

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

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(Release 143-4)

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A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo appears in the Sunday, May 18, 2003 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.*"

## **NEW JERSEY AND RODNEY DANGERFIELD: PERFECT TOGETHER**

### ***HOW THE U.S. VIEWS US***

For over 30 years the Eagleton Institute has been surveying New Jersey residents to explore what we think about our state, its politics and policies, culture and quality of life. Now, in partnership with the Newark *Star-Ledger*, we have for the first time asked people living elsewhere in the country for their views of New Jersey. Their responses suggest the many years of being the butt of jokes by Johnny Carson, Jay Leno, Woody Allen and others have taken their toll. Or, we get no respect.

While 72 percent of those of us who live here describe our state as an "excellent" or "good" place to live, just 38 percent of those living elsewhere describe New Jersey in these same flattering terms. And to add insult to injury, the 72 percent of New Jerseyans rating their state positively is actually low. When people throughout the country are asked to rate *their own* states as places to live, the national average is 84 percent saying excellent or good.

New Jersey also comes up on the short end of the stick when people here and in the nation as a whole are asked to rate their state as a place to live compared to "most other states." While New Jersey residents are mildly positive about their home – 31 percent say NJ is better than other places, and 16 percent say it is worse – those living elsewhere in the county are much more enthusiastic when comparing their states to the rest of the country—51 percent say their state is better and nine percent say it is worse.

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

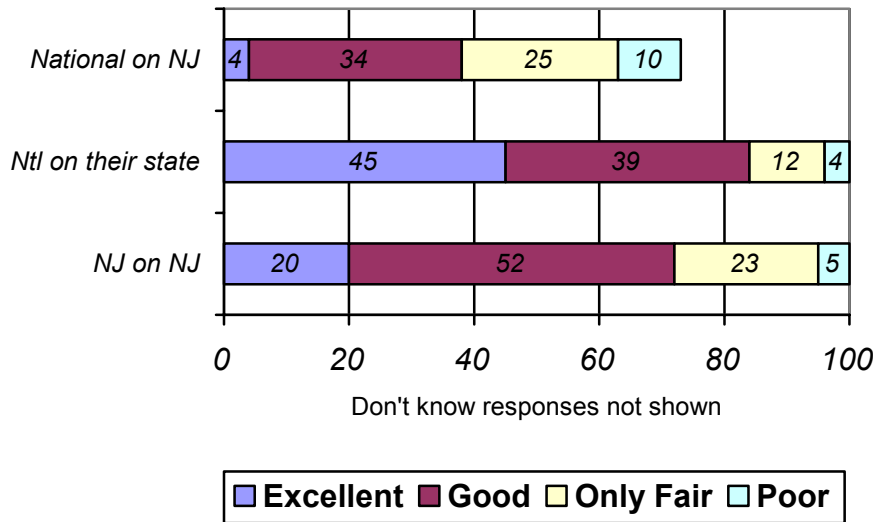
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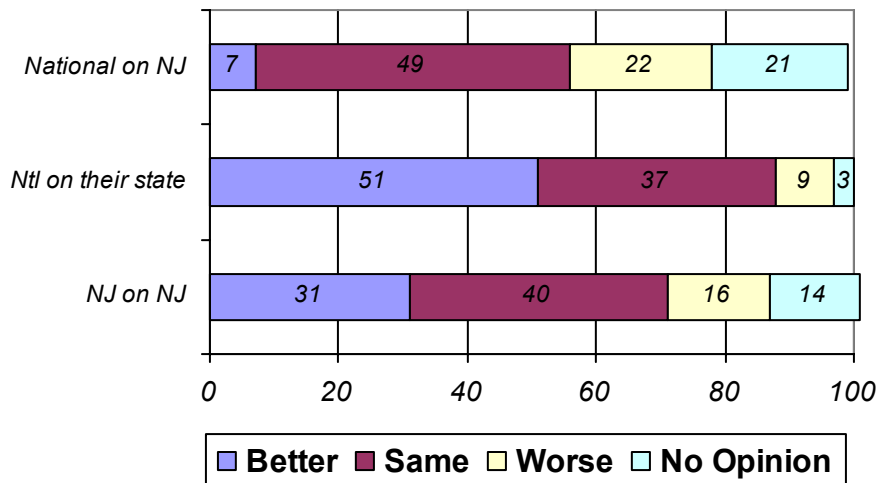
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**Ratings of NJ & Others' Home States**



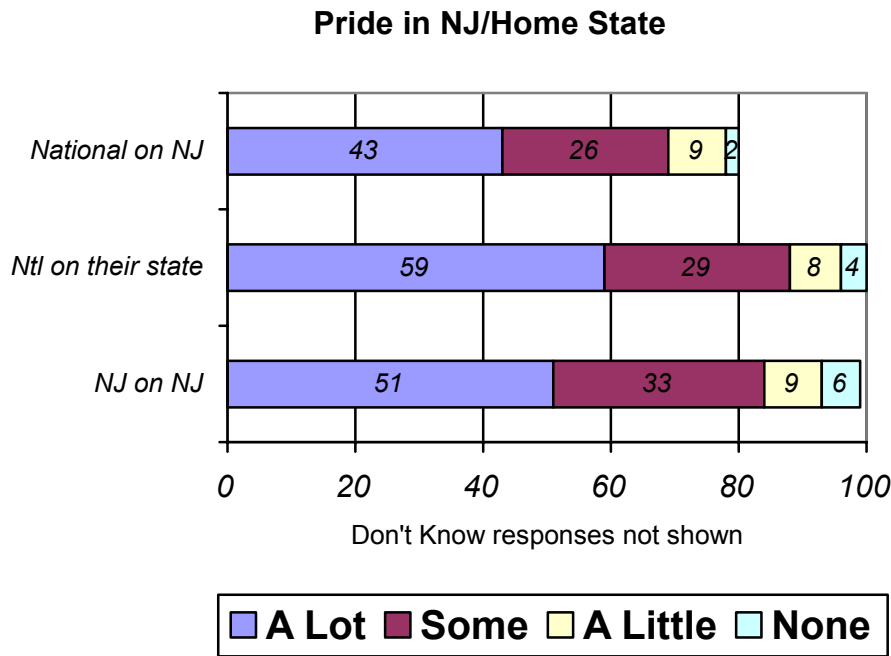
And, when the national sample is asked to compare New Jersey to other states, just seven percent believe the Garden State is a better place to live, while 22 percent say it is worse than most other states.

*NJ/Home State Compared to other States*



The last question put to the national sample concerns state chauvinism: people were asked how much pride they take in being a resident of their own state, and then how much pride they think people here have in being a resident of New Jersey. And, of course, we asked our statewide sample of Garden Staters how much pride they take in

being a resident of New Jersey. The results were not as dispiriting, but nonetheless New Jersey residents appear to have less pride in their state than do those living elsewhere. In state, 51 percent say they take “a lot” of pride in being a resident of New Jersey. The national average, however, is a slightly higher 59 percent. And nationwide, just 43 percent believe that NJ residents have a lot of pride in their state.



In assessing the three questions asked of the New Jersey and national samples, poll director Cliff Zukin said: “In rating their home states it is clear that people living in New Jersey give their state a slightly lower quality of life rating and take slightly less pride in it than do those living elsewhere. However, it also seems like the state has gotten a bad reputation, in that those living elsewhere have more negative attitudes about New Jersey than to those who live here and experience the state first hand. We don’t know if this is common, as we know of no similar survey comparisons—it could be that many states would turn out this way.”

New Jersey is not alone in its lower quality of life ratings. In fact, in interpreting the poll findings it is critical to understand that there are strong regional differences in the country. Thus, the 20 percent of New Jerseyans who rate their state as an excellent place

to live is roughly the same as the total of 26 percent of all those living in the Northeast. This compares to 47 percent of those living in the north-central part of the country, to 49 percent of those living in the south, and 53 percent of those living in the western United States. The Northeast as a whole – not just New Jersey – scores lower on all the state quality of life and pride questions asked than do other areas of the country.

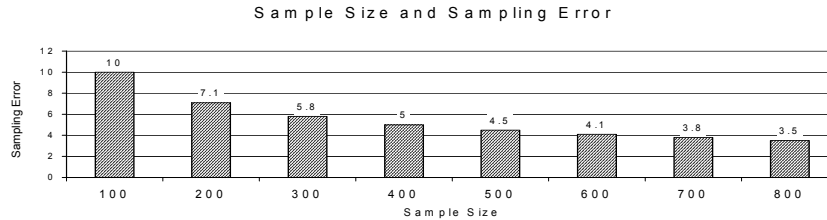
New Jerseyans' basic assessment of their home state has changed little over the last two decades. Then, as now, about one-in-five described New Jersey as an excellent place to live, with another half describing it as good. Currently about one-quarter say it is an "only fair" place to live; just 5 percent rate it as "poor." However, compared to the mid-1980s – when former Governor Tom Kean was an aggressive spokesperson for the state – state chauvinism seems to have slipped a notch. In the mid 1980s, 46 percent said New Jersey was a better place to live compared to most other states. Just 31 percent express that sentiment in the current poll. In 1984, 59 percent felt outsiders' image of New Jersey was positive; now, just 47 percent feel this way.

But it is clear that New Jerseyans realize they are on the receiving end of a great deal of negative publicity, as the state is more often described by those who pass through it on the Turnpike, rather than those who live here. When asked how they think outsiders see the state, residents are split down the middle: 47 percent feel others have a largely negative view of New Jersey and 48 percent believe others see the state in largely favorable terms.

The New Jersey survey was conducted between April 24 and May 4 with a scientifically selected sample of 1,002 state residents and has a sampling error of  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points. The national sample was interviewed between May 1 and May 4 with 1,000 respondents. Half of this group was asked to rate their own state; the other half was in rating their home states asked to rate New Jersey. The sampling error for each group of 500 is  $\pm 4.5$  percent.

**BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP143-4) May 18, 2003**

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eggleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted by telephone from April 24 to May 4 with scientifically selected random samples of 1002 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 the 1002 New Jersey residents surveyed is  $\pm 3.1$  percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of the public were found to be less likely to agree with a statement, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.9 and 53.1 percent ( $50 \pm 3.1$ ) 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. This survey also includes the results from a comparative national survey conducted by ORC International on behalf of the *Star-Ledger*/Eggleton-Rutgers Poll from May 1 to 4 with 1,000 U.S. adults. This poll's sample was split, with different forms of the state rating questions asked to each half. The margin of error for the national poll results is  $\pm 4.5$  percent.



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:

“Overall, how would you rate New Jersey as a place to live – excellent, good, only fair or poor?”  
[NJ1]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>May 2003</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(1002)</b>
<i>Region</i>							
--North	21	54	20	4	--	100	(461)
--Central	17	52	26	5	--	100	(251)
--South	19	49	26	6	--	100	(274)
<i>Community Type</i>							
--Urban	19	48	29	5	--	100	(195)
--Stable Suburb	19	54	19	7	1	100	(386)
--Growth Area	21	52	24	3	--	100	(411)
<b>PAST SURVEYS</b>							
--April 2001	23	53	19	4	1	100	(802)
--March 2000	25	51	17	6	--	99	(800)
--May 1999	22	54	19	5	--	100	(800)
--February 1994	18	53	22	7	--	100	(801)
--July 1990	16	43	25	15	1	100	(800)
--February 1988	27	51	17	4	1	100	(800)
--July 1980	18	50	23	7	2	100	(1005)

“How would you rate New Jersey as a place to live compared to most other states -- is New Jersey better, about the same, or worse?” [NJ2]

	<b><u>Better</u></b>	<b><u>About the same</u></b>	<b><u>Worse</u></b>	<b><u>DK</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>(n)</u></b>
<b>May 2003</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(1002)</b>
<i><u>Region</u></i>						
--North	34	37	14	15	100	(461)
--Central	30	41	15	14	100	(251)
--South	25	45	18	12	100	(274)
<i><u>Community Type</u></i>						
--Urban	30	41	19	10	100	(195)
--Stable Suburb	31	42	13	14	100	(386)
--Growth Area	31	37	16	16	100	(411)
<b><i>PAST SURVEYS</i></b>						
--April 2001	31	42	11	15	99	(802)
--January 1988	47	27	11	15	100	(800)
--October 1984	46	33	11	10	100	(500)

“How would you rate your own town or city as a place to live -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?” [NJ3]

	<b><u>Excellent</u></b>	<b><u>Good</u></b>	<b><u>Only Fair</u></b>	<b><u>Poor</u></b>	<b><u>DK</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>(n)</u></b>
<b>May 2003</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(1002)</b>
<i><u>Region</u></i>							
--North	31	39	21	8	--	100	(461)
--Central	27	50	19	4	--	100	(251)
--South	29	50	14	6	--	100	(274)
<i><u>Community Type</u></i>							
--Urban	16	33	33	18	--	100	(195)
--Stable Suburb	34	46	15	5	--	100	(386)
--Growth Area	32	50	14	3	--	100	(411)
<b><i>PAST SURVEYS</i></b>							
--April 2001	28	45	21	6	--	99	(802)
--June 1995	30	40	21	8	--	99	(802)

“Do you think New Jersey residents get along with each other better, worse or about the same as people living in the rest of the country?” [NJ4]

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>About the Same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>May 2003</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(1002)</b>
<i>Region</i>						
--North	19	15	59	7	100	(461)
--Central	13	14	60	13	100	(251)
--South	13	16	65	6	100	(274)
<i>Community Type</i>						
--Urban	18	14	60	8	100	(195)
--Stable Suburb	18	14	58	10	100	(386)
--Growth Area	14	16	63	7	100	(411)
<b>PAST SURVEYS</b>						
--June 1995	12	26	55	7	100	(802)

“How much pride do you take in being a resident of NJ – a lot, some, a little or none?” [NJ5]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>May 2003</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(1002)</b>
<i>Region</i>							
--North	53	34	8	4	1	100	(461)
--Central	45	33	13	8	1	100	(251)
--South	51	31	9	8	1	100	(274)
<i>Community Type</i>							
--Urban	51	34	11	2	2	100	(195)
--Stable Suburb	52	34	6	7	1	100	(386)
--Growth Area	49	32	12	7	--	100	(411)
<b>PAST SURVEYS</b>							
--April 2001	52	29	10	7	3	101	(802)
--June 1994	59	27	9	4	1	100	(801)

“There has been a lot of talk lately about New Jersey’s image – how outsiders see the state. On the whole, do you think New Jersey’s image is positive or negative?” [NJ6]

	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>May 2003</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(1002)</b>
<i>Region</i>					
--North	50	46	4	100	(461)
--Central	41	53	6	100	(251)
--South	45	50	5	100	(274)
<i>Community Type</i>					
--Urban	54	41	5	100	(195)
--Stable Suburb	46	50	3	100	(386)
--Growth Area	44	51	6	100	(411)
<b>PAST SURVEYS</b>					
--April 2001	49	45	7	101	(802)
--October 1984	59	36	6	101	(500)

**NEW JERSEY – NATIONAL COMPARISONS**

“Overall, how would you rate [New Jersey/your state] as a place to live – excellent, good, only fair or poor?”

<b>NEW JERSEY</b>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>--%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(1002)</b>
<b>National</b>							
--Northeast	7	37	26	11	19	100	(106)
--North Central	2	37	24	7	31	101	(119)
--South	4	35	24	10	26	99	(172)
--West	2	25	28	14	31	100	(107)
<b>YOUR OWN STATE</b>							
<b>National</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>--%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(496)</b>
--Northeast	26	56	11	5	2	100	(88)
--North Central	47	42	9	2	--	100	(111)
--South	49	31	15	6	--	101	(187)
--West	53	34	12	2	--	101	(110)



**NEW JERSEY – NATIONAL COMPARISONS**

“How would you rate [New Jersey/your state] as a place to live compared to most other states -- Is [New Jersey/your state] better, about the same, or worse?”

<b>NEW JERSEY</b>	<b><u>Better</u></b>	<b><u>About the same</u></b>	<b><u>Worse</u></b>	<b><u>DK</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>(n)</u></b>
<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(1002)</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>(504)</b>
--Northeast	12	46	25	18	101	(106)
--North Central	2	59	14	24	99	(119)
--South	7	50	21	22	100	(172)
--West	7	41	30	23	101	(107)

**YOUR OWN STATE**

<b>National</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(496)</b>
--Northeast	36	50	10	4	100	(88)
--North Central	52	42	3	3	100	(111)
--South	51	34	11	4	100	(187)
--West	63	24	10	2	99	(110)

**NEW JERSEY – NATIONAL COMPARISONS**

“How much pride do you take in being a resident of [New Jersey/your state] – a lot, some, a little or none?” “How much pride do you think New Jerseyans take in being a resident of their state – a lot, some, a little or none?”

**NEW JERSEY’S**

<b>PRIDE</b>	<b><u>A Lot</u></b>	<b><u>Some</u></b>	<b><u>A Little</u></b>	<b><u>None</u></b>	<b><u>DK</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>(n)</u></b>
<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(1002)</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(504)</b>
--Northeast	39	28	11	3	20	101	(106)
--North Central	49	24	7	1	18	99	(119)
--South	37	33	9	3	18	100	(172)
--West	48	17	11	1	24	101	(107)

**PRIDE IN YOUR OWN STATE**

<b>National</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>--%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(496)</b>
--Northeast	55	31	9	3	2	100	(88)
--North Central	58	33	5	5	--	101	(111)
--South	61	27	7	6	--	101	(187)
--West	61	27	10	2	--	100	(110)