

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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(Release 147-3)

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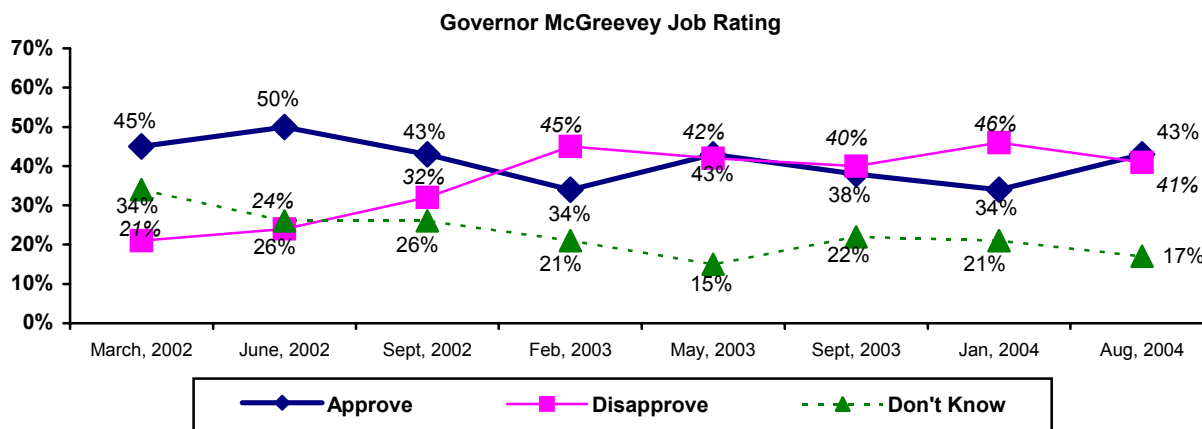
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NEW JERSEY SPLIT ON GOVERNOR MCGREEVEY

Job Performance Rating Improves; but Corruption Issues Taint Him

New Jerseyans have some good news and bad news for Governor McGreevey. The good news is his job approval rating has improved since the low registered early this year. The bad news is that only one-third of the state's electorate is ready to commit to a second McGreevey term. And to make matters worse, when New Jerseyans think of corruption in the state, James McGreevey's name is usually the first that comes to mind.

This is the scene painted by responses to the latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*, conducted between July 30 and August 4 with a scientifically selected sample of 800 New Jersey adults. The poll has a sampling error figure of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. It includes 624 registered voters, for whom the sampling error figure is a slightly higher 4 percent.



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

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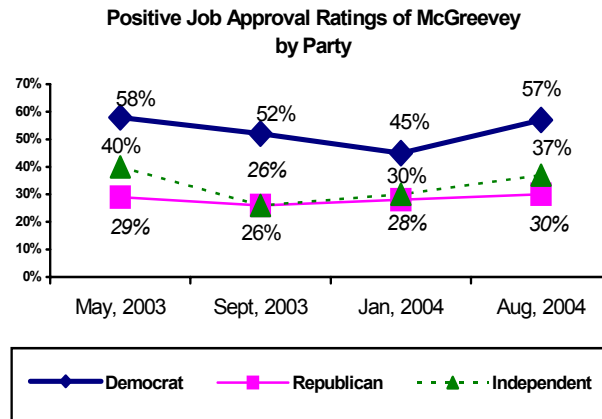
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The new survey finds New Jersey residents about evenly split on the job McGreevey is doing as governor – with 43 percent who approve to 41 percent who disapprove. This marks an improvement from a poll conducted in January which found more residents disapproving (46%) than approving (34%).

The rise in approval is mainly due to the fact that the Governor has won back some support from his own partisans. In January, only 45 percent of Democrats approved of his job performance. Today that number stands at 57 percent. He also increased his job rating among independents somewhat from 30 percent earlier this year to 37 percent now, although this is still outweighed by the number of independents (52%) who disapprove of McGreevey’s performance. The Governor’s job approval among Republicans remains basically unchanged at 30 percent positive to 57 percent negative.



Despite increased approval within his own party, Governor McGreevey has been unable to garner positive job performance marks from a majority of Garden State residents since he took office. His highest approval ratings were registered in June 2002, just a few months into his term, when half – 50 percent – of New Jerseyans granted him a positive score.

“It’s tough going into a reelection bid when you’re fighting just to keep your positives even with your negatives,” commented Patrick Murray, acting director of the poll. “Among the state’s electorate who will determine McGreevey’s fate next year, negative evaluations are slightly higher than they are among the general public.” In the current poll, 44 percent of registered voters disapprove of the job McGreevey is doing compared to 43 percent who approve.

A little more than a year before the Governor stands for reelection, only 1-in-3 (34%) registered voters say they would cast their ballot for McGreevey if the election were held today. Another 30 percent say they would vote for the Republican candidate. At this time, 65 percent of Democrats give their support to the incumbent governor and a similar 61 percent of Republicans say they would vote for their party’s nominee.

The state's independent electorate currently tilts toward the unnamed Republican candidate by a margin of 30 to 25 percent. This is slightly better than the 38-21 percent deficit McGreevey faced when the poll asked about his reelection in January. However, candidates in New Jersey usually need to take the independent vote outright in order to be successful statewide.

Registered voters are split in their view of McGreevey, with 37 percent having a favorable opinion compared to an equal 37 percent with an unfavorable opinion. When former governor Christine Whitman was preparing for her 1997 reelection bid – a race in which she narrowly defeated then-challenger McGreevey – she was garnering favorable ratings with 46 percent of the electorate compared to 33 percent unfavorable. And even Jim Florio had a better favorable (44%) to unfavorable (35%) ratio in the months leading up to his 1993 reelection defeat.

Murray remarked, “One of the Governor’s problems is that he is not seen as someone who has made a major mark on the state.” Despite recent legislative successes including the Highlands protection bill, the “millionaire’s tax,” and changes to campaign finance practices in New Jersey, only 16 percent of residents feel that James McGreevey has any major accomplishments he can point to. Another 46 percent say he has some minor ones and 26 percent don’t feel that the McGreevey administration can lay claim to any real accomplishments. This is only marginally better than a year ago, when polls indicated that 11 percent of New Jerseyans saw major accomplishments from the governor’s office.

Murray added, “Any gains McGreevey may have made with the public by funding property tax rebates and passing a budget that causes little pain appear to be offset by the dubious conduct of his associates.” Recent indictments of Democratic fundraisers Charles Kushner and David Damiano as well as the resignations-under-fire of commerce chief William Watley and other administration staff have taken their toll on the state. Currently, nearly half of New Jersey feels that the state is plagued by “a lot” of political corruption. The number who classify the amount of corruption as “a lot” has grown from 33 percent two years ago and 34 percent in January to 45 percent today. Another 31 percent say there is some corruption and 14 percent say there is very little or none.

It is among swing voters where recent events seem to have had the greatest impact. In January, 36 percent of independents felt there was a lot of political corruption in the state. Today that number stands at 55 percent – a 19 percentage point increase. During the same

period, the number of Democrats (42%) and Republicans (43%) who say there is a lot of corruption went up by 13 and 11 points respectively.

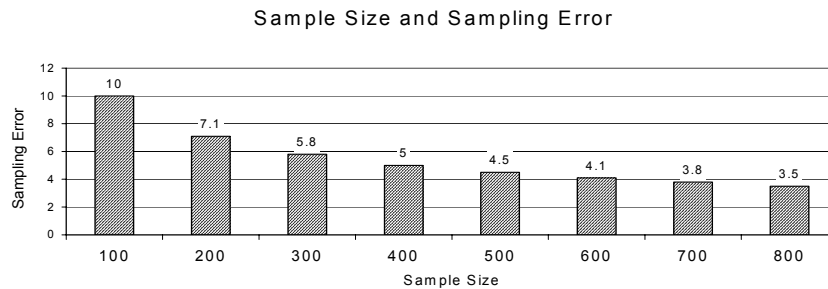
Despite the Governor's signing of a pay-to-pay reform package earlier this summer, the public is split on whether McGreevey is being aggressive enough in stamping out influence peddling in government. While 40 percent agree that the governor is committed to reducing corruption and related practices, a similar 36 percent disagree.

Progress in cleaning up campaign finance may have been overshadowed by the federal indictments, though. Nearly 6-in-10 New Jerseyans have heard something about the political corruption cases of the past year, including 22 percent who say they have heard a lot. When those aware of these proceedings are asked to name someone involved in the cases, half are able to give an answer. And the name that tops the list is James McGreevey's at 29 percent. The next most commonly named figures are Kushner (5%), former Hudson County chief Robert Janiszewski (5%), Damiano (3%) and former U.S. Senator Robert Torricelli (3%).

"Despite not being actually named in any indictment, the actions of McGreevey's associates are taking a toll on the reputation of the alleged State Official 1," Murray observed.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP147-3) AUGUST 12, 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. 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 ± 3.5 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey residents were found to have a favorable opinion of a presidential candidate, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.5 and 53.5 percent (50 ± 3.5) had all New Jersey adults 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:

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way James McGreevey is handling his job as Governor?” [G1]

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004					
All Adults	43%	41%	17%	101%	(800)
Registered Voters	43%	44%	13%	100%	(624)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>					
--Democrat	57	23	20	100	(266)
--Independent	37	52	11	100	(258)
--Republican	30	57	14	101	(183)
<u>Region</u>					
--North	46	37	16	99	(369)
--Central	40	43	17	100	(197)
--South	37	47	16	100	(220)
<u>Race</u>					
--White	42	44	14	100	(601)
--Blacks & Hispanics	45	33	21	99	(143)
<u>Gender</u>					
--Male	42	43	15	100	(383)
--Female	43	38	18	99	(417)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>					
January 2004					
All Adults	34%	46%	21%	101%	(904)
Registered Voters	37	49	15	101	(823)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>					
--Democrat	45	34	21	100	(289)
--Independent	30	48	22	100	(295)
--Republican	28	56	16	100	(214)

<i>G1, continued</i>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2003	38%	40%	22%	100%	(802)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>					
--Democrat	52	29	19	100	(285)
--Independent	26	41	33	100	(212)
--Republican	26	59	15	100	(195)
May 2003	43%	42%	15%	100%	(1002)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>					
--Democrat	58	29	13	100	(313)
--Independent	40	45	16	101	(322)
--Republican	29	57	15	101	(242)
February 2003	34%	45%	21%	100%	(802)
September 2002	43%	32%	26%	101%	(804)
June 2002	50%	24%	26%	100%	(801)
March 2002	45%	21%	34%	100%	(803)

“Is your general impression of McGreevey 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)?” [G2]

	<u>Very Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Unfavorable</u>	<u>Very Unfavorable</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004	13%	23%	15%	19%	31%	101%	(800)
All Adults							
Registered Voters	13%	24%	16%	21%	25%	99%	(624)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>							
--Democrat	21	27	10	6	36	100	(266)
--Independent	8	22	21	23	26	100	(258)
--Republican	8	21	14	37	19	99	(183)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	14	23	15	23	24	99	(383)
--Female	11	23	14	15	37	100	(417)
<u>Region</u>							
--North	16	22	15	15	32	100	(369)
--Central	9	24	12	28	26	99	(197)
--South	10	22	17	20	31	100	(220)
<u>Race</u>							
--White	12	25	17	22	24	100	(601)
--Blacks & Hispanics	17	20	6	11	46	100	(143)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
January 2004	---	36%	---	43%	---	21%	100% (904)
February 2003	8	20	15	17	39	99	(802)
March 2002	---	51	---	19	---	30	100 (803)
<u>PAST GOVERNORS</u>							
<u>Christine Whitman</u>							
June 1997 – Reg Voters	16	30	14	19	21	100	(623)
Sept 1995 – All Adults	17	30	12	12	29	100	(804)
<u>Jim Florio</u>							
June 1993 – Reg Voters	18	26	19	16	21	100	(664)
Sept 1990 – All Adults	7	12	19	46	17	101	(800)

[ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY:] "If the 2005 election for governor was held today, would you vote for James McGreevey or the Republican candidate?" [G3]

	<u>McGreevey</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>No Vote/ Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004 Registered Voters	34%	30%	5%	14%	18%	101%	(624)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
--Democrat	65	9	3	8	14	99	(216)
--Independent	25	30	10	18	18	101	(201)
--Republican	11	61	2	11	14	99	(150)
<i>Gender</i>							
--Male	30	37	5	13	15	100	(294)
--Female	37	24	4	15	20	100	(330)
<i>Region</i>							
--North	38	24	6	14	17	99	(290)
--Central	27	32	3	19	19	100	(153)
--South	31	38	3	11	18	101	(171)
<i>Age</i>							
--18 to 29	31	34	6	7	23	101	(74)
--30 to 49	36	34	4	11	15	100	(220)
--50 and older	33	27	5	18	18	101	(320)
<i>Race</i>							
--White	30	32	5	16	18	101	(495)
--Blacks & Hispanics	55	20	4	3	19	101	(91)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
January 2004	34%	36%	4%	12%	13%	99%	(823)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
--Democrat	70	10	4	7	8	99	(261)
--Independent	21	38	5	18	18	100	(271)
--Republican	9	69	4	12	7	101	(202)

“Thinking about McGreevey’s term as Governor so far, would you say that he has major accomplishments to point to, minor accomplishments, or no real accomplishments?” [G4]

	<u>Major</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>No Real Ones</u>	<u>No opinion/ DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004	16%	46%	26%	11%	99%	(800)
All Adults						
Registered Voters	17%	49%	25%	10%	101%	(624)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>						
--Democrat	29	42	16	13	100	(266)
--Independent	8	53	31	8	100	(258)
--Republican	14	45	33	8	100	(183)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>						
September 2003	11%	45%	32%	12%	100%	(802)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>						
--Democrat	13	54	23	10	100	(285)
--Independent	8	40	37	15	100	(212)
--Republican	9	37	46	8	100	(195)
February 2003	11%	41%	37%	12%	101%	(802)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>						
--Democrat	17	48	26	9	100	(254)
--Independent	6	39	41	14	100	(238)
--Republican	7	35	52	6	100	(205)

“Regardless of how you feel about the job he is doing, do you think that McGreevey generally makes good choices in the day to day matters he deals with or does he seem to make a lot of mistakes in his day to day life as governor?” [G5]

	<u>Makes good choices</u>	<u>Makes mistakes</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004	40%	34%	7%	19%	100%	(800)
All Adults						
Registered Voters	41%	36%	7%	17%	101%	(624)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>						
--Democrat	52	22	9	17	100	(266)
--Independent	37	39	8	17	101	(258)
--Republican	28	50	3	18	99	(183)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>						
September 2003	41%	30%	7%	22%	100%	(802)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>						
--Democrat	50	25	7	18	100	(285)
--Independent	33	32	9	26	100	(212)
--Republican	35	37	8	20	100	(195)

“How much political corruption would you say there is in New Jersey – a lot, some, only a little, or none at all?” [C1]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Only a little</u>	<u>None at all</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004							
All Adults	45%	31%	12%	2%	10%	100%	(800)
Registered Voters	47%	32%	11%	2%	9%	101%	(624)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
--Democrat	42	30	14	2	12	100	(266)
--Independent	55	29	12	1	3	100	(258)
--Republican	43	33	14	2	8	100	(183)
PAST SURVEYS							
January 2004							
All Adults	34%	45%	11%	3%	7%	100%	(904)
Registered Voters	37	45	10	1	7	100	(823)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
--Democrat	29	51	10	4	7	101	(289)
--Independent	36	46	12	1	5	100	(295)
--Republican	32	45	11	5	7	100	(214)
February 2003							
All Adults	38	39	14	1	7	99	(802)
Registered Voters	41	40	13	1	6	101	(630)
June 2002							
All Adults	33	51	8	1	7	100	(801)
Registered Voters	34	51	8	--	7	100	(626)

“Would you say there is more or less political corruption in New Jersey today than there was five years ago, or is it about the same?” [C2]

	<u>More today</u>	<u>Less today</u>	<u>About the same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004						
All Adults	25%	11%	51%	14%	101%	(800)
Registered Voters	24%	10%	54%	12%	100%	(624)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>						
--Democrat	26	14	44	16	100	(266)
--Independent	23	10	56	11	100	(258)
--Republican	29	4	57	10	100	(183)

“Have you read or heard of any political corruption cases in New Jersey in the past year, or not? [IF “YES:”] How much have you read or heard about this – a lot, some, or only a little?” [C3]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Only a little</u>	<u>None at all</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August 2004							
All Adults	22%	24%	10%	40%	4%	100%	(800)
Registered Voters	24%	26%	10%	36%	4%	100%	(624)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
--Democrat	23	20	12	41	4	100	(266)
--Independent	24	30	9	34	3	100	(258)
--Republican	23	26	9	40	2	100	(183)

“Can you name anyone involved in any of these cases? Who?” [C4]

AMONG THOSE WHO ARE AWARE OF CORRUPTION CASES:

August 2004	<u>All Adults</u>	<u>Registered Voters</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Party Affiliation</u>	
				<u>Independent</u>	<u>Republican</u>
James McGreevey	29%	29%	15	36	40
Charles Kushner	5%	6%	6	6	5
David Damiano	3%	3%	2	2	4
Robert Torricelli	3%	3%	3	3	3
Robert Janiszewski	5%	6%	5	6	3
James Treffinger	2%	2%	1	2	2
William Watley	1%	1%	--	2	--
Martin Barnes	1%	1%	1	--	3
Joseph Santiago	1%	1%	--	2	1
Wayne Bryant	1%	1%	1	--	2
Sharpe James	1%	1%	1	--	2
Sara Bost	1%	1%	4	--	--
John Bennett	1%	1%	--	1	1
Chris Christie	1%	1%	--	2	--
Other	3%	3%	4	4	1
Don't Know	54%	52	61	48	49
(n)	(488)	(404)	(160)	(175)	(111)

“Do you agree or disagree that Governor McGreevey is committed to reducing political corruption in New Jersey, including controversial practices such as pay-to-play?” [C5]

August 2004	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>(VOL) Not an issue</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
All Adults	40%	36%	2%	23%	101%	(800)
Registered Voters	38%	39%	2%	21%	100%	(624)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>						
--Democrat	53	22	1	24	100	(266)
--Independent	35	43	2	19	99	(258)
--Republican	29	49	2	20	100	(183)
<i>Amount of Corruption in NJ</i>						
--A lot	30	50	1	20	101	(358)
--Not a lot	52	26	3	19	100	(367)