

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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

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THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NEW JERSEY: DEAN LEADS DEMOCRATS; NEW JERSEY DIVIDED ON BUSH

Vermont Governor Howard Dean leads the pack in New Jersey, just as he does among Democrats in the country as a whole. On the eve of Iowa's caucuses, the first major event in the presidential nominating process, Dean is the first choice of about one in four (23%) Garden State Democrats. Five other candidates—Senators John Kerry and Joe Lieberman, Representative Dick Gephardt, retired General Wesley Clark and the Rev. Al Sharpton—are bunched behind Dean, each with the support of about one Democrat in ten. Trailing this group are Senator John Edwards (3%) and Representative Dennis Kucinich (3%).

Presently, President George W. Bush runs evenly when matched against an unnamed Democrat, receiving 41 percent of the vote to the Democrat's 38 percent. Roughly 20 percent of registered voters are up for grabs at this point.

These are some of the main findings of the most recent *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*, conducted between January 7 and 13. A total sample of 904 New Jersey adults were interviewed, yielding a sampling error of ± 3.9 percent. The sample included 823 registered voters ($\pm 4.2\%$), and 373 who said they either were Democrats or leaned towards the Democratic party ($\pm 6.2\%$).

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 Assistant: Robert Suls & Allison Kopicki x289

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

Cliff Zukin, director of the Rutgers-based poll cautioned that the race in New Jersey may tilt a little more Democratic than it currently looks. “More of those currently undecided are Democrats, just waiting to see who their candidate is going to be, while Republicans have already committed to Bush. Most Democrats will probably come home unless there is a serious flaw in their party’s nominee. New Jersey has been a solid Democratic state in recent elections.”

The state is strongly divided on Bush’s leadership. While 50 percent approve of the job he is doing as President, 43 percent disapprove. And, while 42 percent believe the country is going in the right direction, another 45 percent feel it is going the wrong way. Public opinion on both these questions is badly polarized along party lines. Far more Republicans approve than disapprove of Bush’s job, by a margin of 85 to 14 percent while among Democrats far more disapprove (71%) than approve (22%). The state’s large number of independent voters are split on how Bush has been handling his job—48 percent approve and 42 percent disapprove. The President also gets more support among men than women, among older rather than younger voters, and among whites than Blacks and Hispanics.

Bush’s rating in New Jersey continues to trail his job performance rating in the country as a whole. At the same time Eagleton was finding just a seven point gap between those approving and disapproving, the Gallup organization recorded a 21 point gap nationwide, with 59 percent approving and 38 percent disapproving of the job Bush is doing as President.

The preferences among Democrats in New Jersey for their party’s nominee closely mirror those of Democrats elsewhere in the United States with one notable exception. Clark received the support of 20 percent of national Democrats surveyed by the Gallup organization, while he garners just nine percent of New Jersey Democrats. Clark is skipping the Iowa caucus.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP145-1) January 18, 2004

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted by telephone from January 7 to January 13 with a scientifically selected random sample of 904 New Jersey adults. Some of the figures in this release are based upon a sub-sample of 823 registered voters. 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 ± 3.9 percent for the full sample at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey residents were found to say that things in the country are going in the right direction, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.1 and 53.9 percent (50 ± 3.9) 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 Republicans, Independents or Democrats, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. The sampling error for registered voters is ± 4.2 percent and for figures based on registered Democrats or those how lean towards the Democratic party sampling error is ± 6.2 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:

[Asked of half the sample]

“Generally speaking, would you say things in the country are going in the right direction or wrong direction?” [Q3]

	<u>Right direction</u>	<u>Wrong direction</u>	<u>Don't know/ refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004					
All Adults	42%	45%	13%	100%	(452)
Registered Voters	47%	41%	12%	100%	(410)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>					
<i>(All Adults)</i>					
--Democrat	27	55	17	99	(151)
--Independent	39	53	8	100	(142)
--Republican	69	19	12	100	(115)
<u>Gender</u>					
--Male	51	41	9	101	(216)
--Female	35	48	17	100	(236)
<u>Age</u>					
--18 to 29	42	56	1	99	(60)
--30 to 49	47	38	15	100	(155)
--50 and older	37	46	17	100	(224)
<u>NATIONAL SURVEY*</u> (All Adults)					
AP (1/5-7/04)	49	46	5	100	(1000)

*The question wording used in the national survey is “Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?”

[Asked of full sample]

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President?”
[Q4]

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u> <u>/refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004					
All Adults	50%	43%	7%	100%	(904)
Registered Voters	50%	45%	6%	101%	(823)
<i><u>Party Affiliation</u></i>					
--Democrat	22	71	7	100	(289)
--Independent	48	42	9	99	(295)
--Republican	85	14	1	100	(214)
<i><u>Gender</u></i>					
--Male	52	41	7	100	(429)
--Female	48	45	7	100	(475)
<i><u>Age</u></i>					
--18 to 29	43	46	11	100	(111)
--30 to 49	52	44	4	100	(326)
--50 and older	51	42	7	100	(440)
<i><u>Race</u></i>					
--White	58	35	7	100	716
--Blacks & Hispanics	23	71	6	100	127
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>					
--September 2003	56	37	7	100	(802)
<i><u>Party Affiliation</u></i>					
--Democrat	34	55	10	99	(285)
--Independent	61	36	3	100	(212)
--Republican	90	8	2	100	(195)
--May 2003	62	29	8	99	(1002)
<i><u>Party Affiliation</u></i>					
--Democrat	43	47	10	100	(313)
--Independent	61	33	6	100	(322)
--Republican	89	6	5	100	(242)
--February 2003	56	33	12	101	(401)
--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 SURVEY</u>					
--Gallup Poll (All Adults) (1/9-11/04)	59	38	3	100	(1003)
--Gallup Poll (Registered voters)	59	38	3	100	(900)

“If the 2004 election for president was held today, would you vote for George W. Bush or the Democratic candidate?” [WH1]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>Wouldn't vote</u>	<u>DK/ refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004 Registered Voters	41%	38%	3%	10%	1%	8%	101%	(823)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>								
--Democrat	8	73	2	9	--	7	99	(261)
--Independent	40	30	5	14	--	9	98	(271)
--Republican	81	10	--	6	--	4	101	(202)
<i>Gender</i>								
--Male	44	36	4	10	--	6	100	(390)
--Female	39	39	2	10	1	11	102	(433)
<i>Age</i>								
--18 to 29	35	48	5	7	1	5	101	(87)
--30 to 49	43	37	4	8	--	8	100	(293)
--50 and older	42	36	1	11	1	9	100	(419)
<i>Race</i>								
--White	47	30	2	11	1	9	100	(669)
--Blacks & Hispanics	16	73	1	3	--	7	100	(109)

[Asked only of Democrats or those with Democratic leanings in New Jersey who are registered voters:]

“I’m going to name nine Democrats in the race for president. After I read you their names, tell me which ONE you would most like to see nominated as the Democratic Party’s presidential candidate in 2004. Here are the choices?” [WH2]

January 2004	<u>New Jersey Democratic Voters</u>	<u>Gallup National Survey*</u>
Howard Dean	23%	26%
John Kerry	11%	9%
Dick Gephardt	11%	7%
Joe Lieberman	10%	9%
Wesley Clark	9%	20%
Al Sharpton	8%	3%
John Edwards	3%	7%
Dennis Kucinich	3%	1%
Carol Moseley Braun	2%	4%
Other/None/ DK/Refused	21%	14%
Total	101%	100
(n)	(373)	(410)

* Registered self-identified Democrats from the 1/9-11/04 Gallup Poll