

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

**EMBARGOED – NOT FOR RELEASE UNTIL: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1992**

**RELEASE: SL/EP 37-4 (EP 87-4)**

**CONTACT: KEN DAUTRICH  
OR JANICE BALLOU**

## **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, February 22, 1992. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*."

## **UNEMPLOYMENT HITS MANY NJ HOUSEHOLDS; CONSUMERS ASSESS HOUSING, AUTOMOBILE**

### **AND DURABLE GOODS MARKETS**

More than one-third of New Jerseyans say that an adult in their household has been out of work and actively seeking a job in the past year, and one-in-five report that an unemployed adult in their household is currently looking for a job.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll, conducted by telephone with 800 New Jersey adults between January 20 and 27, 1992, also finds that among New Jerseyans who are employed, more than four-in-ten are concerned about losing their job over the next year.

The survey also finds that a majority of state residents feel that now is a good time to purchase big ticket items like a house or automobile. Fully three-quarters feel that now is a good time to buy a house, and more than half say it is a good time to buy a car. Only about 4-in-10, however, describe now as a good time to buy household consumer durables such as furniture or appliances.

Fewer state residents plan to make a purchase of these items in the next six months. Eight percent of New Jerseyans say that someone in their household will buy a house in the next six months, one-quarter say that someone will buy an automobile, and 2-in-5 say a household member will buy a household durable item.

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### **ATTENTION RADIO STATIONS:**

Audio is available after 5:00 P.M. on Saturday, February 22, 1992, from (908)932-3605 (Rutgers Feature Phone).

***UNEMPLOYMENT IN NEW JERSEY***

Thirty-six percent of New Jersey residents say that within the past year an adult in their household has been unemployed and actively seeking a job. This 36 percent includes 21 percent who say the unemployed person has not yet found a job, and 15 percent who say the adult who was unemployed in their household did find a job.

Ken Dautrich, the Poll's Associate Director commented, "The poll shows that the problem of unemployment has touched many households in New Jersey, and is another sign of how the recession has slowed the state's economy."

Unemployment has taken its largest toll on younger and non-white households. Fully 52 percent of non-white residents and half of those 18 to 29 years old say an adult in their household has been out of work and looking for a job in the past year. Also, nearly half (47%) of households with incomes from \$20,000 to less than \$30,000 report an adult being unemployed in the last year.

***PERSONAL CONCERN ABOUT LOSING ONE'S JOB***

More than 4-in-10 state residents who are currently employed report being either "very" (24%) or "somewhat" (19%) concerned about losing their job over the next year, while 56 percent are "not too concerned" about keeping their job. Two groups are particularly concerned about their job security. Two-thirds of non-whites are "very" (45%) or "somewhat" (23%) concerned about losing their job in the next year and nearly 6-in-10 residents with family incomes under \$30,000 are "very" (44%) or "somewhat" (13%) concerned about keeping their job.

***WHO SHOULD BE MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING JOBS?***

One-third of state residents say that the federal government should be most responsible for making sure that people have jobs, while one-quarter feel most responsibility

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lies with state government, and 1-in-5 think private business and industry should be most responsible.

In evaluating how much each is doing to make sure people can have jobs, state government, the federal government, and private business and industry are given roughly the same grades by New Jerseyans. Thirty-eight percent say that New Jersey state government is doing either "a great deal" (4%) or "something" (34%) to make sure people can have jobs, compared to 35 percent who say private business and industry is doing "a great deal" (5%) or "something" (30%), and 33 percent who say the federal government is doing "a great deal" (4%) or "something" (29%).

#### ***NJ CONSUMERS AND THE HOUSING MARKET***

About three-quarters (74%) of New Jerseyans feel that now is a "good time" to buy a house, while only 1-in-5 say it is a "bad time." Positive assessments of the housing market are somewhat tempered by the finding that only 10 percent of residents think it is a "good time" to sell a house in New Jersey, while 85 percent say it is a "bad time" to sell a house.

Dautrich commented, "The results confirm, from the consumer's perspective, that what we are experiencing is a very strong buyers' market in housing. The feeling that it's a good time to buy is likely a result of the relatively lower interest rates for mortgages. Negative feelings about the sellers' market, however, may be preventing homeowners from considering moving, and thus thwarting more buying activity."

A total of 8 percent of New Jerseyans say that either they or someone in their household will actually purchase a house in the next six months (4% in the next three months, and another 4% in three to six months from now). Those with family incomes in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 range are most likely (12%) to say that someone in their household will buy a house in the next half year.

#### ***NJ CONSUMERS AND THE AUTOMOBILE MARKET***

Fifty-four percent of New Jerseyans say that now is a "good time" to buy an automobile, while 36 percent feel it is a "bad time."

In terms of actual purchase intentions, one-quarter of New Jersey residents say that either they or someone in their home will purchase a car or small truck over the next six months (13% within three months, and another 12% in three to six months).

***NJ CONSUMERS AND THE HOUSEHOLD DURABLE GOODS MARKET***

Fewer New Jerseyans are positive about the market for household consumer durables such as furniture and appliances. Forty-three percent say it is a "good time" to buy these items and about half (49%) say it is a "bad time" to make these purchases.

Forty percent of New Jerseyans say they or someone in their home will purchase a major household durable item in the next six months (22% in the next three months, and 18% in the next three to six months).

## BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP37-4 (EP87-4), SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1992

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll was conducted between January 20 and 27, 1992, 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 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.

"In the last 12 months, has any adult in your household been out of work and actively looking for a job? Did that person find a job or not?" [Q.14A/Q.14B]

	<u>Unemployed and Found Job</u>	<u>Unemployed - Not Find Job</u>	<u>No One Unemployed</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>January, 1992</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(800)</b>
<u>Age</u>					
--18 - 29	25	25	50	100	(163)
--30 - 49	15	19	65	99	(344)
--50 - 64	12	28	60	100	(148)
--65 and older	3	12	85	100	(130)
<u>Race</u>					
--White	15	16	68	99	(649)
--Non-white	13	39	48	100	(139)
<u>Family Income</u>					
--under \$20,000	6	28	66	100	(105)
--\$20,000 - \$30,000	20	27	53	100	(101)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	14	24	61	99	(202)
--Over \$50,000	23	14	63	100	(142)
<u>Type of Community</u>					
--Urban	13	31	56	100	(130)
--Non-urban	15	19	66	100	(670)

"How much is (NAME ITEM) doing to make sure that people can have jobs--a great deal, some, a little, or nothing at all? (READ LIST STARTING AT DESIGNATED POINT.) [Q.15]

	<u>A Great Deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b><u>January, 1992</u></b>							
<b>New Jersey State Government</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(800)</b>
<b>Federal Government</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>(800)</b>
<b>Private Business &amp; Industry</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>(800)</b>

"And, who should be the most responsible for making sure that people can have jobs--New Jersey state government, the federal government or private business and industry?" [Q.16]

	<u>NJ State Government</u>	<u>Federal Government</u>	<u>Business &amp; Industry</u>	<u>Combination</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>January, 1992</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>(800)</b>

**Party ID**

--Democrat	23	37	15	22	3	100	(193)
--Independent	24	35	18	19	4	100	(350)
--Republican	23	30	28	14	4	99	(225)

**Family Income**

--Under \$20,000	30	33	14	21	2	100	(105)
--\$20,000 - \$30,000	27	36	13	19	5	100	(101)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	24	35	19	19	3	100	(202)
--Over \$50,000	17	31	30	17	4	99	(142)

"Thinking about major household items people might buy for the home--such as furniture, a refrigerator, a television, or things like that--do you think now is a good time or a bad time for people to buy these major household items?" [Q.17]

	<u>Good Time</u>	<u>Bad Time</u>	<u>Not Good/ Not Bad</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>January, 1992</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(800)</b>

**Race**

--White	47	44	4	5	100	(649)
--Non-white	30	63	4	2	99	(139)

**Sex**

--Male	50	41	4	5	100	(400)
--Female	36	56	4	4	100	(400)

**Family Income**

--Under \$20,000	22	67	5	5	99	(105)
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--\$20,000 - \$30,000	41	53	6	--	100	(101)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	43	48	4	5	100	(202)
--Over \$50,000	53	40	1	5	99	(142)

Age

--18 - 29	45	48	5	2	100	(163)
--30 - 49	47	46	3	4	100	(344)
--50 and older	39	51	5	5	100	(278)

"Do you think that you or someone in your household will purchase a major household item in the next 3 months? (IF NO: How about in the next 6 months?)" [Q.18]

	<u>Yes-Within 3 Months</u>	<u>Yes-In 3 - 6 Months</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>January, 1992</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(800)</b>

Age

--18 - 39	35	22	36	7	100	(163)
--30 - 49	22	18	55	5	100	(344)
--50 and older	14	15	60	11	100	(278)

Sex

--Male	26	20	44	9	99	(400)
--Female	18	15	61	6	100	(400)

Family Income

--Under \$20,000	14	16	59	10	99	(105)
--\$20,000 - \$30,000	20	19	53	8	100	(101)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	21	18	52	9	100	(202)
--Over - \$50,000	29	16	52	4	101	(142)

"And, thinking about the housing market--do you think that now is a good time or a bad time to buy a house?" [Q.19]

	<u>Good Time</u>	<u>Bad Time</u>	<u>Not Good/ Not Bad</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>January, 1992</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(799)</b>

Race

--White	80	15	1	3	99	(648)
--Non-white	52	40	4	4	100	(139)

Sex

--Male	81	15	2	2	100	(400)
--Female	67	26	2	6	101	(399)

Family Income

--Under \$20,000	45	42	4	9	100	(105)
--\$20,000 - \$30,000	75	23	2	--	100	(101)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	80	15	1	3	99	(202)
--Over \$50,000	84	14	1	1	100	(142)

"And, do you think that now is a good time or bad time to sell a house?" [Q.20]

	<u>Good Time</u>	<u>Bad Time</u>	<u>Not Good/ Not Bad</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>January, 1992</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(800)</b>

"Do you think that you or someone in your household will buy a house in the next 3 months? (IF NO: How about in the next 6 months?)" [Q.21]

	<u>Yes-Within 3 Months</u>	<u>Yes-In 3 - 6 Months</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>January, 1992</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(800)</b>

Family Income

--Under \$20,000	1	2	94	3	100	(105)
--\$20,000 - \$30,000	1	3	95	--	99	(101)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	6	6	86	2	100	(202)
--Over \$50,000	3	3	91	3	100	(142)

"Thinking about the automobile market--do you think now is a good time or a bad time to buy a car?" [Q.22]

	<u>Good Time</u>	<u>Bad Time</u>	<u>Not Good/ Not Bad</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>January, 1992</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(800)</b>

Age

--18 - 29	58	37	1	3	99	(163)
--30 - 49	57	36	3	4	100	(344)
--50 and older	49	35	4	13	101	(278)

Education

--Less than high school	37	47	3	13	100	(60)
--High school graduate	54	38	2	7	101	(250)
--More than high school	64	28	4	4	100	(490)

Race

--White	57	33	3	8	101	(649)
--Non-white	42	50	2	6	100	(139)

Sex

--Male	62	30	2	5	99	(400)
--Female	46	42	4	9	101	(400)

Family Income

--Under \$20,000	38	47	5	10	100	(105)
--\$20,000 - \$30,000	47	47	2	5	101	(101)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	58	34	1	7	100	(202)
--Over \$50,000	56	36	5	3	100	(142)

"Do you think that you or someone in your household will purchase a car or small truck in the next 3 months?" (IF NO: How about in the next 6 months?) [Q.23]

	<u>Yes-Within 3 Months</u>	<u>Yes-In 3 - 6 Months</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>January, 1992</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(800)</b>

Age

--18 - 29	21	20	58	1	100	(163)
--30 - 49	12	10	77	1	100	(344)
--50 and older	8	7	82	3	100	(278)

Sex

--Male	16	14	69	2	101	(400)
--Female	10	9	79	2	100	(400)

Family Income

--Under \$20,000	7	4	88	1	100	(105)
--\$20,000 - \$30,000	7	6	84	3	100	(101)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	12	13	73	2	100	(202)
--Over \$50,000	14	19	64	3	100	(142)

ASKED OF THOSE WHO ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED:

"How concerned are you that you might become unemployed within the next year?" [Q.XD7a]

	<u>Very Concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat Concerned</u>	<u>Not Too Concerned</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>January, 1992</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>(520)</b>

Race

--White	19	18	63	--	100	(422)
--Non-white	45	23	32	--	100	(89)

Family Income

--Under \$30,000	44	13	41	2%	100	(85)
--\$30,000 - \$50,000	21	25	55	--	101	(139)
--Over \$50,000	14	14	72	--	100	(123)