

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

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KERRY GETS JERSEY BOUNCE

Fresh on the heels of his party's convention, Democratic nominee John Kerry has opened up a commanding lead over President George W. Bush in New Jersey. The challenger now leads the incumbent by 52 to 32 percent among the state's registered voters with 12 percent undecided, according to the latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*. In May, Kerry held a slimmer 43 to 37 advantage. Positive reaction to last month's Democratic convention seems to have helped Kerry solidify his Garden State base while the President's support has softened.

Unlike in battleground states, where both Republicans and Democrats are trying to get their message out, New Jerseyans have not heard much from either camp during this presidential campaign. For many in the state, the Democratic convention was their first introduction to John Kerry. This seems to have had a positive effect on voters' opinions of him. Currently, a majority – 54 percent – of the electorate have a favorable impression of the Democratic nominee while 27 percent have an unfavorable impression and 19 percent have no opinion. Kerry's positive ratings have increased by 13 percentage points since May, while his negative ratings have remained stable.

George Bush's ratings, on the other hand, seem to have suffered from the attacks – both explicit and implicit – launched during his opponent's nominating convention. Negative impressions of the President among New Jersey voters now outweigh positive ones by a 38 percent to 50 percent margin. In May, these numbers were much closer at 41 percent favorable to 44 percent unfavorable.

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

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New Jerseyans also hold very different views of the men running for the number two slot. John Edwards, the Democrat's nominee for vice president, commands the widest positive to negative margin of the four candidates on a major party ticket. Half – 51 percent – of Garden State voters have a favorable impression of him compared to only 17 percent who view him unfavorably, and 31 percent have no opinion. At the other end of the spectrum, vice president Dick Cheney registers unfavorable ratings from 49 percent of the electorate compared to 28 percent who have a favorable impression of him, with another 24 percent offering no opinion.

Democrats, Republicans and independents alike see the once-and-future candidate, Ralph Nader, in a negative light. Overall, 22 percent of New Jersey voters have a favorable impression of him and 37 percent view him unfavorably, with another 42 percent who have no opinion of the one time Green Party standard bearer and now independent candidate for President.

Candidate	CANDIDATE RATINGS			Fav:Unfav Margin
	Favorable	Unfavorable	No Opinion	
George W. Bush				
New Jersey	38%	50%	12%	-12
National	47%	45%	8%	+2
John Kerry				
New Jersey	54%	27%	19%	+27
National	51%	32%	16%	+19
Ralph Nader				
New Jersey	22%	37%	42%	-15
National	25%	44%	31%	-19
Dick Cheney				
New Jersey	28%	49%	24%	-21
National	43%	41%	17%	+2
John Edwards				
New Jersey	51%	17%	31%	+34
National	49%	18%	33%	+31

** National figures are from an ABC News/Washington Post Poll conducted July 30-August 1 with 940 registered voters.*

Compared to the favorability ratings found in a recent national poll, New Jersey voters' opinions of the Democratic nominees Kerry and Edwards are similar to those in the rest of the country. However, the Garden State is more negative than other U.S. voters toward the Republican team of Bush and Cheney.

“The Democratic convention tried to paint the Republicans as out of touch with middle America and they seem to have found a receptive audience in New Jersey” commented Patrick Murray, acting director of the Rutgers University-based poll. “New Jersey is a moderate state and politicians who seem to be overly concerned with social wedge issues such as gay marriage and abortion do not play well with this electorate. This may explain why the convention seems to not only had a positive impact for Kerry but a negative one for Bush as well.”

Compared to the May poll, Kerry’s New Jersey support increased by 9 percentage points, while Bush experienced a 5 point decline. Currently 46 percent of voters say they are firm in their choice of John Kerry compared to only 27 percent of Bush supporters who say they won’t change their mind before election day. This movement in support for both candidates is found among all segments of the electorate. In particular, the president has not been able to make any headway with the state’s all-important independent voters, whereas the Democrat’s standing with this group has improved by 8 percentage points. Also, George Bush’s support among his own Republican base seems to have softened slightly, although this may rebound after the initial impact of the Democratic convention wears off.

“Four years ago, Al Gore went into his party’s nominating convention with a slim four point margin over George Bush in New Jersey and eventually won the state by sixteen points,” noted Murray. “New Jersey has been leaning more Democratic over the past few election cycles, and many voters were simply waiting for the chance to get to know the Democrats’ pick. Now that they have met Senator Kerry, they feel more comfortable casting their lot with him.”

The most recent *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* was conducted with 624 registered voters interviewed by telephone between July 30 and August 4. The poll has a sampling error of ± 4 percentage points.

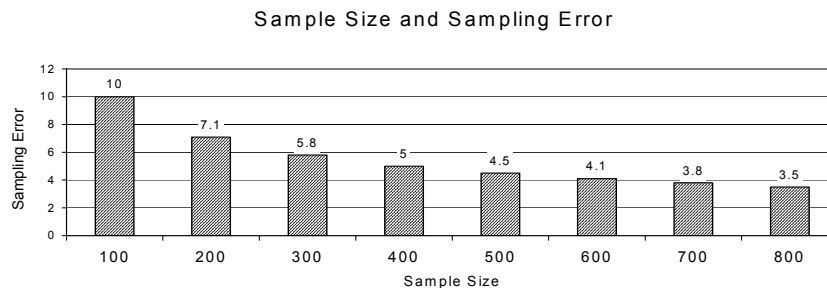
The poll also asked voters whether they watched or heard any of the Democratic convention proceedings last month. About 9-in-10 New Jersey voters claim to have received some exposure to the convention, including just over half – 54 percent – who caught at least some of John Kerry’s acceptance speech (either live or on news broadcasts). About half – 49 percent – of these convention followers say what they saw or heard had no impact on their intended vote. Among the remainder, though, the

convention was more likely to have a positive impact: 35 percent say it has made them more likely to vote for the Kerry-Edwards ticket while 14 percent say it has made them less likely to cast their ballot for the Democrats.

NEW JERSEY 2004 VOTE DYNAMICS			
<u>Voter Group</u>	<i>Kerry Advantage</i>		<i>Movement to Kerry</i>
	<u>May</u>	<u>August</u>	
All Registered	+6	+20	+14
<i>Party ID</i>			
Democrat	+75	+87	+12
Independent	+11	+24	+13
Republican	-81	-74	+7
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	+1	+15	+14
Female	+10	+25	+15
<i>Race</i>			
White	-2	+14	+16
Black/Hispanic	+43	+53	+10
<i>Age</i>			
18 to 29	+30	+45	+15
30 to 49	+4	+15	+11
50 to 64	+4	+18	+14
65 +	+10	+19	+9
<i>Education</i>			
H.S. or less	+7	+17	+10
Some college	+7	+16	+9
College grad	+5	+25	+20

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP147-1) AUGUST 8, 2004

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted from July 30 to August 4 with a scientifically selected random sample of 800 New Jersey adult residents interviewed by telephone. This sampling yielded a total of 624 respondents who reported being registered to vote. 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 for registered voters is ± 4 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey registered voters were found to have a favorable opinion of a presidential candidate, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46 and 54 percent (50 ± 4) had all New Jersey registered voters 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 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 questions referred to in this release are as follows:

“I’d like you to rate your chances of voting in the upcoming November election on a scale of 10 to 1. If 10 represents a person who DEFINITELY will vote and 1 represents a person who definitely will NOT vote, where would you place yourself?” [W2]

	Not likely <<<<<<<<<<<<<<>>>>>>>>>> Definite				Total	(n)
	1-3	4-7	8-9	10		
August 2004						
Registered Voters	3%	4%	6%	87%	100%	(614)
Party ID						
--Democrat	1	4	6	89	100	(215)
--Independent	4	5	7	85	101	(200)
--Republican	2	2	5	91	100	(147)
PAST SURVEYS						
May 2004						
Registered Voters	4%	7%	6%	83%	100%	(639)
Party ID						
--Democrat	5	6	7	82	100	(209)
--Independent	3	8	9	81	101	(200)
--Republican	1	3	4	93	101	(163)
PAST ELECTIONS						
June 2000						
Registered Voters	4%	12%	12%	73%	99%	(586)
Party ID						
--Democrat	2	9	11	79	101	202
--Independent	5	12	14	70	101	180
--Republican	3	13	13	70	99	167

“If the election for President was held today and you had to choose right now, would you vote for (ROTATE Bush/Kerry) *George W. Bush, the Republican; John Kerry, the Democrat;* or Ralph Nader, the independent?” [W3]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Kerry</u>	<u>Nader/ Other</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004	32%	12%	52%	3%	99%	(603)
Registered Voters						
Likely Voters	33%	12%	53%	3%	101%	(529)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	3	6	90	1	100	(212)
--Independent	26	15	50	9	100	(193)
--Republican	82	9	8	1	100	(148)
<u>Education</u>						
--High School or less	32	14	49	5	100	(154)
--Some College	35	12	51	3	101	(162)
--College Graduate	30	11	55	4	100	(284)
<u>Race</u>						
--White	35	11	49	4	99	(480)
--Black and Hispanic	17	10	70	2	99	(86)
<u>Gender</u>						
--Male	35	10	50	4	99	(280)
--Female	29	13	54	3	99	(323)
<u>Age</u>						
--18-29	21	6	66	7	100	(71)
--30-49	35	11	50	3	99	(209)
--50-64	33	11	51	4	99	(183)
--65+	32	15	51	3	101	(130)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>						
May 2004						
Registered Voters *	37%	19%	43%	2%	101%	(619)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	6	12	81	1	100	(201)
--Independent	31	23	42	4	100	(197)
--Republican	85	10	4	--	99	(162)
March 2004						
Registered Voters *	33%	19%	39%	8%	99%	(618)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	10	11	73	6	100	(230)
--Independent	30	25	31	14	100	(180)
--Republican	79	14	5	1	99	(147)
January 2004						
Registered Voters*	41%	18%	38%	3%	100%	(823)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	8	16	73	2	99	(261)
--Independent	40	23	30	5	98	(271)
--Republican	81	10	10	--	101	(202)

* Prior polls did not include Ralph Nader as one of the stated options.
 The March poll offered “another candidate” as an option.
 The January 2004 poll question pitted President Bush against an unnamed Democrat.

HEAD-TO-HEAD RACE *

[COMPOSITE TABLE OF QUESTIONS W3/4/5]

"If the election for President was held today, would you vote for George Bush, the Republican; John Kerry, the Democrat; or Ralph Nader, the independent?" [W3]

IF RESPONDENT CHOSE A CANDIDATE, "Are you very sure about voting for (Bush/Kerry), or might you change your mind before the election?" [W4]

IF RESPONDENT WAS UNDECIDED, "At this moment do you lean more towards Bush or more towards Kerry?" [W5]

	<u>Sure about Bush</u>	<u>Chooses Bush, but may change</u>	<u>>>> Initially Undecided <<<</u>	<u>Does Not Lean</u>	<u>Leans Kerry</u>	<u>Chooses Kerry, but may change</u>	<u>Sure about Kerry</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004 Registered Voters	27%	6%	3%	7%	5%	7%	46%	101%	(592)
Likely Voters	28%	5%	2%	6%	5%	6%	47%	99%	(519)
<u>Party ID</u>									
--Democrat	2	1	1	2	3	6	84	99	(210)
--Independent	19	8	4	9	7	10	42	99	(185)
--Republican	72	9	3	3	3	3	5	98	(148)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>									
May 2004 Registered Voters	30%	7%	3%	12%	5%	10%	34%	101%	(608)
<u>Party ID</u>									
--Democrat	4	2	1	5	7	13	69	101	(199)
--Independent	22	11	5	15	4	14	29	100	(190)
--Republican	77	9	4	5	2	3	1	101	(162)
<u>PAST ELECTIONS</u>									
June 2000 Registered Voters	<u>Sure Bush</u>	<u>Bush, soft</u>	<u>Leans Bush</u>	<u>Does Not Lean</u>	<u>Leans Gore</u>	<u>Gore, soft</u>	<u>Sure Gore</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	26%	13%	3%	9%	3%	14%	30%	98%	(578)
June 1996 Registered Voters	<u>Sure Dole</u>	<u>Dole, soft</u>	<u>Leans Dole</u>	<u>Does Not Lean</u>	<u>Leans Clinton</u>	<u>Clinton, soft</u>	<u>Sure Clinton</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	25%	11%	2%	5%	2%	18%	38%	101%	(620)

* Those selecting another candidate have been omitted from this table.

NEW JERSEY-NATIONAL COMPARISON

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Kerry</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
ABC News Washington Post July 30-August 1, 2004	44%	4%	50%	2%	100%	(940)
New Jersey Registered Voters July 30-August 4, 2004	32%	12%	52%	3%	100%	(603)

“Is your general impression of [INSERT NAME] favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion about him? (IF FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE, PROBE: Is that very (favorable/unfavorable) or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable)?” [W7]

August 2004	<u>Very Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Unfavorable</u>	<u>Very Unfavorable</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
GEORGE W. BUSH							
Registered Voters	21%	17%	13%	37%	12%	100%	(624)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	4	6	16	63	11	100	(216)
--Independent	14	19	17	35	14	99	(201)
--Republican	54	30	5	6	5	100	(150)
PAST SURVEYS							
May 2004	23%	18%	13%	31%	15%	100%	(643)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	4	10	20	54	12	100	(209)
--Independent	18	19	14	33	15	99	(203)
--Republican	58	29	6	2	5	100	(163)
JOHN KERRY							
Registered Voters	27%	27%	10%	17%	19%	100%	(624)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	52	31	2	4	11	100	(216)
--Independent	20	35	8	15	20	98	(201)
--Republican	7	8	24	37	25	101	(150)
PAST SURVEYS							
May 2004	17%	24%	10%	17%	32%	100%	(643)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	34	36	1	1	27	99	(209)
--Independent	16	25	11	17	32	101	(203)
--Republican	1	10	23	41	25	101	(163)
DICK CHENEY							
Registered Voters	13%	15%	13%	36%	24%	101%	(624)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	2	7	13	59	19	100	(216)
--Independent	9	17	18	34	21	99	(201)
--Republican	34	23	7	11	25	100	(150)
JOHN EDWARDS							
Registered Voters	25%	26%	7%	10%	31%	99%	(624)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	44	29	2	2	23	100	(216)
--Independent	20	30	9	8	32	99	(201)
--Republican	10	16	13	28	33	100	(150)
RALPH NADER							
Registered Voters	7%	15%	13%	24%	42%	101%	(624)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	8	12	13	28	39	100	(216)
--Independent	8	19	14	23	36	100	(201)
--Republican	3	12	13	25	47	100	(150)

“Did you personally watch any part of the Democratic Convention on TV, or not?” [W13]

“Did you see or hear any part of John Kerry’s acceptance speech, or not?” [W13A]

“Did you read or hear anything about the convention, or not?” [W14]

	<u>Saw Kerry’s speech</u>	<u>Saw other parts of convention</u>	<u>Read or heard about it</u>	<u>Did not follow convention</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004 Registered Voters	54%	15%	19%	11%	99%	(624)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	61	14	16	9	100	(216)
--Independent	55	14	19	11	99	(201)
--Republican	45	19	27	9	100	(150)
<u>Vote Intention</u>						
--Bush	43	19	29	9	100	(193)
--Undecided	51	18	14	17	100	(71)
--Kerry	63	13	14	9	99	(316)

[ASKED OF THOSE WHO WATCHED OR FOLLOWED CONVENTION:] “Did what you saw or heard of the convention make you more likely or less likely to vote for John Kerry and John Edwards in November, or did it make no difference to you?” [W15]

	<u>More likely</u>	<u>Less likely</u>	<u>No difference</u>	<u>Don’t know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004 Convention followers	35%	14%	49%	2%	100%	(554)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	56	2	41	2	101	(197)
--Independent	34	16	50	1	101	(179)
--Republican	11	29	57	3	100	(136)
<u>Vote Intention</u>						
--Bush	5	38	57	1	101	(175)
--Undecided	36	8	47	8	99	(59)
--Kerry	55	--	44	1	100	(286)
<u>Level of Exposure</u>						
--Saw Kerry’s speech	47	12	41	1	101	(338)
--Saw other parts	22	13	61	4	100	(96)
--Read or heard about it	13	23	61	3	100	(120)