

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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(Release 152-2)

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A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo appears in the Monday, February 7, 2005 Star-Ledger. We ask users to attribute this copyrighted information to "The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll."

DID CODEY BACK OUT TOO SOON?

*Voters express strong approval of Codey's performance and regret
that he's out of the running*

Even though Acting Governor Richard Codey has decided not to enter the 2005 gubernatorial race, his impressive standing among voters of all political stripes prompts the question: what might have been?

A *Star-Ledger/Eagleton Rutgers Poll* conducted after Codey's announcement on January 31 reveals that Codey's "honeymoon" among registered voters in New Jersey is still in full swing. Nearly eight in ten (76 percent) say they approve of the job he is doing as acting governor, while just 8 percent express disapproval. Codey's job performance ratings easily top any of those recorded by Governor Jim McGreevey. And, although directly comparable approval measures are not available, Codey's job performance ratings appear to rival those of governors Donald DiFrancesco, Christie Whitman, Jim Florio, and Tom Kean.

Codey also compares favorably to fellow Democrat Jon Corzine, the current frontrunner in the 2005 gubernatorial race. Although both men have similar favorability scores (54 percent for Codey and 53 percent for Corzine), Codey has better "strongly favorable" ratings than Corzine (24 percent to 19 percent). Codey also has significantly lower unfavorable ratings than Corzine – 22 percent rate Corzine either "somewhat" or "very" unfavorably, while only 8 views Codey unfavorably.

| | <u>Corzine</u> | <u>Codey</u> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Very favorable | 19% | 24% |
| Somewhat favorable | 33% | 30% |
| Somewhat unfavorable | 11% | 6% |
| Very unfavorable | 11% | 2% |
| Not heard of | 9% | 17% |
| No opinion | 15% | 17% |
| DK/RF | 2% | 4% |

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

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Jeffrey Levine, director of the poll, commented, “Codey’s job approval and favorability numbers indicate that he would have been a formidable gubernatorial candidate. At this point, when voters look at Codey, most just see the positive. There hasn’t been time for many negative impressions to form.”

The survey was conducted with a scientific sample of 678 registered voters interviewed by telephone between February 1 and 4, 2005. The sampling error for the poll is ± 3.8 percentage points.

Codey’s appeal extends far beyond his natural Democratic political base. In fact, he’s viewed more positively by Independents and Republicans than by Democrats: 82 percent of Independents, 76 percent of Republicans, and 72 percent of Democrats approve of how Codey is handling his job as governor. Similarly, 61 percent of Independents, 53 percent of Republicans, and 52 percent of Democrats report a favorable opinion of Codey.

In contrast, Corzine’s support is organized along more traditional lines. He receives the highest job approval and favorability ratings from Democrats and the lowest from Republicans, with Independents somewhere in the middle.

Levine noted, “The partisan basis of Codey’s and Corzine’s appeal is very telling. While Codey has broader appeal, a finding that bodes well for a general election contest, Corzine has the edge among Democratic identifiers, the core segment of a Democratic primary electorate. In this context, it looks as though Codey may have been better positioned for a general election campaign than a primary.”

Voters seem to agree. When asked who would have won a primary contest between Codey and Corzine, 66 percent of voters identify Corzine as the probable winner.

Still, most prefer that Codey would have given the race a shot. A little more than half (52 percent) say they would have liked to see Codey run, while just 28 percent said they wouldn’t (the remaining 20 percent declined to offer an opinion). Republicans (58 percent) and Independents (57 percent) are most in favor of a Codey run, while Democrats (44 percent) are least enthusiastic.

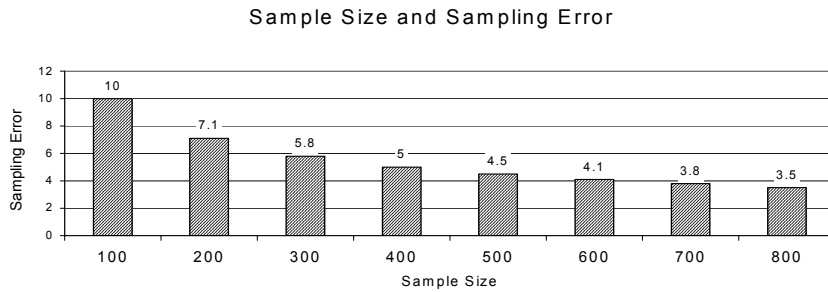
Levine commented, “It looks like there may be some strategic thinking on the part of voters regarding Codey’s potential candidacy. A competitive Democratic primary is seen as most desirable among Republican partisans, those most likely to prefer a weakened Democrat in the general election campaign. Democratic partisans prefer a smoother process, one more likely to produce a stronger Democratic candidate.”

Codey's appeal appears to be unaffected by his recent battle with 101.5 FM radio host Craig Carton. Among the 47 percent of voters who say they heard "a lot" or "something" about the incident, the vast majority (80 percent) believes that Carton was at fault, while just 10 percent put the blame on Codey. This finding extends to all voter segments, including Republicans and self-identified conservatives: 77 percent of Republicans and 84 percent of conservatives believe that Carton is more at fault than Codey.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP 152-2) February 7, 2005

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted from February 1 to 4 with a scientifically selected random sample of 802 New Jersey adults. This sample yielded 678 adult residents registered to vote in New Jersey. Most of the figures in this release are based on this voter sample size. This release also includes results for a sub-sample of registered voters who are considered likely to vote in a Democratic primary, based on their partisan identification and past voting history.

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 ± 3.8 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 gubernatorial candidate, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.2 and 53.8 percent (50 ± 3.8) 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 referred to in this release are as follows:

“Please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the following people. If you haven’t heard of them or don’t have an opinion of them, just tell me and we’ll move on.” (KF2-KF8)

| | <u>Favorable</u> | <u>Unfavorable</u> | <u>Not Heard of</u> | <u>No opinion</u> | <u>DK/ RF</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| February, 2005 | | | | | | |
| RICHARD CODEY | | | | | | |
| Registered Voters | 54% | 8% | 17% | 17% | 4% | (678) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | | | |
| Democrat | 52 | 7 | 19 | 16 | 5 | (246) |
| Independent | 61 | 3 | 15 | 18 | 2 | (207) |
| Republican | 53 | 16 | 11 | 16 | 4 | (152) |
| JOHN CORZINE | | | | | | |
| Registered Voters | 53% | 22% | 9% | 15% | 2% | (678) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | | | |
| Democrat | 68 | 8 | 9 | 13 | 2 | (246) |
| Independent | 49 | 24 | 8 | 17 | 2 | (207) |
| Republican | 38 | 43 | 5 | 13 | 1 | (152) |
| JIM MCGREEVEY | | | | | | |
| Registered Voters | 41% | 49% | 1% | 8% | 1% | (678) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | | | |
| Democrat | 58 | 35 | * | 6 | 1 | (246) |
| Independent | 35 | 52 | 1 | 12 | 1 | (207) |
| Republican | 18 | 74 | 1 | 7 | 1 | (152) |

“As you may know, Richard Codey announced that he is not going to run in the Democratic primary against Jon Corzine. Would you have liked to see Codey run against Corzine, or not?” (PE2)

| | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>DK/RF</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|--|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| February 2005 Registered Voters | 52% | 28% | 20% | (678) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | |
| --Democrat | 44 | 35 | 21 | (246) |
| --Independent | 57 | 24 | 19 | (207) |
| --Republican | 58 | 27 | 15 | (152) |
| <u>Gender</u> | | | | |
| --Male | 53 | 30 | 17 | (323) |
| --Female | 51 | 27 | 23 | (355) |
| <u>Race</u> | | | | |
| --White | 55 | 27 | 18 | (540) |
| --Black & Hispanic | 45 | 32 | 23 | (100) |
| <u>Ideology</u> | | | | |
| --Liberal | 50 | 24 | 26 | (132) |
| --Moderate | 50 | 31 | 19 | (382) |
| --Conservative | 59 | 28 | 13 | (144) |
| <u>Age</u> | | | | |
| --18-29 | 38 | 37 | 25 | (71) |
| --30-49 | 47 | 29 | 24 | (272) |
| --50-64 | 57 | 27 | 15 | (197) |
| --65+ | 63 | 23 | 14 | (119) |
| <u>Region of State</u> | | | | |
| --North | 52 | 28 | 20 | (307) |
| --Central | 51 | 29 | 19 | (171) |
| --South | 54 | 26 | 20 | (179) |

[ONLY DEMOCRATS, INDEPENDENTS WHO LEAN DEMOCRATIC, OR THOSE WHO TYPICALLY VOTE IN DEMOCRATIC PRIMARIES]

| | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>DK/RF</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|--|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| February 2005 Registered Voters | 48% | 32% | 21% | (383) |

“If Richard Codey had run against Jon Corzine in the Democratic primary, who do you think would have been most likely to win the race, (ROTATE) Codey or Corzine?” (PE3)

| | <u>Codey</u> | <u>Corzine</u> | <u>DK/RF</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|--|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| February 2005 Registered Voters | 18% | 66% | 16% | (678) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | |
| --Democrat | 18 | 65 | 17 | (246) |
| --Independent | 16 | 68 | 16 | (207) |
| --Republican | 18 | 70 | 11 | (152) |
| <u>Gender</u> | | | | |
| --Male | 15 | 73 | 12 | (323) |
| --Female | 20 | 59 | 20 | (355) |
| <u>Race</u> | | | | |
| --White | 18 | 68 | 14 | (540) |
| --Black & Hispanic | 20 | 62 | 18 | (100) |
| <u>Ideology</u> | | | | |
| --Liberal | 17 | 66 | 17 | (132) |
| --Moderate | 18 | 65 | 17 | (382) |
| --Conservative | 20 | 69 | 10 | (144) |
| <u>Age</u> | | | | |
| --18-29 | 14 | 58 | 28 | (71) |
| --30-49 | 17 | 67 | 16 | (272) |
| --50-64 | 17 | 68 | 15 | (197) |
| --65+ | 25 | 66 | 9 | (119) |
| <u>Region of State</u> | | | | |
| --North | 16 | 67 | 17 | (307) |
| --Central | 23 | 61 | 15 | (171) |
| --South | 16 | 69 | 15 | (179) |

[ONLY DEMOCRATS, INDEPENDENTS WHO LEAN DEMOCRATIC, OR THOSE WHO TYPICALLY VOTE IN DEMOCRATIC PRIMARIES]

| | <u>Codey</u> | <u>Corzine</u> | <u>DK/RF</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|--|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| February 2005 Registered Voters | 17% | 66% | 17% | (383) |

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way Jon Corzine is handling his job as Senator?” (J1)

| | <u>Approve</u> | <u>Disapprove</u> | <u>DK/RF</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|--|----------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| February 2005 Registered Voters | 61% | 18% | 21% | (678) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | |
| --Democrat | 80 | 6 | 15 | (246) |
| --Independent | 58 | 18 | 24 | (207) |
| --Republican | 37 | 38 | 25 | (152) |
| <u>Gender</u> | | | | |
| --Male | 61 | 22 | 17 | (323) |
| --Female | 61 | 15 | 24 | (355) |
| <u>Age</u> | | | | |
| --18-29 | 69 | 13 | 18 | (71) |
| --30-49 | 63 | 16 | 21 | (272) |
| --50-64 | 61 | 20 | 19 | (197) |
| --65+ | 53 | 24 | 23 | (119) |
| <u>Region of State</u> | | | | |
| --North | 64 | 16 | 21 | (307) |
| --Central | 58 | 21 | 20 | (171) |
| --South | 59 | 21 | 20 | (179) |

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way Richard Codey is handling his job as acting governor?” (J3)

| | <u>Approve</u> | <u>Disapprove</u> | <u>DK/RF</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|--|----------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| February 2005 Registered Voters | 76% | 8% | 17% | (678) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | |
| --Democrat | 72 | 9 | 18 | (246) |
| --Independent | 82 | 4 | 14 | (207) |
| --Republican | 76 | 10 | 14 | (152) |
| <u>Gender</u> | | | | |
| --Male | 75 | 8 | 16 | (323) |
| --Female | 76 | 7 | 17 | (355) |
| <u>Race</u> | | | | |
| --White | 80 | 6 | 14 | (540) |
| --Black & Hispanic | 61 | 14 | 25 | (100) |
| <u>Ideology</u> | | | | |
| --Liberal | 77 | 7 | 17 | (132) |
| --Moderate | 76 | 8 | 16 | (382) |
| --Conservative | 78 | 8 | 13 | (144) |
| <u>Age</u> | | | | |
| --18-29 | 62 | 14 | 24 | (71) |
| --30-49 | 73 | 10 | 17 | (272) |
| --50-64 | 81 | 5 | 15 | (197) |
| --65+ | 84 | 3 | 13 | (119) |
| <u>Region of State</u> | | | | |
| --North | 75 | 8 | 17 | (307) |
| --Central | 77 | 6 | 16 | (171) |
| --South | 78 | 8 | 13 | (179) |
| <u>Past governor approval ratings</u> | | | | |
| --McGreevey (Feb./March 2002) | 45% | 23% | 32% | (645) |
| --McGreevey (Jan./Feb 2003) | 33% | 49% | 18% | (630) |
| --McGreevey (August 2004) | 45% | 42% | 14% | (317) |

“How much have you heard or read about the argument between Acting Governor Richard Codey and New Jersey 101.5 FM radio host Craig Carton – a lot, some, not much, or nothing at all?” (F1)

| | <u>A lot</u> | <u>Some</u> | <u>Not much</u> | <u>Nothing at all</u> | <u>DK/RF</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|--|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| February 2005 Registered Voters | 22% | 25% | 13% | 39% | 1% | (678) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | | | |
| --Democrat | 20 | 23 | 12 | 45 | 1 | (246) |
| --Independent | 27 | 28 | 15 | 30 | 1 | (207) |
| --Republican | 21 | 27 | 9 | 42 | 1 | (152) |
| <u>Gender</u> | | | | | | |
| --Male | 20 | 26 | 14 | 38 | 1 | (323) |
| --Female | 24 | 25 | 12 | 39 | 1 | (355) |
| <u>Race</u> | | | | | | |
| --White | 25 | 27 | 13 | 34 | 1 | (540) |
| --Black & Hispanic | 8 | 24 | 16 | 52 | * | (100) |
| <u>Ideology</u> | | | | | | |
| --Liberal | 23 | 25 | 11 | 39 | 2 | (132) |
| --Moderate | 23 | 26 | 14 | 37 | 1 | (382) |
| --Conservative | 22 | 25 | 13 | 41 | * | (144) |
| <u>Age</u> | | | | | | |
| --18-29 | 6 | 21 | 14 | 59 | * | (71) |
| --30-49 | 24 | 28 | 14 | 35 | * | (272) |
| --50-64 | 27 | 25 | 10 | 36 | 2 | (197) |
| --65+ | 22 | 25 | 15 | 37 | 1 | (119) |
| <u>Region of State</u> | | | | | | |
| --North | 17 | 26 | 15 | 41 | 1 | (307) |
| --Central | 35 | 25 | 10 | 30 | 1 | (171) |
| --South | 20 | 25 | 12 | 42 | 1 | (179) |

[ONLY ASKED IF HEARD OF CODEY-CARTON ARGUMENT]

“Based on what you’ve heard about the argument, which person – (ROTATE) Codey or Carton do you think is most at fault?” (F2)

| | <u>Codey</u> | <u>Carton</u> | <u>Both</u> | <u>Neither</u> | <u>DK/RF</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|--|--------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| February 2005 Registered Voters | 10% | 80% | 3% | 2% | 5% | (322) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | | | |
| --Democrat | 10 | 82 | 5 | * | 4 | (104) |
| --Independent | 8 | 85 | 1 | 3 | 4 | (112) |
| --Republican | 14 | 77 | 5 | 3 | 1 | (73) |
| <u>Gender</u> | | | | | | |
| --Male | 12 | 81 | 4 | 1 | 2 | (150) |
| --Female | 8 | 80 | 3 | 2 | 7 | (172) |
| <u>Race</u> | | | | | | |
| --White | 10 | 80 | 4 | 2 | 4 | (283) |
| --Black & Hispanic | 9 | 78 | 6 | * | 6 | (32) |
| <u>Ideology</u> | | | | | | |
| --Liberal | 9 | 83 | 2 | * | 6 | (64) |
| --Moderate | 11 | 78 | 4 | 3 | 5 | (186) |
| --Conservative | 9 | 84 | 4 | 1 | 1 | (67) |
| <u>Age</u> | | | | | | |
| --18-29 | 16 | 63 | 16 | * | 5 | (19) |
| --30-49 | 12 | 74 | 3 | 4 | 8 | (140) |
| --50-64 | 8 | 87 | 3 | * | 2 | (103) |
| --65+ | 7 | 89 | * | 2 | 2 | (56) |
| <u>Region of State</u> | | | | | | |
| --North | 6 | 86 | 4 | 2 | 2 | (133) |
| --Central | 13 | 77 | 3 | 2 | 5 | (102) |
| --South | 12 | 73 | 4 | 2 | 9 | (81) |

“How much would you say you rely on what you hear on 101.5 FM for information about elected officials?” (F3)

| | <u>A great deal</u> | <u>Somewhat</u> | <u>Not very much</u> | <u>Not at all</u> | <u>DK/RF</u> | <u>(n)</u> |
|--|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| February 2005 Registered Voters | 4% | 15% | 16% | 60% | 4% | (678) |
| <u>Party ID</u> | | | | | | |
| --Democrat | 4 | 17 | 16 | 59 | 4 | (246) |
| --Independent | 3 | 14 | 17 | 61 | 5 | (207) |
| --Republican | 5 | 14 | 14 | 64 | 4 | (152) |
| <u>Gender</u> | | | | | | |
| --Male | 5 | 13 | 14 | 64 | 4 | (323) |
| --Female | 3 | 18 | 19 | 55 | 5 | (355) |
| <u>Race</u> | | | | | | |
| --White | 4 | 16 | 17 | 61 | 3 | (540) |
| --Black & Hispanic | 4 | 18 | 19 | 51 | 8 | (100) |
| <u>Ideology</u> | | | | | | |
| --Liberal | 2 | 10 | 18 | 64 | 6 | (132) |
| --Moderate | 5 | 18 | 18 | 57 | 3 | (382) |
| --Conservative | 5 | 15 | 12 | 65 | 3 | (144) |
| <u>Age</u> | | | | | | |
| --18-29 | 4 | 13 | 14 | 65 | 4 | (71) |
| --30-49 | 5 | 17 | 17 | 57 | 4 | (272) |
| --50-64 | 4 | 14 | 17 | 62 | 3 | (197) |
| --65+ | 3 | 17 | 17 | 56 | 7 | (119) |
| <u>Region of State</u> | | | | | | |
| --North | 1 | 10 | 14 | 70 | 5 | (307) |
| --Central | 5 | 25 | 20 | 49 | 2 | (171) |
| --South | 9 | 15 | 17 | 54 | 4 | (179) |