

# The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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## **BUSH, MCGREEVEY CAST SHADOWS IN GUBERNATORIAL RACE**

*Corzine, Forrester Manage to Link Each Other to Polarizing Figures*

The gubernatorial candidates' attempts to link each other to polarizing political figures appears to be paying off, with Democrat Jon Corzine benefiting to a greater extent than Republican Doug Forrester, according to the latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*.

Recent campaign ads have attempted to link Corzine to former Gov. James McGreevey and Forrester to President George W. Bush. "The messages are resonating with sizable numbers of likely voters," Poll Director Murray Edelman said.

Sixty-seven percent of likely voters in the latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*, conducted Oct. 3-6, say they associate Forrester with Bush "very closely" or "somewhat closely." Only 56 percent of likely voters say the same about Corzine and McGreevey.

The ads coincide with a historically low job approval rating for Bush in New Jersey. Thirty-six percent of likely voters approved of Bush's job performance in the latest poll, and the figures were 35 percent for registered voters and 33 percent for all adults. Bush's approval ratings in New Jersey have shifted little since September, and are the lowest of his presidency. In addition, only 38 percent of registered voters in the Oct. 3-6 poll said Bush "is up to the job of being president," compared to 65 percent when the

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poll last asked the question in September 2002.

Voters also have a poor opinion of McGreevey, who resigned as governor in November after disclosing an affair with a man whom McGreevey had appointed to a state post. The former governor had a favorability rating of just 29 percent among registered voters in the Sept. 6-9 *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

“There is a payoff for both candidates in hitting these connections, but with a stronger benefit for Corzine right now,” Edelman said. “Whether this continues depends on what happens to Bush over the next few weeks.”

Do these connections affect the race? To some extent, yes. Of those likely voters who associate Forrester with Bush very or somewhat closely, 51 percent say the connection is negative for Forrester. Fifty-two percent of those linking Corzine to McGreevey say the link is negative for Corzine. Among those who identify the Bush connection as negative for Forrester, 73 percent are voting for Corzine. A similar proportion – 70 percent – of those who see a negative Corzine-McGreevey association say they are voting for Forrester.

The news is not all bad, however. Forty percent of those who very closely or somewhat closely associate Forrester with Bush say it is a positive connection. Thirty-seven percent of those connecting Corzine to McGreevey very closely or somewhat closely say the link is positive for Corzine.

The associations appear to be connected with the voters’ preferences for who will be the next governor. As the strength of the association increases, so does the probability of voting for the opposing candidate.

For example, two-thirds of those who very closely associate Forrester and Bush are voting for Corzine. Among those who somewhat closely link the two, nearly half are voting for Forrester.

At the same time, 60 percent of those who very closely associate Corzine and McGreevey say they are backing Forrester for governor. Among those who somewhat closely connect Corzine and McGreevey, a plurality of 46 percent are voting for Corzine.

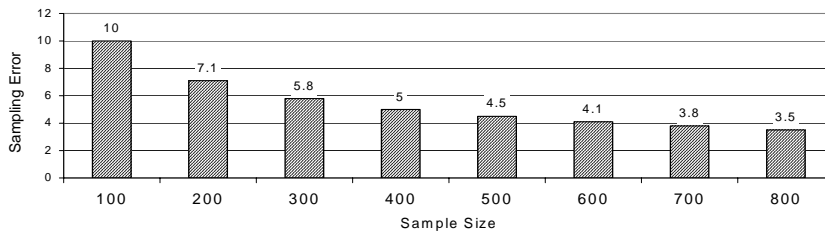
Voter preferences also have a strong connection to Bush’s job approval rating. Of those who disapprove of the job Bush is doing, 61 percent say they are voting for Corzine. Sixty-five percent of likely voters who approve of the job the president is doing say they will vote for Forrester.

**BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP 156-2) October 10, 2005**

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted from October 3 to 6 with a scientifically selected random sample of 833 New Jersey adults. The random sample of 833 New Jersey adults yielded 703 registered adult residents to vote in New Jersey. This release also includes results for a sub-sample of 638 registered voters who are considered likely to vote in the gubernatorial election, based on their interest and stated plans to vote in the election. Most of the figures in this release are based on the sub-sample of likely voters.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sample drawn from that population. The sampling error for the statewide sample of 833 New Jersey adults is  $\pm 3.4$  percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. The sampling error for the statewide sample of 703 registered voters is  $\pm 3.7$  percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. The sampling error for the sub-sample of 638 likely voters is  $\pm 3.9$  percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey likely voters were found to have a favorable opinion of a gubernatorial candidate, one would be 95 percent sure that the interval of 46.1 to 53.9 percent ( $50 \pm 3.9$ ) would contain the true figure had all New Jersey likely voters 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.

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:

How closely do you associate Republican Doug Forrester with the policies and actions of the administration of President George W. Bush? (BU1)

[ROTATE BU1/BU2 AND MC1/MC2]

POLL 156 / Oct 2005	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Somewhat closely</u>	<u>Not closely at all</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>Likely Voters</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>638</b>
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	37%	34%	16%	13%	185
--Republican	19%	53%	18%	10%	162
--Independent	20%	42%	26%	12%	215
<u>Race</u>					
--White	24%	44%	20%	12%	501
--Nonwhite	31%	33%	19%	17%	103
<u>Age</u>					
--18-49	25%	44%	17%	14%	279
--50-64	21%	45%	23%	11%	201
--65+	33%	30%	22%	15%	135
<u>Education</u>					
--High school and below	25%	42%	17%	16%	161
--Some college and above	26%	41%	21%	12%	458
<u>Region of State</u>					
--North	26%	42%	20%	12%	239
--Central	22%	44%	22%	12%	201
--South	28%	37%	16%	19%	162

Do you consider this a positive or negative for Forrester? (BU2)

[ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAID "VERY OR SOMEWHAT CLOSELY" IN  
QBUI]

POLL 156 / Oct 2005 Likely Voters	<u>Positive</u> 40%	<u>Negative</u> 51%	<u>Neither</u> 6%	<u>DK/RF</u> 3%	<u>(n)</u> 419
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	21%	71%	5%	3%	132
--Republican	71%	20%	6%	3%	112
--Independent	32%	58%	8%	2%	135
<u>Race</u>					
--White	46%	46%	6%	3%	340
--Nonwhite	22%	68%	6%	4%	63
<u>Age</u>					
--18-49	38%	55%	4%	2%	191
--50-64	44%	47%	7%	2%	131
--65+	39%	45%	9%	7%	87
<u>Education</u>					
--High school and below	47%	41%	8%	4%	107
--Some college and above	36%	57%	5%	2%	304
<u>Region of State</u>					
--North	41%	46%	8%	5%	160
--Central	33%	60%	5%	2%	134
--South	45%	47%	5%	3%	108

How closely do you associate Democrat Jon Corzine with the policies and actions of the administration of former Governor James McGreevey? (MC1)

[ROTATE BU1/BU2 AND MC1/MC2]

POLL 156 / Oct 2005	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Somewhat closely</u>	<u>Not closely at all</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>Likely Voters</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>638</b>
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	15%	41%	29%	15%	185
--Republican	21%	40%	24%	14%	162
--Independent	15%	37%	36%	12%	215
<u>Race</u>					
--White	18%	38%	32%	12%	501
--Nonwhite	14%	40%	25%	21%	103
<u>Age</u>					
--18-49	15%	45%	25%	16%	279
--50-64	20%	34%	36%	10%	201
--65+	19%	28%	35%	18%	135
<u>Education</u>					
--High school and below	19%	37%	26%	17%	161
--Some college and above	15%	40%	32%	13%	458
<u>Region of State</u>					
--North	15%	45%	26%	14%	239
--Central	19%	34%	34%	13%	201
--South	17%	35%	31%	17%	162

Do you consider this a positive or negative for Corzine? (MC2)

[ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAID "VERY OR SOMEWHAT CLOSELY" IN QMCI]

POLL 156 / Oct 2005 Likely Voters	<u>Positive</u> 37%	<u>Negative</u> 52%	<u>Neither</u> 8%	<u>DK/RF</u> 3%	<u>(n)</u> 345
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	66%	23%	6%	4%	100
--Republican	17%	77%	6%	---	99
--Independent	26%	59%	12%	3%	112
<u>Race</u>					
--White	30%	61%	6%	2%	276
--Nonwhite	56%	25%	14%	5%	53
<u>Age</u>					
--18-49	43%	45%	7%	4%	162
--50-64	25%	64%	10%	1%	113
--65+	34%	57%	7%	3%	64
<u>Education</u>					
--High school and below	40%	48%	8%	4%	88
--Some college and above	35%	55%	8%	2%	250
<u>Region of State</u>					
--North	35%	53%	11%	2%	138
--Central	36%	55%	6%	3%	108
--South	35%	53%	6%	5%	84

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.

POLL 156 / Oct 2005	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>Registered Voters</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>703</b>
<u>Party ID</u>				
--Democrat	13%	80%	6%	203
--Republican	74%	20%	5%	170
--Independent	23%	66%	11%	238
<u>Race</u>				
--White	41%	50%	8%	545
--Nonwhite	14%	80%	6%	122
<u>Age</u>				
--18-49	32%	61%	7%	316
--50-64	37%	55%	9%	211
--65+	37%	52%	10%	149
<u>Education</u>				
--High school and below	34%	56%	10%	191
--Some college and above	34%	59%	7%	490
<u>Region of State</u>				
--North	35%	58%	8%	265
--Central	34%	62%	5%	217
--South	36%	54%	10%	180
<b>All Adults</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>833</b>
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2005	<b>35%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>700</b>
<b>Registered voters</b>				
<u>Party ID</u>				
--Democrat	10%	84%	6%	245
--Republican	77%	17%	6%	177
--Independent	29%	65%	6%	181
<b>All Adults</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>865</b>



	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<i><b>PAST SURVEYS</b></i>				
---February 2005	46%	50%	4%	678
---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

Overall, do you think George Bush is up to the job of being president, or do you have some serious doubts about his ability? (B2)

	<u>Up to the job</u>	<u>Doubts about his ability</u>	<u>DK/RF Both/Undecided</u>	<u>(n)</u>
POLL 156 / Oct 2005				
<b>Registered Voters</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>703</b>
<u>Party ID</u>				
--Democrat	16%	79%	5%	203
--Republican	78%	19%	3%	170
--Independent	29%	63%	8%	238
<u>Race</u>				
---White	45%	49%	6%	545
---Nonwhite	17%	78%	5%	122
<u>Age</u>				
---18-49	36%	59%	6%	316
---50-64	44%	51%	5%	211
---65+	38%	56%	6%	149
<u>Education</u>				
---High school and below	39%	55%	7%	191
---Some college and above	38%	57%	5%	490
<u>Region of State</u>				
--North	40%	52%	8%	265
--Central	38%	60%	3%	217
--South	39%	56%	5%	180
<b>All Adults</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>833</b>
	<u>Up to the job</u>	<u>Doubts about his ability</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2002				
<b>Registered Voters</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>804</b>