better job for the state, a theme each candidate has mentioned. At this time Lautenberg has an advantage as the candidate who could “accomplish more for New Jersey,” by a margin of 47 to 31 percent.

The survey was conducted between October 13 to 17 and showed Lautenberg with a 47 to 39 percent lead among potential voters and a slimmer 47 to 42 percent lead among those most likely to vote on election day. The survey has a sampling error of \pm 3.5 percent for potential voters—those who say they “definitely” or “probably” will vote in the election.

The new poll shows that neither candidate has an advantage on the two national issues of the economy and war with Iraq. Voters have little in the way of opinions about which candidate would be more likely to do what they want done on either of these issues. Only about one-quarter think that Lautenberg (28%) or Forrester (25%) would do a better job helping the economy. Just 19 percent say that Forrester, and 14 percent feel Lautenberg has views closer to their own on whether the US should go to war with Iraq. A staggering 67 percent say they have no opinion in response to this latter question.

When asked directly to rate the importance of seven issues, Forrester’s agenda would seem to resonate better with New Jersey voters. The top three of these—honesty, national security and tax reform—have been concerns that the Republican candidate has emphasized; the last four—social security, the environment, guns and abortion—have been themes the Democrat has campaigned on.

Percentage saying each issue is “Very Important” to them:

85 %	Honesty and ethics
80 %	Preventing terrorism and strengthening national defense
71 %	The candidates’ positions on taxes and tax reform
69 %	The candidates’ positions on protecting social security
59 %	Environmental issues
53 %	The candidates’ positions on gun control
45 %	The issue of abortion

However, among those saying each of these seven issues is “very important to them,” Forrester holds no clear advantage even on his own issues, while Lautenberg is widely viewed as the candidate better able to handle those concerns he has campaigned on.

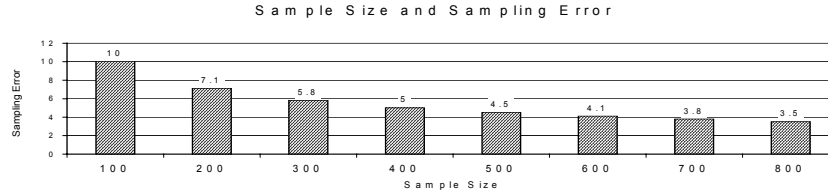
- On honesty and ethics, 26 percent say Forrester has the advantage while 23 percent think that Lautenberg does. The remaining half give neither candidate an advantage in this area—neutralizing a big plus that Forrester had over Torricelli.
- Among those who say that national defense and homeland security are very important to them, Forrester has a slim lead of 33 to 27 percent over Lautenberg as the candidate better able to handle these concerns.
- The candidates are tied on who would do a better job on the issue of tax reform—Lautenberg 35 percent and Forrester 34 percent.
- Lautenberg holds a two-to-one advantage among those who say that social security is very important to them (44 to 22%) and among those who feel that abortion is a key issue (45 to 22%).
- Lautenberg holds even larger leads as the candidate who would most likely do what voters want done among those who say that the environment is a very important issue to them (46 to 14%), and those who say that gun control is a primary concern in how they will vote (45 to 17%).

A comparison of the current *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers survey to one conducted earlier in October shows that the Senate election has not heated up over the last two weeks. Just about half (48%) of potential voters say they have “a lot” of interest in the election for Senate, and just one-quarter (26%) say they are following the campaign for Senator “very closely.” Some 47 percent say they have talked about the senate campaign with their family or friends in the last week.

Nor has the campaign come to people's homes. Just 37 percent say they heard or saw any campaign ads for the late-starting Lautenberg on TV or radio in the week before they were interviewed. Just over half (56%) say they saw or heard some material for Forrester on TV (35%), radio (7%) or both (14%). Less than one-in-five (19%) say they have received mail from the Senate candidates.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP140-2) October 22, 2002

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted by telephone from October 13 to October 17 with a scientifically selected random sample of 916 New Jersey registered voters. The figures in this release are based on a subgroup 800 potential voters – New Jerseyans who identified themselves as registered voters who will “definitely” or “probably” go to the polls this November. This release also includes results for a sub-sample of voters who are considered most likely to go to the polls, based on their interest in the election and politics in general, as well as their past voting history. 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 potential voters in New Jersey were found to have a lot of interest in the election for senator, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.5 and 53.5 percent (50 ± 3.5) had all registered voters in New Jersey 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:

“How much interest do you have in the election for Senator - - a lot, some, a little or none at all?”
[Q9]

	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>None at All</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 13-17, 2002							
--Potential Voters	48%	36%	14%	2%	1%	101%	(800)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>							
--Democrat	48	35	14	2	1	100	(279)
--Independent	46	36	14	3	--	99	(236)
--Republican	53	34	12	--	--	99	(221)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	52	34	14	1	--	101	(385)
--Female	44	38	14	2	1	99	(415)
<u>Race</u>							
--White	48	37	13	1	1	100	(634)
--Black/Latino	48	30	18	4	1	101	(120)
<u>Past Surveys:</u>							
October 3-6, 2002							
--Potential Voters	50%	35%	11%	2%	--	98%	(532)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>							
--Democrat	48	36	13	3	1	101	(175)
--Independent	48	40	11	1	--	100	(145)
--Republican	53	35	10	1	1	100	(160)
Sept. 3-8, 2002							
--Potential Voters	41%	41%	16%	1%	1%	100%	(537)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>							
--Democrat	35	46	17	2	--	100	(184)
--Independent	44	37	16	1	2	100	(142)
--Republican	47	35	15	1	2	100	(165)

“And how closely have you been following the campaign for Senator -- very closely, somewhat closely, or not very closely so far?” [Q10]

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Somewhat closely</u>	<u>Not very closely</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 13-17, 2002	26%	54%	19%	1%	100%	(800)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>						
--Democrat	25	55	20	--	100	(279)
--Independent	26	55	18	1	100	(236)
--Republican	31	53	16	--	100	(221)
<i>Gender</i>						
--Male	30	53	17	--	100	(385)
--Female	23	55	21	1	100	(415)
<i>Past Surveys:</i>						
October 3-6, 2002	31%	46%	22%	--	99%	(532)
Sept. 3-8, 2002	14%	45%	41%	--	100%	(537)

“What is the most important issue to you personally in determining who to vote for?” [Q11]

October 13-17, 2002	Potential Voters	Party Affiliation:			Gender:	
		<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
(n)	(800)	(279)	(236)	(221)	(385)	(415)
Taxes	14%	9%	13%	18%	15%	13%
Economy/stock market	9	12	9	7	12	7
Iraq	2	3	2	2	2	2
Defense/security	2	1	2	3	3	1
Education	10	12	9	9	7	12
Abortion/Choice	5	5	6	3	4	5
Health Care	5	7	4	4	5	6
Social Security	4	6	3	3	3	5
Environment	2	3	3	--	1	3
Gun Control	2	--	3	1	3	1
Ethics/integrity	11	9	11	14	11	11
Party	13	12	10	18	15	10
Other/gen'l performance	9	8	12	8	10	9
Don't Know	12	13	12	10	10	14
Total	100	100	99	100	101	99

“Which candidate do you think would do a better job of helping the economy—Forrester, Lautenberg, or wouldn’t there be any difference?” [Q12]

	<u>Forrester</u>	<u>Lautenberg</u>	<u>No difference</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 13-17, 2002	25%	28%	34%	14%	101%	(800)
-- Potential Voters						
<i>Party Affiliation</i>						
--Democrat	3	52	32	13	100	(279)
--Independent	21	23	40	16	100	(236)
--Republican	59	3	28	10	100	(221)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	1	56	32	11	100	(344)
--Forrester	63	2	28	7	100	(277)
--Undecided	11	14	47	28	100	(155)
<i>Gender</i>						
--Male	30	25	35	9	99	(385)
--Female	19	30	33	17	99	(415)
<i>Likely Voters</i>	29	34	27	11	101	(460)

“Which candidate do you think has views closer to your own about whether the US should go to war with Iraq -- Forrester, Lautenberg, or aren’t you sure?” [Q13]

	<u>Forrester</u>	<u>Lautenberg</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 13-17, 2002	19%	14%	67%	100%	(800)
-- Potential Voters					
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	4	25	70	99	(279)
--Independent	14	11	75	100	(236)
--Republican	44	4	52	100	(221)
<i>Vote Choice</i>					
--Lautenberg	3	27	69	99	(344)
--Forrester	47	2	52	101	(277)
--Undecided	7	5	88	100	(155)
<i>Gender</i>					
--Male	25	12	62	99	(385)
--Female	13	15	71	99	(415)
<i>Likely Voters</i>	25	17	58	100	(460)

“Which candidate would accomplish more for New Jersey in the U.S. Senate - Forrester or Lautenberg?” [Q14]

	<u>Forrester</u>	<u>Lautenberg</u>	<u>Both/ Neither/ Other</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 13-17, 2002						
-- Potential Voters	31%	47%	6%	16%	100%	(800)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>						
--Democrat	6	77	3	14	100	(279)
--Independent	25	46	9	20	100	(236)
--Republican	74	10	5	11	100	(221)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	2	88	3	7	100	(344)
--Forrester	78	8	4	9	99	(277)
--Undecided	14	27	10	48	99	(155)
<i>Gender</i>						
--Male	36	42	8	15	101	(385)
--Female	27	51	5	18	101	(415)
<i>Likely Voters</i>	35	50	5	10	100	(460)

“In deciding who to vote for in the Senate election, please tell me if each of the following is very important, somewhat important, or not very important to YOU. [RANDOMIZE]... (A. Honesty and ethics, B. Environmental issues, C. The issue of abortion, D. The candidates’ positions on gun control, E. The candidates’ positions on taxes and tax reform, F. Preventing terrorism and strengthening national defense, G. The candidates’ positions on protecting social security)?” [Q15]

October 13-17, 2002	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	DK	Total	(n)
--Potential Voters	85%	12%	2%	1%	100%	(800)
<u>Honesty and ethics</u>						
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	79	16	3	2	100	(344)
--Forrester	92	6	1	--	99	(277)
--Undecided	86	12	2	1	101	(155)
<u>Environmental issues</u>						
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	70	26	4	--	100	(344)
--Forrester	42	48	9	1	100	(277)
--Undecided	63	32	4	1	100	(155)
<u>The issue of abortion</u>						
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	53	31	14	2	100	(344)
--Forrester	38	30	29	3	100	(277)
--Undecided	43	34	19	5	101	(155)

October 13-17, 2002 --Potential Voters	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not very important</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>The candidates' positions on gun control</u>	53%	31%	15%	2%	101%	(800)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	64	25	8	2	99	(344)
--Forrester	34	42	23	2	101	(277)
--Undecided	59	28	13	--	100	(155)
<u>The candidates' positions on taxes and tax reform</u>	71%	25%	3%	1%	100%	(800)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	67	28	5	--	100	(344)
--Forrester	78	19	2	1	100	(277)
--Undecided	69	28	1	2	100	(155)
<u>Preventing terrorism and strengthening national defense</u>	80%	16%	3%	1%	100%	(800)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	76	19	3	1	99	(344)
--Forrester	84	13	3	1	101	(277)
--Undecided	85	14	1	--	100	(155)
<u>The candidates' positions on protecting social security</u>	69%	26%	5%	1%	100%	(800)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	76	20	3	1	100	(344)
--Forrester	60	32	6	2	100	(277)
--Undecided	70	25	5	--	100	(155)

(Only asked of those who rated the issue as "Very Important" in Q15)

"Now let me read you back some items you said were very important. Which candidate (A. Is more honest, B. Do you agree with more on environmental issues, C. Is closer to you on the issue of abortion, D. Is closer to your position on gun control, E. Do you agree with more on taxes and tax reform, F. Would do a better job preventing terrorism and strengthening defense, G. Would do what you want on social security) -- Doug Forrester or Frank Lautenberg?" [Q16]

October 13-17, 2002 --Potential Voters	<u>Forrester</u>	<u>Lautenberg</u>	<u>(VOL) Both/ Neither/Other</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>Is more honest</u>	26%	23%	16%	36%	101%	(680)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	2	50	15	33	100	(271)
--Forrester	59	2	15	23	99	(256)
--Undecided	11	8	14	67	100	(133)
<u>Do you agree with more on environmental issues</u>	14%	46%	4%	35%	99%	(468)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	3	73	3	22	101	(240)
--Forrester	47	14	8	31	100	(115)
--Undecided	5	23	1	71	100	(97)

October 13-17, 2002 --Potential Voters	<u>Forrester</u>	<u>Lautenberg</u>	<u>(VOL) Both/ Neither/Other</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>Is closer to you on the issue of abortion</u>	22%	45%	3%	31%	101%	(359)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	4	74	--	22	100	(181)
--Forrester	64	10	6	20	100	(104)
--Undecided	7	19	3	70	99	(67)
<u>Is closer to your position on gun control</u>	17%	45%	3%	35%	100%	(421)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	5	69	1	25	100	(221)
--Forrester	56	11	1	32	100	(93)
--Undecided	9	21	5	65	100	(91)
<u>Do you agree with more on taxes and tax reform</u>	34%	35%	5%	26%	100%	(570)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	4	73	4	19	100	(231)
--Forrester	79	2	5	14	100	(217)
--Undecided	12	20	5	64	101	(107)
<u>Would do a better job preventing terrorism and strengthening defense</u>	33%	27%	9%	32%	101%	(642)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	9	56	8	27	100	(261)
--Forrester	73	3	8	17	101	(233)
--Undecided	11	14	8	67	100	(132)
<u>Would do what you want on social security</u>	22%	44%	4%	30%	100%	(549)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	3	77	2	18	100	(262)
--Forrester	62	6	5	26	99	(165)
--Undecided	8	25	3	64	100	(108)

“How would you describe Lautenberg – as a liberal, moderate, or conservative; or aren’t you sure?” [Q17]

October 13-17, 2002 -- Potential Voters	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	31%	26%	6%	37%	100%	(800)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>						
--Democrat	20	39	9	33	101	(279)
--Independent	30	24	8	38	100	(236)
--Republican	51	12	1	35	99	(221)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	21	41	10	27	99	(344)
--Forrester	54	12	1	33	100	(277)
--Undecided	15	19	3	62	99	(155)

“How would you describe Forrester – as a liberal, moderate, or conservative; or aren’t you sure?” [Q18]

	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 13-17, 2002						
-- Potential Voters	4%	17%	34%	45%	100%	(800)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>						
--Democrat	5	5	35	55	100	(279)
--Independent	6	17	31	47	101	(236)
--Republican	1	31	40	27	99	(221)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Lautenberg	5	5	40	51	101	(344)
--Forrester	2	34	37	27	100	(277)
--Undecided	5	12	17	65	99	(155)

“In the last week, have you talked about this year’s senate race with your family or friends, or haven’t you done this in the last 7 days?” [Q19]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 13-17, 2002					
-- Potential Voters	47%	53%	--	100%	(800)

“Have you seen or heard any campaign ads for Lautenberg on TV or radio in the last week, or not? IF YES ASK: TV only, radio only or both?” [Q20]

	<u>Yes, TV</u>	<u>Yes, Radio</u>	<u>Yes, Both</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 13-17, 2002							
-- Potential Voters	24%	5%	8%	59%	4%	100%	(800)

“Have you seen or heard any campaign ads for Forrester on TV or radio in the last week, or not? IF YES ASK: TV only, radio only or both?” [Q21]

	<u>Yes, TV</u>	<u>Yes, Radio</u>	<u>Yes, Both</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 13-17, 2002							
-- Potential Voters	35%	7%	14%	40%	4%	100%	(800)

“Have you received campaign literature about any of the senate candidates mailed to your home, or not? IF YES ASK: Have you received mail for Forrester, for Lautenberg, or for both candidates?” [Q22]

	<u>Yes, Forrester</u>	<u>Yes, Lautenberg</u>	<u>Yes, Both</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 13-17, 2002							
-- Potential Voters	11%	1%	7%	75%	5%	99%	(800)

Campaign Information [Q19-22]:

	<u>Talked with Family/Friends Past Week</u>	<u>Seen/Heard Lautenberg Ads</u>	<u>Seen/Heard Forrester Ads</u>	<u>Received Campaign Mail</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 13-17, 2002					
-- Potential Voters	47%	37%	56%	19%	(800)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	43	40	58	18	(279)
--Independent	44	34	52	14	(236)
--Republican	56	37	60	28	(221)
<i>Vote Choice</i>					
--Lautenberg	46	36	57	16	(344)
--Forrester	57	37	57	25	(277)
--Undecided	28	39	54	15	(155)
<i>Gender</i>					
--Male	52	37	59	21	(385)
--Female	42	36	55	18	(415)