

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

February 5, 2003  
(Release 142-2)

CONTACT: CLIFF ZUKIN OR  
PATRICK MURRAY

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo appears in the Wednesday, February 5, 2003 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.*"

## NEW JERSEYANS DIVIDED ON WAR WITH IRAQ

### BUSH JOB APPROVAL DOWN TO PRE-9/11 LEVELS

Secretary of State Colin Powell will be addressing the United Nations today, trying to convince the world that war with Iraq is necessary. He has to convince New Jerseyans, too.

Residents of the Garden State are deeply divided on the issue. A needle-thin majority of 50 percent favor taking military action in Iraq, and just 29 percent would favor such a campaign if it were to be conducted without the support of the United States' major allies. Half have doubts that President George W. Bush has sufficiently made the case for military force in Iraq, and his job approval rating has dropped to its lowest level since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

These are some of the main findings of a *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* conducted with a scientifically selected sample of 401 New Jersey adults conducted between January 30 and February 2. The poll has a margin of error of  $\pm 5$  percentage points.

The potential for war in Iraq has clearly engaged New Jerseyans—58 percent say they have given the matter “a great deal” of thought. Another quarter have given at least “some” thought to the prospect of war. When asked point blank, 50 percent say they favor taking military action in Iraq to end Saddam Hussein’s rule. Another 36 are opposed, with the remaining 14 percent either unsure or saying it depends on the circumstances of the potential conflict. And when faced with the prospect of going it alone—without the support of major allies—only 29 percent think this to be a prudent course for the country to follow.

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

185 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Director: Cliff Zukin x247 • Associate Director: Patrick Murray x243

Graduate Research Assistants: Kelly Sand • Robert Suls

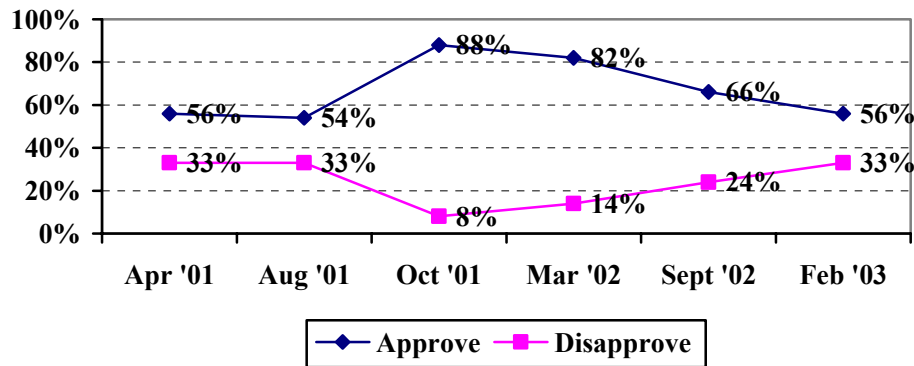
**Phone: 732-932-9384 - Website: <http://slerp.rutgers.edu> - Fax: 732-932-1551**

New Jerseyans are evenly divided about whether the Bush administration has made a compelling case for war. Equal numbers feel Bush has explained clearly what is at stake and why the U.S. might need to use military force in Iraq (47%) as feel that he has not explained the reasons clearly enough (48%).

But despite this great ambivalence, New Jerseyans feel that the country is headed for war. Almost two-thirds (65%) feel that the Bush administration has already made up its mind to go to war with Iraq. Just one-quarter (27%) think the administration is awaiting new evidence of the weapons inspectors in Iraq before deciding what to do.

While Bush has been a popular figure in New Jersey since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the new survey gives evidence that the patriotic rallying of that time has started to fade. Currently, 56 percent of New Jerseyans approve of the job he is doing as President, while 33 percent disapprove and the remainder express no opinion. Bush's approval rating was at 54 percent in August of 2001 – just before the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon – increased to 88 percent in October of that year, and then has declined to 82 percent in March of 2002, 66 percent in September, and now to 56 percent.

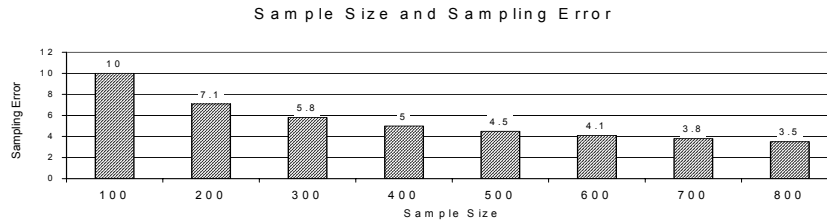
**President's Job Approval Rating**



Garden State residents are slightly less enamored with the Bush presidency and more reticent about taking military action in Iraq than is the nation as a whole. When compared to a national *ABC News/Washington Post* poll conducted the same time (Jan 30 to Feb 1), the *New Jersey Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* finds that while just half (50%) of New Jerseyans favor taking military action in Iraq, two-thirds (66%) of all U.S. residents do so. And, Bush's approval rating in New Jersey (56%) trails his job performance rating in the country as a whole (62%).

**BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP142-2) February 5, 2003**

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted by telephone from January 30 to February 2 with a scientifically selected random sample of 401 New Jersey adults. 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 401 is  $\pm 5$  percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey residents were found to be less likely to agree with a statement, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 45 and 55 percent ( $50 \pm 5$ ) 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 residents of North, Central and South Jersey, 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 approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President?”[Q2]

|                          | <u>Approve</u> | <u>Disapprove</u> | <u>DK</u>  | <u>Total</u> | <u>(n)</u>   |
|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>February 2003</b>     | <b>56%</b>     | <b>33%</b>        | <b>12%</b> | <b>101%</b>  | <b>(401)</b> |
| <u>Party Affiliation</u> |                |                   |            |              |              |
| --Democrat               | 33             | 54                | 14         | 101          | (132)        |
| --Independent            | 51             | 35                | 14         | 100          | (118)        |
| --Republican             | 90             | 8                 | 2          | 100          | (106)        |
| <u>PAST SURVEYS</u>      |                |                   |            |              |              |
| --September 2002         | 66%            | 24%               | 10%        | 100%         | (804)        |
| --March 2002             | 82             | 14                | 4          | 100          | (803)        |
| --October 2001           | 88             | 8                 | 4          | 100          | (454)        |
| --August 2001            | 54             | 33                | 13         | 100          | (660)        |
| --April 2001             | 56             | 33                | 11         | 100          | (802)        |
| <u>NATIONAL SURVEYS</u>  |                |                   |            |              |              |
| ABC/Washington Post      |                |                   |            |              |              |
| <b>February 2003</b>     | <b>62%</b>     | <b>34%</b>        | <b>4%</b>  | <b>100%</b>  | <b>(855)</b> |

“How much have you yourself thought about whether the U.S. should use military force to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq— a great deal, some, only a little, or not at all?” [IQ1]

|                          | <u>Great deal</u> | <u>Some</u> | <u>Only a little</u> | <u>Not at All</u> | <u>DK</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>(n)</u>   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>February 2003</b>     | <b>58%</b>        | <b>25%</b>  | <b>7%</b>            | <b>8%</b>         | <b>3%</b> | <b>101%</b>  | <b>(401)</b> |
| <u>Party Affiliation</u> |                   |             |                      |                   |           |              |              |
| --Democrat               | 50                | 32          | 10                   | 6                 | 2         | 100          | (132)        |
| --Independent            | 63                | 23          | 6                    | 7                 | 1         | 100          | (118)        |
| --Republican             | 65                | 21          | 5                    | 9                 | --        | 100          | (106)        |

“Do you think George W. Bush has explained clearly what's at stake as to why the U.S. might use military force to end the rule of Saddam Hussein, or do you think he has not explained the reasons clearly enough?” [IQ2]

|                          | <u>Clearly explained</u> | <u>Not Clearly Enough</u> | <u>DK/Refused</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>(n)</u>   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>February 2003</b>     | <b>47%</b>               | <b>48%</b>                | <b>5%</b>         | <b>100%</b>  | <b>(401)</b> |
| <i>Party Affiliation</i> |                          |                           |                   |              |              |
| --Democrat               | 31                       | 65                        | 3                 | 99           | (132)        |
| --Independent            | 49                       | 49                        | 2                 | 100          | (118)        |
| --Republican             | 70                       | 24                        | 6                 | 100          | (106)        |

“Would you favor or oppose taking military action in Iraq to end Saddam Hussein's rule?” [IQ3]

|                                | <u>Favor</u> | <u>Oppose</u> | <u>Depends (Vol)</u> | <u>DK/Refused</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>(n)</u>   |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>February 2003</b>           | <b>50%</b>   | <b>36%</b>    | <b>6%</b>            | <b>8%</b>         | <b>100%</b>  | <b>(401)</b> |
| <i>Party Affiliation</i>       |              |               |                      |                   |              |              |
| --Democrat                     | 39           | 47            | 8                    | 6                 | 100          | (132)        |
| --Independent                  | 50           | 38            | 7                    | 5                 | 100          | (118)        |
| --Republican                   | 67           | 20            | 4                    | 9                 | 100          | (106)        |
| <b><u>NATIONAL SURVEYS</u></b> |              |               |                      |                   |              |              |
| ABC/Washington Post            |              |               |                      |                   |              |              |
| <b>February 2003*</b>          | <b>66%</b>   | <b>31%</b>    | <b>--</b>            | <b>3%</b>         | <b>100%</b>  | <b>(855)</b> |

\* Question wording: “Would you favor or oppose U.S. forces taking military action against Iraq to force Saddam Hussein from power?”

**IF FAVOR/DEPENDS/DON'T KNOW:**

“And would you favor taking military action in Iraq to end Saddam Hussein's rule only if our major allies agree to join us, or attack Iraq even if allies do not want to join us?” [IQ4]

|                      | <u>Only with Allies</u> | <u>Even without Allies</u> | <u>Depends (Vol)</u> | <u>Oppose</u> | <u>DK/Refused</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>(n)</u>   |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>February 2003</b> | <b>23%</b>              | <b>29%</b>                 | <b>3%</b>            | <b>36%</b>    | <b>8%</b>         | <b>99%</b>   | <b>(401)</b> |

“Do you think the Bush administration has already made up its mind to go to war with Iraq, or do you think the Bush administration is waiting to learn what the UN weapons inspectors find in Iraq to decide on what to do next?” [IQ5]

|                          | <u>Already made up mind</u> | <u>Waiting to Learn</u> | <u>DK/Refused</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>(n)</u>   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>February 2003</b>     | <b>65%</b>                  | <b>27%</b>              | <b>9%</b>         | <b>101%</b>  | <b>(401)</b> |
| <i>Party Affiliation</i> |                             |                         |                   |              |              |
| --Democrat               | 81                          | 17                      | 2                 | 100          | (132)        |
| --Independent            | 71                          | 20                      | 9                 | 100          | (118)        |
| --Republican             | 46                          | 40                      | 13                | 99           | (106)        |