

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

June 1, 2003
(Release 143-7)

CONTACT: CLIFF ZUKIN OR
PATRICK MURRAY
(732) 932-9384

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo appears in the Sunday, June 1, 2003 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.*"

POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE IN NEW JERSEY Or If Ignorance Is Bliss, We're One Happy State

- The Governor of New Jersey is a Democrat.
- The Democrats have a majority in the State Assembly.
- The State Senate is equally divided between Democrats and Republicans.

We start with these basic facts of political life in Trenton, because apparently they are preciously guarded secrets. In fact, *only four percent* of the state's adult residents get all three of these answers correct when asked on the most recent Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll. While two-thirds correctly identify Governor James McGreevey as a Democrat, just one-in-five know that Democrats control the lower house and a similar 18 percent know that the upper house is tied in its partisan composition.

Most New Jerseyans have but a passing interest in public affairs. Well under half—43 percent—report following news about politics and government “regularly.” And the profile of those who do is decidedly tilted towards the older and better educated. Just one-quarter of those under 30 years of age follow public affairs regularly, compared to 41 percent of those between 30 and 50, and to half (51 percent) of those more than 50 years old. While 59 percent of college graduates regularly follow happenings in the political realm, the number drops to just 32 percent of those not having gone beyond high school—approximately half of the state's adult residents.

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

By way of comparison, 31 percent say they follow news about sports regularly, and 26 percent say they follow news from the world of entertainment regularly.

The latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted between April 24 and May 4 with a scientifically selected sample of 1,002 residents. The sampling error for the poll is ± 3.1 percentage points.

While far more watch TV regularly than read a newspaper, it is the paper that is the dominant information supplier about happenings in New Jersey. Three-quarters of Garden State residents reported watching local TV news four or more days in the week prior to being interviewed. In contrast, 57 percent reported having read a newspaper at least four days of the preceding week. But when asked for their main source of information about “what is going on in New Jersey”—and invited to give as many responses as they wanted—newspapers led the list with 65 percent, followed by television at 59 percent. There was a large drop from the two central information sources to radio at 20 percent, “other people” at 15 percent, and the Internet at 13 percent.

Yet television and newspapers have very different effects on political knowledge. Those who watch more TV news are no more knowledgeable than those who don't. But those who read newspapers are more informed than those who do not. Just 43 percent of those who do not read a newspaper know McGreevey is a Democrat. This figure jumps to 64 percent of those reading a paper less than four times a week, and to 76 percent of those reading a paper more than four times a week. The knowledge numbers for TV viewers are flat—62 percent of non-viewers, 61 percent of occasional viewers (less than four days per week) and 69 percent for regular viewers (four or more days per week).

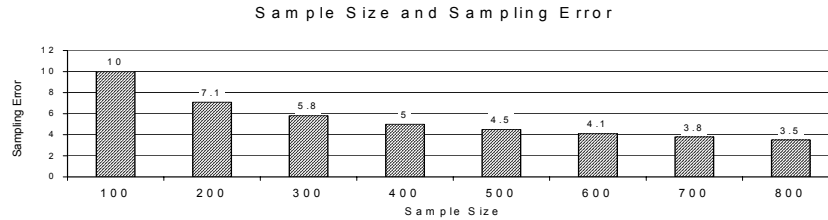
Cliff Zukin, director of the Rutgers-based poll commented, “The greater knowledge of newspaper readers is somewhat due to self-selection—more interested and more knowledgeable people turn to print. The failure of the broadcast media to inform reflects the age-old problem of television in New Jersey. Our ‘local’ news comes from New York and Philadelphia, who devote scant attention to New Jersey and its government. It is little wonder that those with more exposure are really no more knowledgeable than those who do not watch at all.”

Currently, about three-quarters (77 percent) of New Jerseyans report being registered to vote. This encompasses 87 percent of those 50 and older, 77 percent of

those between 30 and 50, but just 58 percent of those under 30 years of age. Additionally, 81 percent of white New Jerseyans report being registered to vote, compared to a lower 72 percent of Blacks and Hispanics.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP143-7) June 1, 2003

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted by telephone from April 24 to May 4 with a scientifically selected random sample 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 1002 is ± 3.1 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 46.9 and 53.1 percent (50 ± 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.



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:

“Are you currently registered to vote at the address where you now live?” [RV1]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003	77%	22%	1%	100%	(1002)
<u>Age</u>					
--18 to 29	58	41	2	101	(123)
--30 to 49	77	22	1	100	(431)
--50 and older	87	13	--	100	(421)
<u>Education</u>					
--High school or less	74	25	2	101	(256)
--Some college	73	27	--	100	(318)
--College graduate	87	13	--	100	(426)
<u>Gender</u>					
--Male	74	24	2	100	(482)
--Female	80	20	--	100	(520)
<u>Race</u>					
--White	81	18	1	100	(736)
--Black/Hispanic	72	27	1	100	(185)

“How closely do you follow news about (A. Entertainment, B. Sports, C. Politics and government)—regularly, some of the time, rarely or never? [IN1]

	<u>Regularly</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003							
Entertainment	26%	44%	20%	10%	--	100%	(1002)
<u>Education</u>							
--High School or less	21	44	21	13	--	99	(256)
--Some College	30	45	17	7	--	99	(318)
--College Graduate	30	42	22	7	--	101	(426)
<u>Age</u>							
--18 to 29	41	39	13	7	--	100	(123)
--30 to 49	21	46	22	10	1	100	(431)
--50 and older	25	44	20	10	--	99	(421)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	22	46	21	10	--	99	(482)
--Female	29	42	20	9	--	100	(520)
<u>Registration Status</u>							
--Registered	26	45	20	9	--	100	(806)
--Not registered	26	40	23	11	--	100	(196)
Sports	31%	26%	21%	22%	--	100%	(1002)
<u>Education</u>							
--High School or less	32	28	17	24	--	101	(256)
--Some College	31	23	23	22	--	99	(318)
--College Graduate	30	25	25	19	--	99	(426)
<u>Age</u>							
--18 to 29	36	24	19	21	--	100	(123)
--30 to 49	32	22	22	23	1	100	(431)
--50 and older	32	29	18	21	--	100	(421)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	43	28	13	14	1	99	(482)
--Female	20	24	27	29	--	100	(520)
<u>Registration Status</u>							
--Registered	32	25	21	21	--	99	(806)
--Not registered	26	29	21	24	--	100	(196)

	<u>Regularly</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Politics & government	43%	39%	11%	6%	--	99%	(1002)
<u>Education</u>							
--High School or less	32	46	12	9	1	100	(256)
--Some College	44	38	13	5	--	100	(318)
--College Graduate	59	30	8	2	--	99	(426)
<u>Age</u>							
--18 to 29	24	50	17	8	1	100	(123)
--30 to 49	41	41	10	7	1	100	(431)
--50 and older	51	35	10	4	--	100	(421)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	43	39	11	6	1	100	(482)
--Female	43	40	11	6	--	100	(520)
<u>Registration Status</u>							
--Registered	47	38	10	4	--	99	(806)
--Not registered	29	43	14	13	1	100	(196)

“Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election or not. Others aren't that interested. Do you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, rarely, or never?” [IN2A]

	<u>Most of the time</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003	47%	37%	11%	5%	--	100%	(501)
<u>Education</u>							
--High School or less	41	39	12	8	--	100	(120)
--Some College	47	35	14	3	1	100	(161)
--College Graduate	55	37	6	3	--	101	(219)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	50	33	14	4	--	101	(234)
--Female	44	42	8	6	--	100	(267)
<u>Registration Status</u>							
--Registered	55	35	5	4	--	99	(399)
--Not registered	24	42	27	8	--	101	(102)
<u>NATIONAL SURVEY</u>							
--Fall 2002	50	33	9	7	1	100	(1400)

“How often do you follow what is happening in government and politics here in New Jersey—most of the time, some of the time, rarely, or never?” [IN2B]

	<u>Most of the time</u>	<u>Some of the time</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003	42%	40%	14%	2%	1%	99%	(501)
<u>Education</u>							
--High School or less	37	43	16	2	1	99	(136)
--Some College	43	41	12	4	--	100	(157)
--College Graduate	50	34	13	3	--	100	(207)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	38	44	13	4	1	100	(248)
--Female	46	37	16	1	--	100	(253)
<u>Registration Status</u>							
--Registered	49	39	12	1	--	101	(806)
--Not registered	20	46	24	7	2	99	(196)

“Where do you get most of your information about what is going on IN NEW JERSEY -- from newspapers, television, radio, magazines, the Internet or from other people?” [IN3]
[ALL RESPONSES LISTED]

	<u>Use this source for New Jersey information</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003		
Newspaper	65%	(1002)
Television	59%	(1002)
Radio	20%	(1002)
Other people	15%	(1002)
Internet	13%	(1002)

“Thinking back over the past seven days, on how many of those days did you watch local TV news—that is news from New York, Philadelphia or New Jersey?” [IN4]

	<u>None</u>	<u>1-3 days</u>	<u>4-6 days</u>	<u>All 7</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003	9%	17%	16%	58%	100%	(1002)
<i>Education</i>						
--High School or less	6	16	12	66	100	(256)
--Some College	10	15	19	56	100	(318)
--College Graduate	12	21	20	47	100	(426)
<i>Age</i>						
--18 to 29	14	28	30	28	100	(123)
--30 to 49	9	21	17	53	100	(431)
--50 and older	7	8	10	75	100	(421)
<i>Gender</i>						
--Male	9	18	19	54	100	(482)
--Female	8	16	13	62	99	(520)
<i>Registration Status</i>						
--Registered	7	15	16	61	99	(806)
--Not registered	13	21	18	48	100	(196)

“Thinking back over the past seven days, on how many of those days did you read a newspaper?” [IN5]

	<u>None</u>	<u>1-3 days</u>	<u>4-6 days</u>	<u>All 7</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003	16%	28%	15%	42%	101%	(1002)
<i>Education</i>						
--High School or less	19	26	12	43	100	(256)
--Some College	14	31	18	37	100	(318)
--College Graduate	14	27	16	44	101	(426)
<i>Age</i>						
--18 to 29	21	46	15	18	100	(123)
--30 to 49	21	28	17	34	100	(431)
--50 and older	11	18	11	60	100	(421)
<i>Gender</i>						
--Male	13	26	16	45	100	(482)
--Female	18	29	14	38	99	(520)
<i>Registration Status</i>						
--Registered	12	25	16	47	100	(806)
--Not registered	30	35	11	24	100	(196)

“And do you have a newspaper delivered to your home? Is that everyday, just on weekends, or something else?”[IN6]

	<u>Every day</u>	<u>Just Weekends</u>	<u>Yes/ Other</u>	<u>No Delivery</u>	<u>Don't read paper</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003	39%	8%	4%	33%	16%	100	(1002)
<i>Education</i>							
--High School or less	35	6	4	36	19	100	(256)
--Some College	37	5	4	40	14	100	(318)
--College Graduate	47	12	3	23	14	99	(426)
<i>Gender</i>							
--Male	40	6	3	36	14	99	(482)
--Female	38	9	4	31	18	100	(520)
<i>Age</i>							
--18 to 29	24	9	4	42	21	100	(123)
--30 to 49	32	8	3	36	21	100	(431)
--50 and older	53	6	4	26	11	100	(421)
<i>Registration Status</i>							
--Registered	45	8	4	32	12	100	(806)
--Not registered	20	6	3	39	31	99	(196)

“Which party controls the New Jersey ASSEMBLY in the state legislature--the Republicans, the Democrats, or is there an equal number?” [IN7]

	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Equal number</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003	20%	20%	18%	42%	100%	(1002)
<i>Party ID</i>						
--Democratic	21	23	18	38	100	(313)
--Independent	18	21	19	42	100	(322)
--Republican	28	18	14	40	100	(242)
<i>Education</i>						
--High School or less	17	19	22	42	100	(256)
--Some College	20	17	21	42	100	(318)
--College Graduate	25	25	9	41	100	(426)
<i>Gender</i>						
--Male	26	24	17	34	101	(482)
--Female	15	17	19	50	101	(520)
<i>Age</i>						
--18 to 29	19	11	22	47	99	(123)
--30 to 49	21	21	17	42	101	(431)
--50 and older	22	23	17	37	99	(421)
<i>Registration Status</i>						
--Registered	22	22	18	37	99	(806)
--Not registered	12	13	17	58	100	(196)

“Which party controls the New Jersey SENATE in the state legislature--the Republicans, the Democrats, or is there an equal number?” [IN8]

	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Equal number</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003	23%	21%	18%	39%	101%	(1002)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democratic	22	23	19	36	100	(313)
--Independent	22	22	16	40	100	(322)
--Republican	26	24	18	31	99	(242)
<u>Education</u>						
--High School or less	20	19	21	41	101	(256)
--Some College	23	23	17	36	99	(318)
--College Graduate	26	24	14	36	100	(426)
<u>Gender</u>						
--Male	26	22	21	31	100	(482)
--Female	19	20	15	45	99	(520)
<u>Age</u>						
--18 to 29	22	21	15	42	100	(123)
--30 to 49	21	23	18	39	101	(431)
--50 and older	25	21	20	34	100	(421)
<u>Registration Status</u>						
--Registered	25	23	18	34	100	(806)
--Not registered	15	15	17	53	100	(196)

“As far as you know, is the Governor of New Jersey a Democrat or a Republican?” [NJ8]

	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003	66%	15%	19%	100%	(1002)
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democratic	73	12	15	100	(313)
--Independent	64	15	21	100	(322)
--Republican	71	19	11	101	(242)
<u>Education</u>					
--High School or less	55	19	26	100	(256)
--Some College	69	14	18	101	(318)
--College Graduate	83	10	6	99	(426)
<u>Gender</u>					
--Male	68	15	16	99	(482)
--Female	65	15	20	100	(520)
<u>Age</u>					
--18 to 29	52	17	31	100	(123)
--30 to 49	62	19	19	100	(431)
--50 and older	74	12	14	100	(421)
<u>Registration Status</u>					
--Registered	72	13	15	100	(806)
--Not registered	46	22	32	100	(196)
Past Surveys*					
--February 1998	18	73	9	100	(802)
--June 1995	17	68	15	100	(802)
--October 1991	70	13	17	100	(800)
--October 1984	22	60	17	100	(500)
--May 1976	70	14	15	100	(800)

*Percentages in bold indicate correct answers

**Correctly Identify Governor as a Democrat
(by news source and frequency)**

May 2003	<u>Not exposed</u>	<u>Fewer than 4 days per week</u>	<u>4 or more days per week</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Newspaper	43%	64%	76%	(721)
TV News	62%	61%	69%	(720)

NEW JERSEY POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE SCALE
(Based on correct answers to party control of Assembly, Senate, and Governor)

	<u>None correct</u>	<u>One correct</u>	<u>Two correct</u>	<u>All three correct</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
May 2003	25%	50%	21%	4%	100%	(1002)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democratic	18	55	23	4	100	(313)
--Independent	29	48	21	3	101	(322)
--Republican	22	46	25	7	100	(242)
<u>Education</u>						
--High School or less	31	47	18	3	99	(256)
--Some College	24	49	23	3	99	(318)
--College Graduate	14	54	25	6	99	(426)
<u>Gender</u>						
--Male	23	45	27	5	100	(482)
--Female	27	54	16	3	100	(520)
<u>Age</u>						
--18 to 29	36	43	18	2	99	(123)
--30 to 49	26	50	21	3	100	(431)
--50 and older	21	48	26	6	101	(421)
<u>Registration Status</u>						
--Registered	20	52	24	5	101	(806)
--Not registered	41	45	13	1	100	(196)