

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, November 9, 1991. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll".

BUSH RATINGS DECLINE IN NEW JERSEY

Over the past four months there has been a 13 point drop in the number of New Jerseyans who give President George Bush a positive overall job performance rating, which is now at 56 percent.

The poll shows that New Jerseyans rate George Bush quite differently on domestic and foreign affairs--only about one-in-five now gives Bush positive ratings for both his handling of the economy and social problems, however, six-in-ten continue to give him positive grades on foreign affairs.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll, conducted by telephone with 800 New Jerseyans between October 22 and 30, 1991, also finds that if the Presidential election were held today, George Bush would receive stable support from one-third of New Jersey residents, while one-quarter say they would vote against him. However, half of the state's residents feel Bush deserves to be re-elected to a second term based on his performance to date, while one-third do not think he deserves to be re-elected.

ATTENTION RADIO STATIONS:

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BUSH RATINGS

In the past four months there has been a sharp decline in President Bush's overall job performance rating. Fifty-six percent of New Jerseyans give Bush a positive overall job rating of "excellent" (15%) or "good" (41%), while 42 percent say he is doing either an "only fair" (31%) or "poor" (11%) job. The positive overall rating is down 13 points from June of this year when he received a 69 percent positive rating from New Jerseyans.

"The declining popularity of Bush is interesting because it comes at a time when Republicans scored a major victory in the state legislative elections," commented Associate Poll Director Ken Dautrich. "This suggests that the Republican victory at the state level may not be a very good test for the mood of New Jerseyans in a national contest."

In the current poll, Republicans (78%) are much more likely to rate Bush positively than are Democrats (34%) and independents (56%). However, the trend toward lower ratings cuts across partisan groups. Among Republicans there has been a 14 point decline from 92 percent positive to 78 percent; a 9 point drop among independents from 65 percent to 56 percent; and a 21 point drop among Democrats from 55 percent positive to 34 percent.

The President's ratings on his handling of the economy and social problems have also dropped over the past 18 months. In the current poll only one-in-five New Jerseyans now rates Bush's performance on the economy as "excellent" (2%) or "good" (18%). Thirty-six percent say he is doing an "only fair" job on economic issues and another 41 percent feel he is doing a "poor" job. Those giving a positive rating is down 14 points from March, 1990 when 34 percent rated his handling of economic issues positively. In addition, those rating his handling of the economy as "poor" has increased dramatically from 17 percent to 41 percent since March of 1990.

Even among Republicans only about four-in-ten (38%) give Bush a positive rating on his handling of the economy. In comparison, only one-in-ten Democrats and 14 percent of independents give positive grades to Bush in the area of economic policy.

Less than one-in-four state residents rates Bush's handling of social problems positively. Twenty-two percent say he is doing an "excellent" (4%) or "good" (18%) job in this area, while 74 percent give a negative rating of "only fair" (35%) or "poor" (39%). The President's positive rating on

handling social problems is down 10 points from 18 months ago, and those saying he has done a "poor" job has increased 17 points.

In the current poll, four-in-ten Republicans and about 15 percent of both independents and Democrats rate Bush positively on his handling of social problems.

The President's job performance rating on foreign affairs remains stable--six-in-ten give a positive rating of either "excellent" (24%) or "good" (36%), which is about the same as those who offered a positive rating in March of 1990. Three-quarters of Republicans rate Bush's foreign affairs performance as positive, compared to 59 percent of independents and 47 percent of Democrats.

Dautrich commented, "New Jerseyans have serious concerns about Bush's handling of the economy and social issues. Even a majority of Republicans in the state give him negative grades in this area. So while the President remains strong on international affairs, he's quite vulnerable on the domestic and economic issues."

More than half (56%) say they have a favorable impression of Bush, 29 percent say their impression is unfavorable, and 15 percent did not offer an opinion.

BUSH'S RE-ELECTION PROSPECTS IN NEW JERSEY

When asked specifically whether they would vote for George Bush or the Democratic Party's candidate in 1992, about one-third (35%) say they would vote for the President while one-quarter (24%) would vote for the Democratic challenger. Another 23 percent say their vote in the next Presidential election would depend on who the Democratic candidate is, and an additional 17 percent say they don't know who they would vote for at this time.

In thinking about President Bush's performance during his first 1,000 days in office, 48 percent of New Jerseyans feel that he deserves to be re-elected to a second term while 34 percent feel he does not deserve re-election. Fully eight-in-ten Republicans think he deserves to be re-elected while only one-quarter of Democrats, and 42 percent of independents feel that way.

QUAYLE RATING

The overall job performance rating New Jerseyans give Vice President Dan Quayle has declined slightly over the past four months as well. Currently 29 percent give Quayle a positive rating of "excellent" (4%) or "good" (25%), while 53 percent offer a negative rating of "only fair" (32%) or "poor" (21%). The positive rating is down 6 points from 35 percent in the June, 1991 poll.

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BACKGROUND MEMO--RELEASE SL/EP36-2 (EP86-2), SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1991

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll was conducted between October 22 and 30, 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 ± 3.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. 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.

"Is your general impression of George Bush favorable or unfavorable, or don't you have an opinion about him? Is that very (favorable/unfavorable) or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable)?" [Q.29]

	<u>Very Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Unfavorable</u>	<u>Very Unfavorable</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October, 1991 (Bush)	28%	28%	15%	14%	15%	100%	(800)
<i><u>Party ID, October, 1991</u></i>							
--Democrat	14	22	22	26	16	100	(225)
--Independent	24	34	12	16	15	101	(303)
--Republican	50	28	10	1	11	100	(242)

PAST SURVEYS

June, 1989 (Bush)	19	35	7	6	33	100	(800)
<i><u>Party ID, June, 1989</u></i>							
--Democrat	7	30	11	11	42	101	(270)
--Independent	16	38	7	6	35	102	(276)
--Republican	41	39	2	3	15	100	(220)

"How would you rate the job George Bush is doing as President--excellent, good, only fair or poor?" [Q.30a]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>BUSH</u>							
October, 1991	15%	41%	31%	11%	2%	100%	(800)
<u>Party ID, October, 1991</u>							
--Democrat	7	27	45	19	2	100	(225)
--Independent	9	47	30	13	--	99	(303)
--Republican	30	48	18	2	2	100	(242)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
June, 1991	24	45	21	9	1	100	(800)
<u>Party ID, June, 1991</u>							
--Democrat	19	36	27	17	--	99	(195)
--Independent	18	47	26	8	1	100	(340)
--Republican	40	52	6	2	--	100	(215)
February, 1991	31	40	20	8	1	100	(800)
March, 1990	13	47	29	8	3	100	(800)
June, 1989	9	44	31	6	10	100	(800)

"How would you rate his handling of the nation's foreign affairs--excellent, good, only fair or poor?" [Q.30b]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>BUSH</u>							
October, 1991	24%	36%	24%	11%	6%	101%	(800)
<u>Party ID, October, 1991</u>							
--Democrat	14	33	30	16	7	100	(225)
--Independent	24	35	25	12	5	101	(303)
--Republican	36	40	18	3	3	100	(242)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
March, 1990	16	43	31	7	4	101	(800)
<u>Party ID, March, 1990</u>							
--Democrat	7	36	44	9	4	100	(265)
--Independent	16	46	27	9	2	100	(273)
--Republican	28	49	16	2	5	100	(239)
June, 1989	10	39	36	7	9	101	(800)

"And how would you rate Bush's handling of the problems of the economy--excellent, good, only fair, or poor?" [Q.30c]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>BUSH</u>							
October, 1991	2%	18%	36%	41%	3%	100%	(800)
<i><u>Party ID, October, 1991</u></i>							
--Democrat	--	11	30	57	2	100	(225)
--Independent	1	13	41	44	1	100	(303)
--Republican	5	33	37	20	5	100	(242)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
March, 1990	3	32	45	17	3	100	(800)
<i><u>Party ID, March, 1990</u></i>							
--Democrat	2	26	46	23	3	100	(265)
--Independent	4	24	50	20	2	100	(273)
--Republican	5	49	38	5	3	100	(239)
June, 1989	4	30	41	16	9	100	(800)

"How do you rate his handling of social problems in this country--excellent, good, only fair, or poor?" [Q.30d]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October, 1991	4%	18%	35%	39%	4%	100%	(800)
<i><u>Party ID, October, 1991</u></i>							
--Democrat	2	12	29	52	5	100	(225)
--Independent	3	12	40	41	4	100	(303)
--Republican	7	32	37	21	3	100	(242)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
March, 1990	3	29	43	22	3	100	(800)
<i><u>Party ID, March, 1990</u></i>							
--Democrat	1	29	38	29	3	100	(265)
--Independent	4	25	48	22	1	100	(273)
--Republican	6	35	43	11	5	100	(239)
June, 1989	3	27	43	17	10	100	(800)

"Thinking back over George Bush's first 1,000 days in office, do you think he deserves to be re-elected for a second term, or not?" [Q.31]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October, 1991	48%	34%	10%	8%	100%	(800)
<i><u>Party ID</u></i>						
--Democrat	24	53	11	11	99	(225)
--Independent	42	39	11	7	99	(303)
--Republican	81	9	6	4	100	(242)

"There will be a presidential election about one year from now. Do you think you will vote for Bush the Republican, or the Democratic party's candidate in next year's presidential election?" [Q.32]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Depends On Democratic Candidate</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October, 1991	35%	24%	23%	17%	99%	(800)
<i><u>Party ID</u></i>						
--Democrat	8	52	23	17	100	(225)
--Independent	28	18	32	22	100	(302)
--Republican	75	4	11	9	99	(242)

"How would you rate the job Dan Quayle is doing as Vice President--excellent, good, only fair or poor?" [Q.33]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October, 1991	4%	25%	32%	21%	19%	101%	(800)
<i><u>Party ID</u></i>							
--Democrat	1	18	36	29	16	100	(225)
--Independent	2	22	33	22	21	100	(303)
--Republican	9	36	28	12	16	101	(242)

PAST SURVEYS

June, 1991	6	29	36	17	13	101	(800)
March, 1990	3	24	35	20	17	99	(800)