

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

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

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NEW JERSEY IN BLACK AND WHITE

MANY FEEL RACIAL EQUALITY WILL NOT BE ACHIEVED IN THEIR LIFETIME

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. And four decades on, fewer than 1-in-3 New Jerseyans believes that racial equality has been achieved. In addition, the state is equally divided on whether affirmative actions programs are necessary to overcome discrimination. And, as might be expected, there are stark differences in opinion on these issues among various racial groups in the state.

According to the latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*, two-thirds of New Jersey adults continue to believe that racism is a notable problem in the Garden State. This includes 17 percent who say it is a big problem and 48 percent who say it is somewhat of a problem. Another 22 percent feel that racism is a small problem in New Jersey today and only 7 percent say it is not a problem at all. Majorities among Black and Hispanic residents (76%) as well as white residents (62%) feel that racism is at least somewhat of a problem.

Overall, only 30 percent of New Jerseyans feel that blacks and white are treated equally in our society today. Another 1-in-4 residents (26%) say that racial equality does not exist today, but they expect to see it in their lifetimes. Four-in-ten residents (41%) do not expect that they will ever see a time when blacks and white are treated equally.

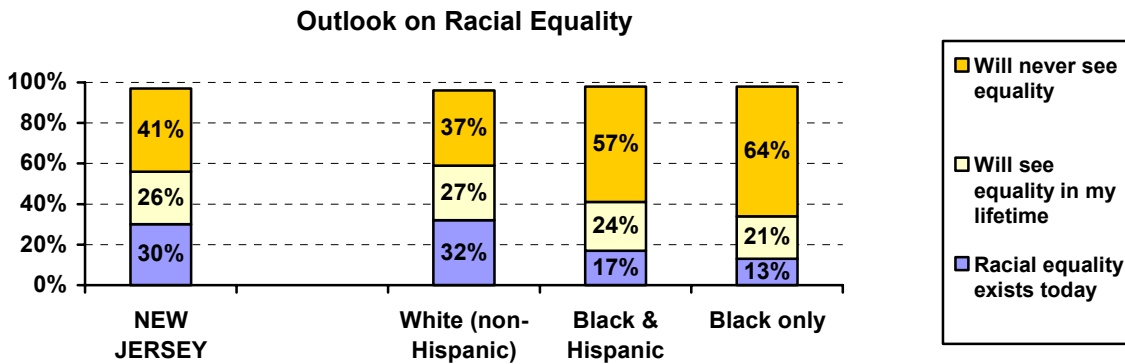
The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll • Eagleton Institute of Politics

185 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

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

Graduate Research Assistants: Robert Suls & Allison Kopicki x289

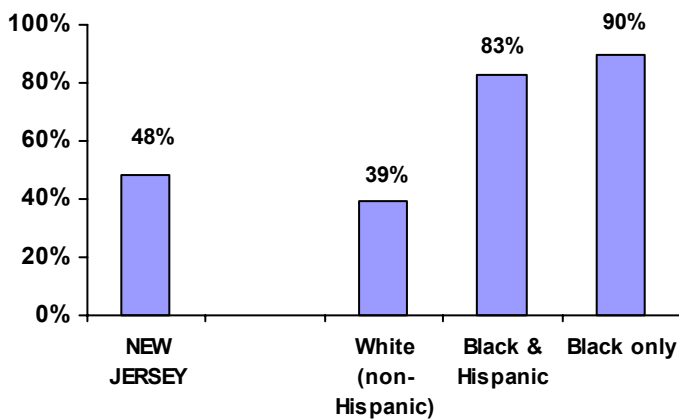
Phone: 732-932-9384 - Website: <http://slerp.rutgers.edu> - Fax: 732-932-1551



There are stark differences by race in these findings. While 32 percent of non-Hispanic whites say that racial equality has already been achieved, only 13 percent of black adults feel the same. Furthermore, more blacks (64%) than whites (37%) believe they will not live to see racial equality in their lifetimes.

“At first glance, the view on race in New Jersey looks somewhat optimistic. Over half of all residents say that racial equality either has been achieved or will be in their lifetimes,” commented Patrick Murray associate director of the poll. “However, there are deep racial divides in these opinions that are impossible to ignore, especially when it comes to anti-discrimination policy.”

Affirmative action programs are needed to overcome discrimination today



The overwhelming opinion among New Jersey Blacks and Hispanics is that affirmative action programs are still needed to help minorities overcome discrimination – by an 83 to 13 percent margin. On the other hand, most non-Hispanic whites (55%) do not see the necessity of such programs, compared to 39 percent of whites who feel they are still needed to help overcome discrimination.

The poll also asked about personal experiences with racial interaction. While majorities of all racial backgrounds feel that racism is a problem in the state, few whites say they witness it in their backyards. There are stark demographic differences in who feels friction between the

racism in their own town. Blacks and Hispanics (51%) are nearly twice as likely as whites (27%) to say there is at least some racial tension in their town.

Overall, about one-third of all New Jersey residents report that there is either a lot (10%) or some (22%) racial or ethnic tension in their hometown. Another 35 percent say there is a little and 29 percent say there is no racial or ethnic tension in their own towns. These findings are similar to the results of New Jersey surveys conducted in 2001 and 1996.

While the survey results indicate that New Jerseyans have divided views on issues around racial inequality, most New Jerseyans report having social interactions with people of other races. Three-quarters say they have attended a social gathering in the home of someone who is a different race from them at least once in the past five years. The survey left the definition of “another race” up to the individual participant, so this could include a wide-ranging set of racial or ethnic demographics.

The poll results also found some differences in the personal experiences of younger adults, which may indicate an evolving attitude toward race in the state. Regardless of race, young adults under the age of 30 (53%) are more likely than those age 30 to 49 (29%) or 50 and over (26%) to say that there is at least some racial and ethnic tension in their hometown. At the same time, New Jerseyans under age 50 (84%) are more likely than those age 50 and over (59%) to report visiting the home of someone who is a different race. Furthermore, white adults under the age of 30 (48%) are somewhat more likely than their older counterparts (37%) to feel that affirmative action programs are still needed to redress discrimination in society.

The *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* was conducted by telephone with a random sample of 904 New Jersey adults between January 7 and 13, 2004. Results from this poll have a +/-3.9 percent margin of error.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP145-2) January 19, 2001

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eggleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted by telephone from January 7 to 13 with a scientifically selected random sample of 904 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 is ± 3.9 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adult residents were found to believe that racial discrimination was a big problem, 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 adult 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 Whites or Blacks and Hispanics are subject to a larger margin of error than are statements based on the total sample.

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:

“In general, do you feel that blacks and whites are treated equally in our society or not?” [RC1]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004	30%	65%	3%	2%	100%	(904)
<u>Race</u>						
--White Non-Hispanic	32	62	3	2	99	(716)
--Blacks & Hispanics	17	78	3	2	100	(127)
--Blacks only	13	81	4	3	101	(71)
<u>Age</u>						
--18 to 29	34	64	2	--	100	(111)
--30 to 49	25	74	2	--	101	(326)
--50 and older	33	57	5	6	101	(440)

“Do you think you will see equal treatment for blacks and whites in your lifetime or not?” [RC2]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Already Equal*</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004	26%	41%	30%	4%	101%	(904)
<u>Race</u>						
--White Non-Hispanic	27	37	32	4	100	(716)
--Blacks & Hispanics	24	57	17	3	101	(127)
--Blacks only	21	64	13	2	100	(71)
<u>Age</u>						
--18 to 29	31	32	34	3	100	(111)
--30 to 49	26	48	25	2	101	(326)
--50 and older	25	37	33	5	100	(440)

* from RCI

“How big a problem is racism in New Jersey today -- Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all?” [RC3]

	<u>Big Problem</u>	<u>Somewhat of a Problem</u>	<u>Small Problem</u>	<u>Not a Problem</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004	17%	48%	22%	7%	6%	100%	(904)
<i><u>Race</u></i>							
--White Non-Hispanic	14	48	24	9	6	101	(716)
--Blacks & Hispanics	26	50	14	1	9	100	(127)
--Blacks only	25	59	9	2	6	101	(71)
<i><u>Community type</u></i>							
--Urban	23	36	27	9	6	101	(129)
--Existing suburb	16	49	22	5	8	100	(353)
--Expanding suburb	15	52	21	8	4	100	(405)
<i><u>Age</u></i>							
--18 to 29	19	44	32	4	1	100	(111)
--30 to 49	16	52	21	6	6	101	(326)
--50 and older	15	47	19	9	9	99	(440)

“How much racial or ethnic tension do you think there is among people who live in your town or city – a lot, some, just a little or none at all?” [RC4]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>None at all</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004	10%	22%	35%	29%	4%	100%	(904)
<i><u>Race</u></i>							
--White Non-Hispanic	8	19	37	32	4	100	(716)
--Blacks & Hispanics	19	32	28	16	5	100	(127)
--Blacks only	15	40	27	12	6	100	(71)
<i><u>Community type</u></i>							
--Urban	18	25	32	19	6	100	(129)
--Existing suburb	8	22	36	30	4	100	(353)
--Expanding suburb	8	22	35	32	3	100	(405)
<i><u>Age</u></i>							
--18 to 29	23	30	23	23	--	99	(111)
--30 to 49	6	23	43	26	1	99	(326)
--50 and older	8	18	31	34	9	100	(440)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
April 2001	7	25	29	33	5	100	(802)
<i><u>Race</u></i>							
-- White Non-Hispanic	6	24	28	37	5	100	(582)
-- Blacks & Hispanics	13	30	35	18	4	100	(155)
--Blacks only	15	30	34	17	4	100	(101)
August 1996	9	27	32	29	4	101	(1203)
<i><u>Race</u></i>							
-- White Non-Hispanic	8	25	32	32	4	101	(599)
-- Blacks & Hispanics	16	36	28	16	5	101	(601)
--Blacks only	16	38	25	16	5	100	(399)

“In the past five years, have you personally had dinner or attended a social gathering in the home of someone who is a different race from you, or not?” [RC5]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004	75%	24%	1%	100%	(904)
<i>Race</i>					
--White Non-Hispanic	74	25	1	100	(716)
--Blacks & Hispanics	75	24	--	99	(127)
--Blacks only	64	35	1	100	(71)
<i>Community type</i>					
--Urban	72	28	--	100	(129)
--Existing suburb	74	26	--	100	(353)
--Expanding suburb	76	22	2	100	(405)
<i>Age</i>					
--18 to 29	86	14	--	100	(111)
--30 to 49	84	16	--	100	(326)
--50 and older	59	39	2	100	(440)

“Do you think affirmative action programs are needed today to help minorities such as blacks and Hispanics overcome discrimination, or are they not needed today?” [IS2]

	<u>Needed today</u>	<u>Not Needed</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004	48%	46%	6%	100%	(904)
<i>Race</i>					
--White Non-Hispanic	39	55	6	100	(716)
--Blacks & Hispanics	83	13	5	101	(127)
--Blacks only	90	6	4	100	(71)
<i>Community type</i>					
--Urban	61	31	8	100	(129)
--Existing suburb	44	51	5	100	(353)
--Expanding suburb	45	50	5	100	(405)
<i>Age</i>					
--18 to 29	63	32	5	100	(111)
--30 to 49	47	47	5	99	(326)
--50 and older	41	52	7	100	(440)
<u>NATIONAL SURVEY</u>					
Associated Press Poll (2/28-3/4 2003)	51	43	6	100	(1013)