

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

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## UNEASE OVER THE WAR ON TERRORISM

### *Assessment of War, Bush Approval Numbers Decline*

Four years after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, a majority of New Jersey residents say the United States is losing the war on terrorism and only one in five say that the federal government will respond effectively if a disaster strikes New Jersey. At the same time, President Bush's job approval rating in New Jersey has reached an all-time low, according to the latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*.

Fifty-three percent of those surveyed said the war on terrorism has been a failure, up 16 points from September 2003. Only 28 percent said the war has been a success, down from 35 percent two years ago. At the same time, President Bush's job approval rating has fallen to 33 percent among all adults, and 35 percent among registered voters. Forty-six percent of registered voters had approved of the job Bush was doing in February. Bush's lowest job approval in the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* was 43 percent among registered voters in January 2001, at the start of his presidency.

"This lowest point for Bush is consistent with recent national polls," said Murray Edelman, director of the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*. "It comes in the context of high gas prices, increasing casualties in Iraq, and, of course, the very visible mismanagement of the hurricane disaster seen on television."

The poll found that only one in five people are very confident that the federal government can respond effectively if a disaster were to strike New Jersey. The differences by race are particularly striking, with only 12 percent of non-whites saying they are very confident, compared to 23 percent of whites. Opinion also split along party

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

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lines, with 44 percent of Republicans saying they are very confident, compared to 9 percent of Democrats and 18 percent of Independents.

In terms of the war on terrorism, Democrats were the harshest critics, with 72 percent calling the war a failure, while the figure was 54 percent for Independents. In contrast, only 24 percent of Republicans viewed the war as a failure, and 59 percent called it a success. Nonwhites also were more likely than whites to be critical of the war, with 66 percent of nonwhites and 51 percent of whites saying it has been a failure.

While criticism of the war increased, opinions were relatively stable concerning security and fear of future terrorist attacks. Twenty-six percent feel more secure since September 11<sup>th</sup>, roughly the same as in 2002, when the question was last asked. Thirty-three percent feel less secure, down five points since 2002. In addition, 32 percent believe that it is very likely a terrorist attack will occur in the United States in the next year or two, and 43 percent believe it is somewhat likely. Both figures are virtually unchanged since the question was last asked in 2003.

Sharp differences emerged along party lines, however. Only 14 percent of Democrats feel more secure now than before Sept. 11, 2001, while 42 percent feel less secure. Among Republicans, 49 percent feel more secure, and 20 percent feel less secure.

“While there is a big difference in feelings of security by party identification, it is interesting that there is no difference by party in their belief that a terrorist attack is likely,” Edelman said.

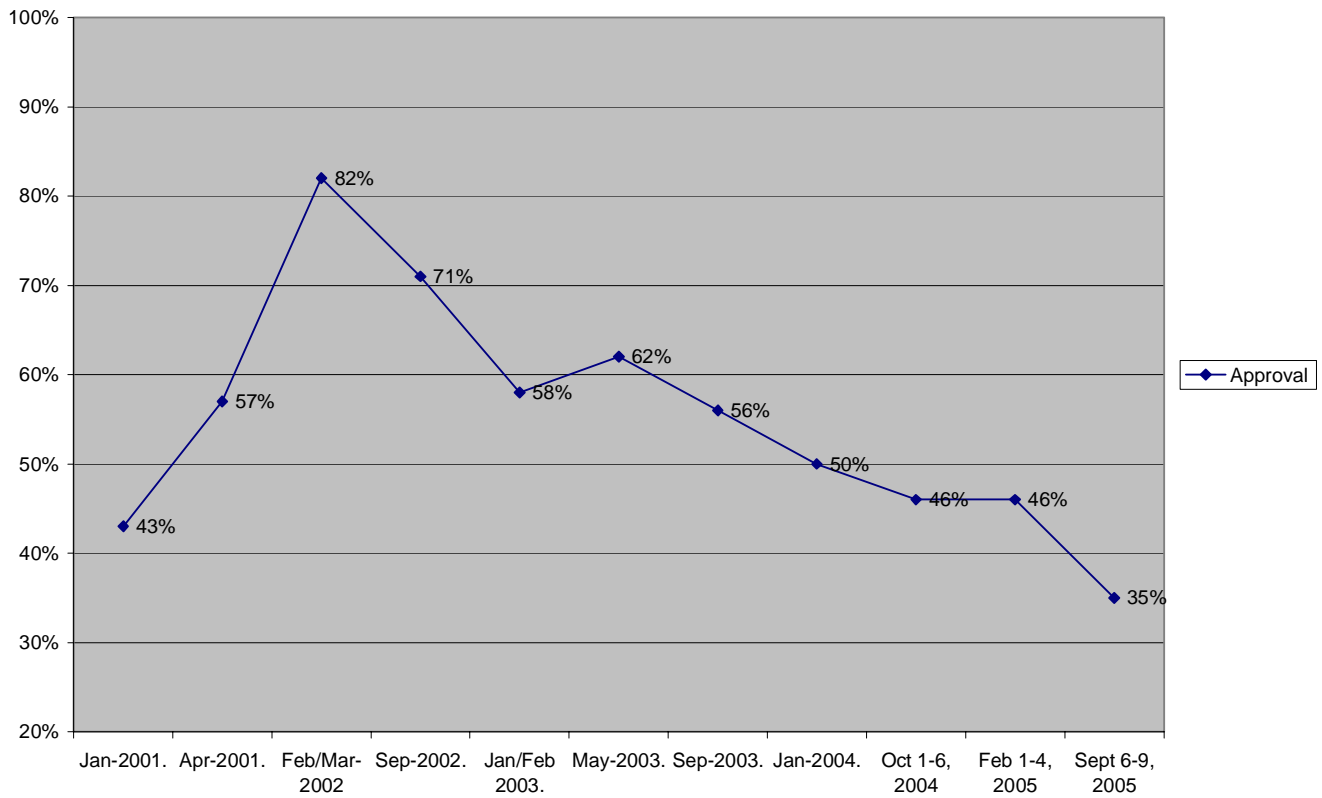
The survey also revealed disagreement over whether the Bush administration has succeeded in making illegal immigration more difficult since the terrorist attacks. More than half of the respondents – 54 percent – said the administration has not succeeded, while 37 percent said the administration has succeeded.

Views about the war on terrorism were strongly related to the president’s job approval ratings. Of those who disapprove of the job the president is doing, 13 percent say the war has been a success, and 71 percent say the war has been a failure. Of those who approve of the job that the president is doing, 60 percent say the war is a success and 25 percent say it has been a failure.

The poll also found partisan shifts in the president’s job approval. Among Democrats, the approval rating dropped 10 percentage points, to 10 percent, from February 2005. Among Independents, approval dropped 16 points since February, to 29

percent. Approval declined among registered Republicans from 88 percent in February to 77 percent.

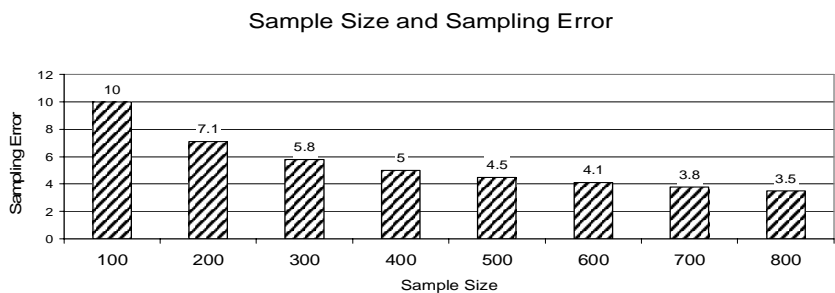
**Approve of the way President Bush is handling his job**



**BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP 155-1) September 11, 2005**

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted from September 6 to 9 with a scientifically selected random sample of 865 New Jersey adults. The random sample of 865 New Jersey adults yielded 673 registered adult residents to vote in New Jersey. Most of the figures in this release are based on the statewide sample of all 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 for the statewide sample of 865 adults is  $\pm 3.3$  percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval, and the sampling error for 673 registered voters is  $\pm 3.8$  percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults were found to feel more secure since the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.2 and 53.8 percent (50 minus or plus 3.8) 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 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:

**Anniversary of Sept. 11 terrorist attacks**

Much has happened over the last four years, with the attacks on the country and the government's reactions. Do you feel more secure than you were before the attacks, less secure, or is there no difference? (T1)

		<u>More secure</u>	<u>Less secure</u>	<u>No difference</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>All Adults</b>		<b>26%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>(865)</b>
Party ID	Democrat	14%	42%	42%	2%	328
	Republican	49%	20%	30%	1%	196
	Independent	23%	32%	44%	1%	208
Race	White	29%	34%	36%	1%	651
	Nonwhite	17%	32%	48%	3%	192
Age	18-29	25%	31%	44%	---	157
	30-49	26%	32%	40%	2%	360
	50-64	30%	33%	34%	2%	170
	65+	22%	35%	40%	3%	173
Education	High school and below	24%	29%	45%	2%	386
	Some college and above	28%	36%	35%	2%	473
Region	North	27%	34%	38%	1%	329
	Central	26%	31%	41%	2%	270
	South	26%	34%	39%	1%	240
Poll 138b		<u>More secure</u>	<u>Less secure</u>	<u>No difference</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>Total</u>
September 2002						
<b>All Adults</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>(804)</b>

How likely do you think it is that another terrorist attack will occur in the United States in the next year or two – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?  
(T2)

		<u>Very likely</u>	<u>Somewhat likely</u>	<u>Not too likely</u>	<u>Not at all likely</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>All Adults</b>		<b>32%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>(865)</b>
Party ID	Democrat	30%	43%	14%	5%	8%	328
	Republican	27%	48%	12%	10%	3%	196
	Independent	35%	42%	10%	5%	8%	208
Race	White	33%	46%	11%	6%	5%	651
	Nonwhite	30%	36%	16%	6%	11%	192
Age	18-29	31%	41%	13%	6%	9%	157
	30-49	32%	46%	12%	6%	5%	360
	50-64	35%	42%	12%	5%	7%	170
	65+	32%	40%	15%	6%	8%	173
Education	High school and below	32%	39%	13%	8%	8%	386
	Some college and above	32%	46%	13%	4%	5%	473
Region	North	35%	40%	15%	6%	5%	329
	Central	30%	43%	12%	7%	9%	270
	South	31%	47%	12%	5%	5%	240
Poll 144		<u>Very likely</u>	<u>Somewhat likely</u>	<u>Not too likely</u>	<u>Not at all likely</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>Total</u>
September 2003							
<b>All Adults</b>		32	41	15	8	5	(401)

In general, has the war on terrorism been a success or a failure? (T3)

		<u>A success</u>	<u>A failure</u>	<u>To soon to tell</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>All Adults</b>		<b>28%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>(865)</b>
Party ID	Democrat	14%	72%	5%	9%	328
	Republican	59%	24%	7%	10%	196
	Independent	27%	54%	8%	11%	208
Race	White	32%	51%	8%	10%	651
	Nonwhite	17%	66%	7%	11%	192
Age	18-29	24%	54%	12%	10%	157
	30-49	30%	56%	5%	9%	360
	50-64	31%	52%	9%	8%	170
	65+	26%	48%	7%	19%	173
Education	High school and below	25%	54%	6%	15%	386
	Some college and above	32%	53%	9%	7%	473
Region	North	30%	53%	6%	11%	329
	Central	26%	54%	10%	10%	270
	South	30%	53%	7%	11%	240
Poll 144				<u>To soon to tell</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>Total</u>
September 2003		<u>A success</u>	<u>A failure</u>			
<b>All Adults</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>(802)</b>

**Cross-tabulation: Sense of security since the attacks (T1) by Bush approval (B1)**

Much has happened over the last four years, with the attacks on the country and the government's reactions. Do you feel more secure than you were before the attacks, less secure, or is there no difference? (T1)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? (B1)

POLL 155 / Sept 2005 - All Adults		Sense of security since the attacks (T1)				
Bush approval (B1)		<u>More</u>	<u>Less</u>	<u>No Difference</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n=865)</u>
<b>Approve</b>		49%	18%	33%	1%	282
<b>Disapprove</b>		12%	42%	43%	2%	501
<b>DK/RF</b>		29%	26%	40%	5%	82

**Cross-tabulation: Likelihood of another terrorist attack (T2) by Bush approval (B1)**

How likely do you think it is that another terrorist attack will occur in the United States in the next year or two – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely? (T2)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? (B1)

POLL 155 / Sept 2005 - All Adults	Likelihood of another terrorist attack					<u>(n=865)</u>
	<u>Very likely</u>	<u>Somewhat likely</u>	<u>Not too likely</u>	<u>Not at all likely</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	
<b>Approve</b>	30%	46%	14%	7%	4%	281
<b>Disapprove</b>	33%	44%	12%	6%	5%	501
<b>DK/RF</b>	34%	31%	12%	1%	22%	82



**Cross-tabulation: War on terrorism (T3) by Bush approval (B1)**

In general, has the war on terrorism been a success or a failure? (T3)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? (B1)

POLL 155 / Sept 2005 - All Adults	War on terrorism				
Bush approval (B1)	<b>A success</b>	<b>A failure</b>	<b>Too soon to tell</b>	<b>DK/RF</b>	<b>(n=865)</b>
<b>Approve</b>	60%	25%	6%	9%	282
<b>Disapprove</b>	13%	71%	7%	9%	501
<b>DK/RF</b>	12%	44%	13%	31%	82

**Bush job approval**

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? (B1)

\*Note: All numbers are based on samples of registered voters – unless otherwise specified.

	<b><u>Approve</u></b>	<b><u>Disapprove</u></b>	<b><u>DK/RF</u></b>	<b><u>(n)</u></b>
Poll 155 / September 2005				
<b>Registered Voters</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>(673)</b>
<i>Party Affiliation</i>				
--Democrat	10%	84%	6%	252
--Republican	77%	17%	6%	165
--Independent	29%	65%	6%	164
<b>All Adults</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>(865)</b>
<i>PAST SURVEYS</i>				
---February 2005	46%	50%	4%	678
<i>Party Affiliation</i>				
--Democrat	20	77	3	(246)
--Republican	88	9	3	(152)
--Independent	45	50	5	(207)
--October 2004	46	49	6	(664)

--January 2004	50	45	6	(679)
--September 2003	56	38	6	(628)
--May 2003	62	31	8	(773)
--Jan/Feb 2003	58	30	12	(301)
--September 2002	71	24	6	(596)
--Feb/Mar 2002	82	15	4	(622)
--April 2001	57	34	9	(606)
--January 2001	43	21	37	(636)

### **Immigration and Sept. 11**

Do you think the Bush administration has succeeded in making it harder for immigrants to enter the United States illegally since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks? (IM1)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>ALL ADULTS</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>865</b>
Party Id				
Democrat	36%	54%	10%	328
Republican	46%	49%	6%	196
Independent	33%	55%	12%	208
Race				
White	33%	58%	10%	651
Nonwhite	51%	42%	7%	192
Age				
18-29	55%	41%	4%	157
30-49	37%	53%	11%	360
50-64	30%	63%	7%	170
65+	26%	59%	16%	173
Region				
North	40%	50%	10%	329
Central	37%	54%	9%	270
South	31%	58%	11%	240
Education				
High school and below	31%	60%	9%	386
Some college and above	41%	49%	10%	473
<b>Registered Voters</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>673</b>

**Cross-tabulation: Immigration (IM1) by Bush approval (B1)**

Do you think the Bush administration has succeeded in making it harder for immigrants to enter the United States illegally since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks? (IM1)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? (B1)

POLL 155 / Sept 2005 – All Adults		Immigration (IM1)			
Bush approval (B1)		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n=865)</u>
	<b>Approve</b>	48%	45%	7%	282
	<b>Disapprove</b>	32%	59%	9%	502
	<b>DK/RF</b>	26%	49%	25%	81

**Cross-tabulation: Immigration (IM1) by Sense of security since the attacks (T1)**

Do you think the Bush administration has succeeded in making it harder for immigrants to enter the United States illegally since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks? (IM1)

Much has happened over the last four years, with the attacks on the country and the government's reactions. Do you feel more secure than you were before the attacks, less secure, or is there no difference? (T1)

POLL 155 / Sept 2005 – All Adults		Immigration (IM1)			
Sense of security since the attacks (T1)		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n=865)</u>
	<b>More secure</b>	46%	46%	8%	224
	<b>Less secure</b>	33%	58%	10%	284
	<b>No difference</b>	33%	56%	11%	341
	<b>DK/RF</b>	25%	31%	44%	16

**Cross-tabulation: Immigration (IM1) by Likelihood of another terrorist attack (T2)**

Do you think the Bush administration has succeeded in making it harder for immigrants to enter the United States illegally since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks? (IM1)

How likely do you think it is that another terrorist attack will occur in the United States in the next year or two – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely? (T2)

POLL 155 / Sept 2005 - All Adults		Immigration (IM1)			
Likelihood of another terrorist attack (T2)		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n=865)</u>
	<b>Very likely</b>	29%	63%	7%	276
	<b>Somewhat likely</b>	38%	52%	10%	372
	<b>Not too likely</b>	46%	46%	8%	111
	<b>Not at all likely</b>	53%	41%	6%	51
	<b>DK/RF</b>	30%	40%	30%	57

**Cross-tabulation: Immigration (IM1) by War on terrorism (T3)**

Do you think the Bush administration has succeeded in making it harder for immigrants to enter the United States illegally since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks? (IM1)

In general, has the war on terrorism been a success or a failure? (T3)

POLL 155 / Sept 2005 - All Adults		Immigration (IM1)			
War on terrorism (T3)		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n=865)</u>
	<b>Success</b>	49%	44%	7%	244
	<b>Failure</b>	31%	61%	8%	460
	<b>Too soon to tell</b>	38%	51%	11%	65
	<b>DK/RF</b>	32%	44%	24%	94

**Disaster Response**

How confident are you that the federal government will respond effectively if a disaster strikes New Jersey? (DR1)

		<u>Very confident</u>	<u>Somewhat confident</u>	<u>Not confident at all</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
POLL 155 / Sept 2005						
<b>All Adults</b>		<b>21%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>(865)</b>
Party Id						
	Democrat	9%	36%	49%	6%	328
	Republican	44%	34%	19%	3%	196
	Independent	18%	42%	37%	3%	208
Race						
	White	23%	36%	37%	4%	651
	Nonwhite	12%	39%	42%	7%	192
Age						
	18-29	21%	34%	38%	8%	157
	30-49	20%	43%	34%	4%	360
	50-64	19%	34%	45%	3%	170
	65+	24%	29%	39%	7%	173
Education						
	High school and below	20%	38%	35%	7%	386
	Some college and above	22%	35%	40%	4%	473
Region						
	North	21%	36%	40%	3%	329
	Central	17%	40%	35%	8%	270
	South	23%	34%	40%	4%	240

**Cross-tabulation: Disaster Response (DR1) by Bush approval (B1)**

How confident are you that the federal government will respond effectively if a disaster strikes New Jersey? (DR1)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? (B1)

POLL 155 / Sept 2005 - All Adults

Disaster Response (DR1)

Bush approval (B1)	Disaster Response (DR1)			DK/RF	(n=865)
	<u>Very confident</u>	<u>Somewhat confident</u>	<u>Not confident at all</u>		
<b>Approve</b>	49%	37%	11%	4%	282
<b>Disapprove</b>	6%	35%	56%	3%	502
<b>DK/RF</b>	15%	45%	18%	22%	82