The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

November 7, 2005 (Release 157-2)

CONTACTS: MURRAY EDELMAN, (917) 968-1299 (cell) TIM VERCELLOTTI, (732) 932-9384, EXT. 285; (919) 812-3452 (cell)

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

CORZINE MAINTAINS LEAD IN GUBERNATORIAL RACE

Democrat holds on to six-point edge in final days of campaign

Democrat Jon Corzine leads Republican Doug Forrester 43 percent to 37 percent among likely voters, with 9 percent still saying they are undecided, according to the latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.

The poll, conducted last Tuesday through Saturday, found Corzine's lead has dropped by one point since the last *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll in October.

But the numbers also indicated movement among the all-important independent voters, who are expected to decide the race. Corzine trailed Forrester 38 percent to 37 percent among independent voters in the latest poll. In October, independent voters had favored Corzine over Forrester 41 percent to 37 percent.

Voter preferences also shifted among men and women. Corzine's lead over Forrester among women has dropped to eight points, compared to 17 points in October. At the same time, Corzine trails Forrester by only one point among men, compared to a five-point Forrester advantage among men in October.

Further evidence of volatility in the electorate emerged in response to a question about whether voters might change their minds before Tuesday's election. Seventeen percent of Corzine supporters and 18 percent of Forrester supporters said they might change their minds before Election Day. Those figures have dropped considerably since October, however, when about a third of each candidate's supporters said they might

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

185 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901 Director: Murray Edelman, ext. 240 or (917) 968-1299 (cell)

Assistant Director: Tim Vercellotti, ext. 285 or (919) 812-3452 (cell)

Phone: 732-932-9384 - Website: http://slerp.rutgers.edu - Fax: 732-932-1551

change their minds.

"While there is still the possibility of a change, increasingly more voters have said they won't change their minds and there is not much time left," said Murray Edelman, director of *The Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.

The favorability ratings for both candidates shifted in a negative direction in the latest poll, possibly reflecting the increasingly bitter tone of the campaign. While 47 percent of voters had a favorable view of Corzine, up one point since October, his unfavorable rating climbed five points to 36 percent. Forrester's favorability rating went up two points to 43 percent, but 33 percent have an unfavorable view of Forrester, up eight points since October.

"This type of increase in unfavorable ratings is common as negative campaigning increases near the end of a campaign," Edelman said. "And while these levels of unfavorability may seem high, they are not that unusual."

Edelman noted that, in the 2001 gubernatorial race, Democrat James McGreevey's unfavorability rating was 23 percent right before the election, and Republican Bret Schundler's unfavorability rating was 33 percent. In the 2004 presidential campaign, 43 percent of likely voters in New Jersey gave President Bush an unfavorable rating before the election, and 38 percent had an unfavorable view of Sen. John Kerry.

Some of the movement in opinion in the 2005 gubernatorial race may be due to events of the past week, particularly the negative remarks that Corzine's ex-wife, Joanne, made about her former husband in newspaper interviews. Forrester's use of some of those comments in a campaign ad that began airing Thursday night, and subsequent news stories about the ad, also may have influenced opinion.

Comparing the data gathered Tuesday through Thursday nights to data gathered Friday and Saturday, Corzine went from leading Forrester by a few points among independent likely voters to trailing Forrester by a few points in that group, Edelman said.

At the same time, Corzine's unfavorable rating increased by several points among independent likely voters from the Tuesday-Thursday period to the Friday-Saturday period. Also, Forrester's favorable rating climbed several points among independent voters from the Tuesday-Thursday period to the Friday-Saturday period.

Edelman pointed out that "while there is movement toward Forrester within the period of the poll, it is suggestive rather than definitive because it is based on a small sample" of 229 independent likely voters.

Assessments of the candidates' ads, however, did not vary between the two periods. Voters throughout the survey consistently were more likely to say each candidate's ads were unfair as opposed to fair – 39 percent saying so for Forrester's ads and 40 percent expressing that view for Corzine's ads.

In addition 14 percent of voters said they had not seen a Forrester ad, and 13 percent of voters said they had not seen a Corzine ad.

"With so many millions of dollars spent on advertising, it is surprising that so many people have not seen even one ad," Edelman said.

Thirty-six percent of likely voters said property taxes are the most important issue for the next governor to deal with, while 18 percent said eliminating corruption among state elected officials should be the top priority. This has been the order of the top two issues throughout the fall campaign.

One of Corzine's key issues in the race has been a call for a major state investment in stem cell research. However, only two percent of likely voters chose that as the most important issue facing the next governor. Those respondents were then asked their second most important issue so that the list would be comparable to previous surveys.

The likely voters who chose reducing property taxes as the most important issue favored Forrester over Corzine 46 percent to 37 percent. Those who identified eliminating public corruption backed Forrester over Corzine 56 percent to 22 percent. However, the remaining 42 percent of respondents – who said the next governor's top priority should be improving education, increasing access to health care, dealing with the state's budget crisis, or protecting the state from terrorist attacks – strongly favored Corzine over Forrester by a margin of 58 percent to 22 percent.

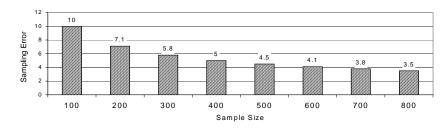
The margins separating the candidates were much smaller concerning who would do a better job of addressing key issues. Likely voters remained evenly divided over who would do the best job of reducing property taxes, with 35 percent saying Corzine and 36 percent saying Forrester. Forrester continues to hold the advantage on eliminating public corruption, leading Corzine on the issue 37 percent to 32 percent.

BACKGROUND MEMO - RELEASE (EP 157-2) November 7, 2005

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted from November 1 to 5 with a scientifically selected random sample of 1,132 New Jersey adults. The random sample of 1,132 New Jersey adults yielded 946 adult residents registered to vote in New Jersey. All of the figures in this release are based on 724 likely voters, a sub-sample of registered voters who were assigned a probability of voting based on several factors, including their interest in the election, plans to vote, and voter history.

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 sub-sample of 724 likely voters is ± 3.6 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 from 46.4 to 53.6 percent (50 \pm 3.6) 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:

Corzine-Forrester

If the election for governor were held today, for whom would you vote (ROTATE) Jon Corzine, the Democrat, Doug Forrester, the Republican or some other candidate for governor? (G1)

[Includes "Leaners" from G1a and $\underline{29}$ individuals who indicated "voted already by mailing an absentee ballot."]

POLL 157 / Nov 2005 Likely Voters	Corzine 43%	Forrester 37%	Some Other 1%	Wouldn't Vote	<u>Undecided/</u> <u>DK/RF**</u> 19%	<u>(n)</u> 724
Party ID						
Democrat	76%	11%			13%	258
Republican	13%	79%			9%	184
Independent	37%	38%	2%		23%	229
Gender						
Male	39%	40%	1%		20%	340
Female	47%	35%			17%	384
Race						
White	40%	43%			17%	581
Nonwhite	57%	21%	1%		21%	124
Age						
18-29	***	***	***	***	***	***
30-49	47%	36%	1%		16%	277
50-64	40%	44%	1%		15%	251
65+	39%	34%			27%	169
Education						
High school and below	39%	37%	1%		23%	173
Some college and above	45%	38%			16%	549
Region of State						
North	46%	36%			18%	297
Central	46%	37%			18%	224
South	37%	41%	1%		21%	201

^{**}Breakouts: Undecideds= 9%; Refused= 10%

^{***}Subgroup contains less than 50.

	Corzine	Forrester	Some Other	Wouldn't Vote	Undecided/ DK/RF	<u>(n)</u>
October 2005 Likely Voters	44%	37%		1%	18%	638
Party ID						
Democrat	80%	8%			12%	185
Republican	10%	75%		2%	13%	162
Independent	41%	37%		1%	20%	215
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	37%	42%		1%	20%	309
Female	50%	33%		1%	17%	329
Race						
White	37%	43%		1%	18%	501
Nonwhite	65%	16%		1%	18%	103
Age						
18-29	***	***		***	***	***
30-49	43%	37%		2%	19%	243
50-64	40%	43%			17%	201
65+	43%	35%		3%	19%	135
Education						
High school and below	42%	34%		1%	22%	161
Some college and above	44%	39%		1%	16%	458
Region of State						
North	41%	43%		1%	15%	239
Central	51%	31%		2%	16%	201
South	40%	38%		1%	22%	162
Registered Voters	44%	34%		3%	19%	703

^{***}Subgroup contains less than 50.

	Corzine	Forrester	Some Other	Wouldn't Vote	<u>Undecided/</u> DK/RF	<u>(n)</u>
September 2005 Likely Voters	49%	31%		1%	19%	476
September 2005 Registered Voters	48%	28%		3%	22%	700
June 2005 Registered Voters	46%	38%		2%	15%	600
May 2005 Registered Voters	44%	36%		3%	16%	519
February 2005 Registered Voters	52%	29%		2%	17%	575

Are you very sure about voting for [FILL NAME – Q.G1/Q.G1a]; or might you change your mind before Election Day? (G2)

[ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAID "JON CORZINE OR DOUG FORRESTER" IN Q.G1 OR Q.G1a]

[Includes "Leaners" from G1a]

POLL 157 / Nov 2005	Very Sure	Might Change	DK/RF	(n=568)
Likely Voters				
Corzine	82%	17%	1%	304
Forrester	82%	18%		264
October 2005				(n=524)
Likely Voters				
Corzine	62%	37%	1%	268
Forrester	65%	33%	2%	248
October 2005				(n=564)
Registered Voters				
Corzine	58%	40%	2%	295
Forrester	63%	34%	3%	260
September 2005				(n=476)
Likely Voters				
Corzine	66%	33%	1%	229
Forrester	59%	38%	4%	153
September 2005				(n=700)
Registered Voters				
Corzine	59%	39%	1%	333
Forrester	51%	47%	3%	201

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.

(ROTATE PF1-PF2)

POLL 157 / Nov 2005	Favorable	Unfavorable	Not Heard of	No opinion	DK/RF	(n)
JON CORZINE						
Likely Voters	47%	36%	1%	12%	5%	724
Party ID						
Democrat	75%	11%	1%	9%	3%	258
Republican	16%	68%	2%	11%	3%	184
Independent	46%	37%		14%	3%	229
	Favorable	Unfavorable	Not Heard of	No opinion	DK/RF	(n)
October 2005 Likely Voters	46%	31%	1%	17%	5%	638
September 2005 Likely Voters	53%	27%		16%	4%	476
September 2005 Registered Voters	48%	22%	2%	23%	5%	700
June 2005 Registered Voters	51%	25%	3%	18%	3%	600
May 2005 Registered Voters	44%	25%	4%	24%	3%	519
February 2005 Registered Voters	53%	22%	9%	15%	2%	678

POLL 157 / Nov 2005	Favorable	Unfavorable	Not Heard of	No opinion	DK/RF	(n)
DOUGLAS FORRESTER						
Likely Voters	43%	33%	1%	18%	6%	724
Party ID						
Democrat	20%	56%		21%	3%	258
Republican	79%	10%		7%	4%	184
Independent	46%	27%	2%	21%	5%	229
	Favorable	Unfavorable	Not Heard of	No opinion	DK/RF	(n)
October 2005 Likely Voters	41%	25%	2%	27%	5%	638
September 2005 Likely Voters	43%	24%	2%	27%	4%	476
September 2005 Registered Voters	35%	22%	4%	34%	5%	700
June 2005 Registered Voters	41%	23%	6%	26%	5%	600
May 2005 Registered Voters	38%	14%	18%	27%	3%	519
February 2005 Registered Voters	25%	15%	29%	26%	26%	678

Now I'm going to read to you a list of issues that the next Governor of New Jersey may address. Which one of the following issues should be the top priority for the next Governor to address? (READ AND ROTATE) (MP1)

	Nov 2005, Poll 157/ Likely voters	Oct 2005, Poll 156/ Likely voters	Sept 2005, Poll 155/ Likely voters
(n) Dealing with the state's budget	(724)	(638)	(476)
<u>crisis</u>	12%	13%	14%
Improving the quality of education	13%	14%	15%
Protecting the state from terrorist attacks	6%	9%	7%
Reducing property taxes	36%	31%	28%
Increasing access to quality healthcare	11%	11%	11%
Eliminating corruption among state elected officials	18%	17%	19%
None of the above			
Other	2%	3%	3%
Don't know/refused	3%	3%	3%

Regardless of which candidate for governor you support, which one of the candidates, (ROTATE AND READ OPTIONS #1-2), do you think would do the best job of....(READ AND ROTATE A-B) [IF SOME OTHER CANDIDATE, ASK:] If you had to choose between (READ OPTIONS #1-2)...? (CA1)

POLL 157 / Nov 2005 - Likely Voters

Which one of the candidates would do the best job of?	<u>Corzine</u>	<u>Forrester</u>	None of the above	All the same/ equal	DK/RF	(n)
Reducing property taxes	35%	36%	8%	2%	19%	724
Eliminating corruption among state elected officials	32%	37%	12%	2%	18%	724

POLL 156 / Oct 2005 – Likely Voters

Which one of the candidates would do			None of the	All the same/		
the best job of?	Corzine	Forrester	<u>above</u>	equal	DK/RF	(n)
Dealing with the state's budget crisis	37%	33%	4%	3%	22%	638
Improving the quality of education	40%	24%	6%	6%	25%	638
Protecting the state from terrorist attacks	27%	26%	13%	10%	24%	638
Reducing property taxes	33%	35%	9%	3%	21%	638
Increasing access to quality healthcare	40%	22%	9%	5%	24%	638
Eliminating corruption among state elected officials	28%	35%	13%	5%	20%	638

POLL 155 / Sept 2005 – Likely Voters

Which one of the candidates would do the best job of?	<u>Corzine</u>	<u>Forrester</u>	None of the above	All the same/ equal	DK/RF	(n)
Dealing with the state's budget crisis	43%	30%	4%	1%	22%	476
Improving the quality of education	43%	21%	4%	3%	29%	476
Protecting the state from terrorist attacks	30%	24%	9%	9%	29%	476
Reducing property taxes	35%	35%	5%	1%	24%	476
Increasing access to quality healthcare	43%	19%	5%	2%	31%	476
Eliminating corruption among state elected officials	33%	30%	10%	3%	25%	476

In your view, have Doug Forrester's campaign ads been fair or unfair or haven't you seen any of his ads? (C1)

[RANDOMLY ROTATE C1 AND C2]

			Haven't seen		
POLL 157 / Nov 2005	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Unfair</u>	any ads	DK/RF	<u>(n)</u>
Likely Voters	33%	39%	14%	14%	724
Party ID					
Democrat	23%	50%	11%	16%	258
Republican	51%	23%	17%	8%	184
Independent	33%	38%	15%	14%	229
<u>Gender</u>					
Male	37%	40%	12%	11%	340
Female	30%	37%	15%	17%	384
Race					
White	36%	37%	14%	13%	581
Nonwhite	25%	45%	14%	16%	124
Age					
18-29	***	***	***	***	***
30-49	36%	38%	14%	13%	277
50-64	33%	44%	11%	12%	251
65+	32%	37%	12%	19%	169
<u>Education</u>					
High school and below	36%	33%	12%	19%	173
Some college and above	32%	42%	15%	11%	549
Region of State					
North	38%	38%	11%	14%	297
Central	28%	44%	18%	10%	224
South	33%	35%	13%	19%	201

^{***}Subgroup contains less than 50.

In your view, have Jon Corzine's campaign ads been fair or unfair or haven't you seen any of his ads? (C1)

[RANDOMLY ROTATE C1 AND C2]

			Haven't seen		
POLL 157 / Nov 2005	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Unfair</u>	any ads	DK/RF	<u>(n)</u>
Likely Voters	33%	40%	13%	13%	724
Party ID					
Democrat	42%	32%	11%	15%	258
Republican	24%	51%	17%	8%	184
Independent	33%	40%	12%	14%	229
<u>Gender</u>					
Male	37%	39%	13%	11%	340
Female	30%	41%	14%	15%	384
Race					
White	30%	44%	14%	12%	581
Nonwhite	48%	23%	12%	17%	124
Age	***	***	***	***	***
18-29					
30-49	40%	35%	14%	11%	277
50-64	29%	47%	10%	14%	251
65+	25%	45%	14%	16%	169
Education					
High school and below	32%	37%	12%	19%	173
Some college and above	34%	42%	14%	10%	549
C					
Region of State					
North	36%	38%	12%	13%	297
Central	34%	40%	16%	9%	224
South	29%	42%	11%	18%	201

^{***}Subgroup contains less than 50.