

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

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

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FEW NEW JERSEYANS WOULD MISS THE NETS IF THEY GO YET MANY SAY PROFESSIONAL SPORTS IMPORTANT TO STATE

There has been much talk about the possible comings and goings of major league teams in New Jersey over the past few years and it appears that New Jerseyans are of two minds on the issue. While the vast majority of residents agree that having home-grown professional sports teams is good for the Garden State, few would shed any tears if the New Jersey Nets were to relocate across the Hudson.

According to the latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll, only 20 percent of the state would miss the Nets basketball team a great deal if they moved to New York and 16 percent would miss them somewhat. This compares to nearly half – 47 percent – who say they would not miss them at all and 14 percent who would not miss them much.

Ironically, while most New Jerseyans do not have a strong personal attachment to the state's NBA franchise, the vast majority feel that professional sports are important for the state. Nearly 4-in-5 – 78 percent – say that having major league professional sports teams located in the state is important for New Jersey's economy. A sizable majority – 67 percent – also say the same about professional sports' importance to New Jersey's image.

There are some demographic differences in attitudes towards the Nets possible departure. Men (43%) are more likely than woman (31%) to say they will miss the Nets a great deal or some. Similarly Black and Hispanic residents (55%) are more likely

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185 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

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

Graduate Research Assistant: Robert Suls x289

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

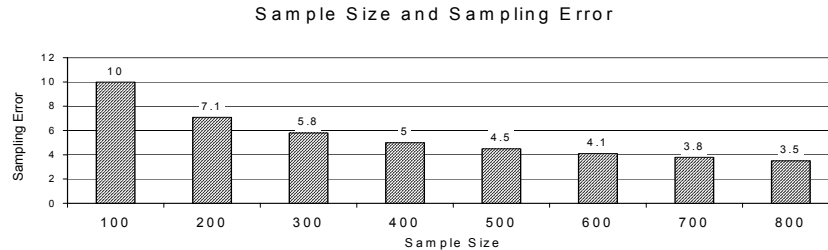
to miss the Nets than are white residents (30%). Younger adults – those under age 30 (55%) – are more likely than New Jerseyans age 30 to 49 (36%) and 50 or older (28%) to say they will miss the Nets.

Since the Nets home base is located in the northern tier of the state, one might expect regional differences of opinion over the possible loss of the reigning Eastern Conference champions. And while these differences do exist, even most of those who live in North Jersey would not lose sleep over the Nets potential departure. Overall, fewer than half – 44 percent – of North Jersey residents say they would personally miss the Nets a great deal or some if they left the state. This is somewhat higher than the 37 percent of Central Jerseyans and 25 percent of South Jerseyans who say the same.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* was conducted between September 2 and 8 with a scientific sample of 802 New Jersey residents. The associated margin of sampling error is ± 3.5 percentage points.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP144-1) September 10, 2003

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted by telephone from September 2 to 8 with a scientifically selected random sample of 802 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 be less likely to agree with a statement, 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 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 think having major league professional sports teams located in the state is important or not important for New Jersey’s image?” [SP1]

	<u>Important</u>	<u>Not Important</u>	<u>Don’t Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2003	67%	27%	5%	99%	(802)

“Do you think having major league professional sports teams located in the state is important or not important for New Jersey’s economy?” [SP2]

	<u>Important</u>	<u>Not Important</u>	<u>Don’t Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2003	78%	18%	5%	101%	(802)

“There has been some talk recently about the New Jersey Nets basketball team moving to New York. If this happened, would you personally miss having the Nets in New Jersey a great deal, some, not much or not at all?” [SP3]

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don’t Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2003	20%	16%	14%	47%	2%	99%	(802)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	27	16	13	42	2	100	(386)
--Female	14	17	15	52	2	100	(416)
<u>Age</u>							
--18 to 29	33	22	12	30	2	99	(105)
--30 to 49	20	16	14	49	1	100	(326)
--50 and older	13	15	14	55	3	100	(344)
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>							
--White	14	16	14	53	3	100	(597)
--Black/Hispanic	38	17	14	30	1	100	(143)
<u>Region of State</u>							
--North	28	16	12	42	2	100	(367)
--Central	19	18	14	47	2	100	(205)
--South	8	17	17	56	2	100	(215)