

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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McGREEVEY, WE HARDLY KNEW YE

It's been four weeks since James McGreevey shocked New Jersey with the announcement that he is gay and will resign his office on November 15. And in that time, little has changed in public attitudes toward the Governor and his decision.

A *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* conducted over Labor Day weekend found that New Jersey voters remain divided on whether this issue – or at least what they know of it – necessitates McGreevey's resignation. Currently, 48 percent say he should have resigned because of his affair with Golan Cipel compared to 44 percent who feel the Governor should have served out his term. This is almost identical to the 44-44 percent split registered immediately following his August 12 announcement.

As in last month's poll, Democrats are more likely to think he should stick it out (55%) while Republicans are adamant that he should go (70%). Independent voters are split, with 45 percent saying that McGreevey's resignation is justified and 47 percent saying there is no need to leave office based on what they have heard of the issue.

The Governor's approval rating has also changed little since his announcement. Currently, 46 percent of voters approve of the job James McGreevey is doing compared to 42 percent who disapprove. One month ago, this split stood at a nearly identical 45-42 percent among the state's registered voters.

"New Jersey is in a holding pattern over the Governor's resignation," observed Patrick Murray, acting director of the poll. "When we polled voters in the days following his announcement, most expected that more would come of this story. Well, there's been no lawsuit and no more significant allegations. New Jersey is still waiting for the other shoe to drop."

New Jersey also remains ambivalent in its personal view of McGreevey. Thirty-eight percent have a favorable impression of him – up 3 points from mid-August – compared to 42

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percent who view McGreevey unfavorably – which is up 6 percentage points.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* was conducted with 738 registered voters by telephone from September 3 to 7. The poll has a margin of error of ± 3.7 percentage points.

Registered voters in the Garden State continue to be split on whether the Governor should have left in time to hold a special election – 46 percent say he should have resigned by September 3rd while 42 percent are comfortable with his decision to let an acting governor finish out his term.

Speaking of the acting governor, only 1-in-4 voters (27%) can name Richard Codey as the person who will step into McGreevey's shoes come November 15. Another 39 percent recognize the name when they hear it, but 34 percent say they have never heard of the man who will lead the state in two months time.

In a poll taken in January 2001 when former governor Christie Whitman was preparing to step down in order to join the Bush administration, a similar number of voters either named (31%) or had heard of (34%) then-incoming acting governor Donald DiFrancesco.

“This will be the second time in less than four years when the acting governor provision of the state constitution will be activated,” remarked Murray. “And it doesn't seem that New Jerseyans have digested the civics lesson.”

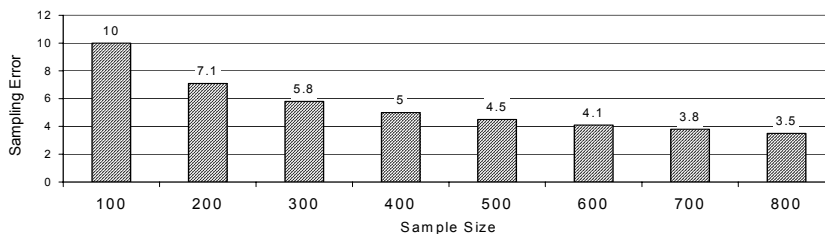
Only 22 percent of New Jersey voters know that the senate president becomes acting governor, although another 7 percent do realize that it is a senator who steps in when a governor resigns mid-term. However, 5 percent of voters are under the mistaken impression that the state has a lieutenant governor. Fully 61 percent of Garden State voters won't even hazard a guess as to the title now held by the person who will become governor.

By virtue of being the only statewide elected official, New Jersey's governor is one of the most powerful chief executives in the country. Recent developments have raised the debate over whether there should be more statewide elected offices. Proponents of this idea say having more offices elected directly by the people will ensure a smooth transition of power and provide a check on the governor's power. Those opposed to the idea believe it will cost the taxpayers too much money and will make it harder for the governor to be effective.

The poll asked whether New Jersey should have five different elected offices. Two-in-three Garden State voters feel that we should have an elected lieutenant governor (68%), elected public auditor (66%) and elected attorney general (64%). Just over half favor the idea of having an elected public auditor (56%) and elected Supreme Court (56%). Support for having these elected offices comes from similar proportions of Democrats, Republicans and independents.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP148-3) September 13, 2004

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted from September 3 to 7 with a scientifically selected random sample of 738 New Jersey registered voters 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 ± 3.7 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 46.3 and 53.7 percent (50 ± 3.7) 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>
September 2004 Registered Voters	46%	42%	11%	99%	(738)
<u>Party Affiliation</u>					
--Democrat	64	25	12	101	(256)
--Independent	45	45	11	101	(214)
--Republican	22	71	7	100	(201)
<u>Gender</u>					
--Male	42	45	13	100	(338)
--Female	50	40	10	100	(400)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>					
August 12-13, 2004	45%	42%	14%	101%	(317)
July 30-August 4, 2004	43	44	13	100	(624)
January 2004	37	49	15	101	(823)
September 2003	39	42	19	100	(658)
May 2003	42	46	12	100	(806)
February 2003	33	49	18	100	(630)
September 2002	45	35	20	100	(622)
June 2002	55	26	20	101	(626)
March 2002	45	23	32	100	(645)

“Is your general impression of McGreevey favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion about him?” [G2]

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2004 Registered Voters	38%	42%	21%	101%	(738)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	54	25	21	100	(256)
--Independent	35	44	20	99	(214)
--Republican	15	69	15	99	(201)
<i>Gender</i>					
--Male	34	45	21	100	(338)
--Female	41	39	20	100	(400)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>					
August 12-13, 2004	35%	36%	28%	99%	(317)
July 30-August 4, 2004	37	37	25	99	(624)
January 2004	38	47	15	100	(823)
February 2003	31	34	34	99	(630)
March 2002	52	21	27	100	(645)

“Last month, the Governor also announced that he will resign from office on November 15 because of an affair he had with another man. Based on what you know or have heard, should he have resigned or should he have served out his term in office?” [G3]

	<u>Should have resigned</u>	<u>Serve out term</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2004 Registered Voters	48%	44%	8%	100%	(738)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	39	55	6	100	(256)
--Independent	45	47	8	100	(214)
--Republican	70	25	5	100	(201)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>					
August 12-13, 2004 Registered Voters	44%	44%	12%	100%	(317)

“Can you name the person who will take over as Acting Governor in November?” [G4]

“His name is Richard Codey. Have you heard of him or not?” [G5]

	Can Name Codey	Heard of Codey	Never heard of Codey	Total	(n)
September 2004 Registered Voters	27%	39%	34%	100%	(738)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	28	40	33	101	(256)
--Independent	31	42	27	100	(214)
--Republican	29	37	34	100	(201)
<i>Region</i>					
--North	31	39	30	100	(331)
--Central	24	41	36	101	(182)
--South	24	37	38	99	(217)
PAST SURVEYS					
-- January 2001 Donald DiFrancesco *	31%	34%	35%	100%	(649)

* Poll taken before Governor Whitman left office to head the EPA.

“Can you name the office he currently holds?” [G6]

	Senate President	Lieutenant Governor	State Senator	Other	No/Don't Know	Total	(n)
September 2004 Registered Voters	22%	5%	7%	6%	61%	101%	(738)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
--Democrat	22	3	8	4	63	100	(256)
--Independent	27	5	7	7	54	100	(214)
--Republican	20	7	6	10	57	100	(201)
<i>Region</i>							
--North	23	4	9	5	60	101	(331)
--Central	22	7	6	6	59	100	(182)
--South	20	3	6	7	64	100	(217)

“If McGreevey had resigned by September 3rd there would have been a special election for Governor this November. Do you think he should have resigned immediately so we could elect a new Governor to take over in January or do you think it is better that the Senate President serve as Acting Governor until next year's regular election?” [G7]

	Resign immediately	Better to wait	Don't Know	Total	(n)
September 2004 Registered Voters	46%	42%	12%	100%	(738)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	29	59	11	99	(256)
--Independent	48	44	8	100	(214)
--Republican	75	16	8	99	(201)
PAST SURVEYS					
August 12-13, 2004	44%	45%	11%	100%	(317)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	27	64	10	101	(120)
--Independent	41	48	11	100	(87)
--Republican	84	12	4	100	(76)

“Currently, the only elected state official in New Jersey is the Governor. Some people say New Jersey should directly elect other state officials as a way to ensure a smooth transition of power and to provide a check on the governor’s power. Others oppose this because they feel it will cost the taxpayers money and will make it harder for the governor to be effective. Taking all this into account, please tell me whether you think New Jersey should or should not have the following elected offices [READ ITEM]” [G8]

September 2004 Registered Voters	<u>Should Have</u>	<u>Should Not Have</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>Elected Lieutenant Governor</u>	68%	23%	9%	100%	(738)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	67	26	7	100	(256)
--Independent	68	24	8	100	(214)
--Republican	75	19	6	100	(201)
<u>Elected Attorney General</u>	64%	26%	10%	100%	(738)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	65	27	9	101	(256)
--Independent	64	27	9	100	(214)
--Republican	65	26	8	99	(201)
<u>Elected Public Auditor who oversees government spending</u>	66%	24%	10%	100%	(738)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	60	32	8	100	(256)
--Independent	65	24	11	100	(214)
--Republican	76	15	9	100	(201)
<u>Elected Public Advocate who can sue the government on behalf of the public</u>	56%	33%	11%	100%	(738)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	59	32	9	100	(256)
--Independent	56	32	12	100	(214)
--Republican	51	38	11	100	(201)
<u>Elected Supreme Court</u>	56%	34%	10%	100%	(738)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	60	32	8	100	(256)
--Independent	49	43	8	100	(214)
--Republican	55	34	10	99	(201)