

# The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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## RELEASE INFORMATION

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in Sunday's *Star-Ledger*. Other newspapers may also use this information in their Sunday editions. Electronic media may release after 5:00 P.M. Saturday, July 27, 1991. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to the "*Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*".

## NEW JERSEYANS' CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Overall, New Jerseyans' confidence in a variety of institutions and organizations has gone up or is unchanged since 1984. The one exception is New Jersey state government, which shows a decline.

In a telephone survey conducted between June 18 and June 24, 1991, 800 New Jersey adults were asked if they had "a lot", "some", or "not very much" confidence in eleven different organizations and institutions.

Rutgers University and organized religion top the list of organizations that state residents express "a lot" of confidence in. In comparison, New Jersey state government, New Jersey political parties, and large corporations are at the bottom.

More than 4-in-10 state residents say they have "a lot" of confidence in Rutgers University (46%) and in organized religion (44%). Those expressing "a lot" of confidence in Rutgers University increased 11 points from 35 percent in 1984, while organized religion increased 4 percentage points from 40 percent.

In addition, 34 percent of New Jerseyans report they have "a lot" of confidence in their local schools which is a 4 point increase from 1984.

### ATTENTION RADIO STATIONS:

Audio is available after 5:00 P.M. on Saturday, July 27, 1991, from (908)932-3605 (Rutgers Feature Phone).

Two media organizations, television news (34%) and newspapers (27%), had about 3-in-10 state residents rating them with "a lot" of confidence. The remainder of New Jerseyans rate their confidence in these two media groups as "some", "not very much", or did not express an opinion.

National, state, and local governments receive a rating of "a lot" of confidence from 1-in-5 people. The national government leads this group with 20 percent compared to local government at 18 percent and New Jersey state government with 10 percent.

More state residents express low than high confidence in New Jersey state government by a margin of 30 percent to 10 percent and in their local government by 24 percent to 18 percent. About an equal number of New Jerseyans say they have "a lot" (20%) of confidence in national government as say "not very much" (21%).

While New Jersey state government shows a 5 point decline from the 15 percent who said they had "a lot" of confidence in 1984, this rating for the national government increased 7 points and local government is basically unchanged.

The assessment of New Jersey political parties is lower than any other organization with just 7 percent saying they have "a lot" of confidence compared to 35 percent who say "not very much" confidence. These results are about the same as in 1984.

More state residents give labor unions and large corporations low confidence ratings than high. While 34 percent rate labor unions with "not very much" confidence 19 percent say they have "a lot". The margin is similar for large corporations with 34 percent giving the low rating compared to 12 percent expressing "a lot" of confidence. Since 1984, the percentage saying they have "a lot" of confidence in labor unions has increased 6 percentage points and those giving corporations this rating increased a smaller 3 percentage points.

"Periodically, it is useful to see how people view key institutions and organizations," commented Janice Ballou, Director of the Poll. "While the good news is the slight overall increase in confidence, the bad news is a majority of New Jerseyans still are not overwhelmingly confident about these various institutions and organizations."

BACKGROUND MEMO--RELEASE SL/EP34-5 (EP84-5), SUNDAY, JULY 28, 1991

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll was conducted between June 18 and June 24, 1991, when a random sample of 800 New Jerseyans, 18 years and older, was interviewed by telephone. Figures based on this sample size are subject to a sampling error of about  $\pm 3.5$  percent. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from that population. Sampling error does not take into account other possible sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The questions and figures referred to in this release are presented below. The location of each question on the actual questionnaire is in brackets.

"I would like to get some idea of how you feel about different organizations or institutions that exist to serve you and others.

For each of the institutions or groups I mention such as (...STARTING POINT...) tell me whether you have a lot of confidence in them, some confidence in them, or not very much confidence. By confidence I mean that you feel they are doing what they ought to be doing." [Q.11]

	<u>LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE</u>				<u>Total*</u>
	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not Very Much</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
<u><i>Rutgers University</i></u>					
--1991	<b>46%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>101%</b>
--1984	35	30	3	31	99
--1978	44	28	6	22	100
--1974	33	28	7	33	101
<u><i>Church/Organized Religion</i></u>					
--1991	<b>44</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>
--1984	40	42	13	4	99
<u><i>Your Local Schools</i></u>					
--1991	<b>34</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>
--1984	30	41	20	9	100
--1978	36	35	24	5	100
--1974	31	39	19	11	100
<u><i>Television News</i></u>					
--1991	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>
--1984	30	54	15	1	100
--1978	38	47	14	1	100
--1974	34	46	17	3	100
<u><i>Newspapers</i></u>					
--1991	<b>27</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>101</b>
--1984	25	56	18	1	100
--1978	34	48	16	2	100
--1974	28	47	23	3	101
<u><i>The National Government</i></u>					
--1991	<b>20</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>
--1984	13	57	27	3	100
--1978	21	59	17	3	100
--1974	13	48	32	7	100

	<u>LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE</u>				<u>Total*</u>
	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not Very Much</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
<u>Labor Unions</u>					
--1991	19	37	34	10	100
--1984	13	40	38	9	100
--1978	12	37	43	7	99
--1974	12	38	39	10	99
<u>Your Local Government</u>					
--1991	18	54	24	3	99
--1984	16	55	26	3	100
--1978	22	52	24	2	100
--1974	25	47	22	7	101
<u>Large Corporations</u>					
--1991	12	46	34	7	99
--1984	9	46	38	7	100
--1978	19	40	35	6	100
--1974	10	35	45	10	100
<u>NJ State Government</u>					
--1991	10	57	30	3	100
--1984	15	59	23	2	99
--1980**	10	53	35	2	100
--1978	18	61	19	2	100
--1974	19	57	16	9	101
<u>NJ Political Parties</u>					
--1991	7	51	35	7	100
--1984	7	48	37	8	100
--1978***	14	55	23	8	100

"Generally speaking, would you say things in New Jersey are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?" [Q.12]

	<u>Right Direction</u>	<u>Wrong Track</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June, 1991	37%	55%	8%	100%	(800)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>					
September/October, 1990	19	74	7	100	(800)

"How much attention do you feel your state government pays to what the people think when it decides what to do--a lot of attention, some attention, not much attention, or no attention?" [Q.13]

	<u>A Lot Of Attention</u>	<u>Some Attention</u>	<u>Not Much Attention</u>	<u>No Attention</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June, 1991	6%	42%	38%	11%	2%	99%	(800)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
September/October, 1990	7	36	39	16	1	99	(800)

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- \* Sample sizes: 1991, n=800; 1984, n=804; 1980 and 1978, n=603; 1974, n=1,209.
  - \*\* Asked in February, 1980 in the wake of Abscam.
  - \*\*\* Separate questions asked about the New Jersey Democratic and Republican Parties.  
Figures reported here are averages.