

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

EMBARGOED – NOT FOR RELEASE UNTIL: SUNDAY, MAY 10, 1992

RELEASE: SL/EP 38-2 (EP 88-2)

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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, May 9, 1992. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*."

NEW JERSEYANS SUPPORT ABORTION NOTIFICATION

REQUIREMENTS; OPPOSE LAWS TO RESTRICT ABORTIONS

The complexity of the abortion issue is underscored by the range of different viewpoints expressed by New Jerseyans. While 2-in-3 residents oppose any new laws in New Jersey to restrict a woman's right to have an abortion, 8-in-10 support parental notification and 7-in-10 favor spousal notification. However, when it comes to issues of personal choice, 8-in-10 feel that the decision to have an abortion is a private matter that should be left up to the women to decide. In addition, 46 percent say "all women should have the right to an abortion in all circumstances," and 46 percent feel abortions should be allowed in "certain circumstances." By a margin of 47 to 38 percent, a plurality of state residents do not think abortion is murder.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll conducted by telephone with 800 New Jersey adults from April 22 to April 30, 1992 found that close to half of the state's residents are very concerned with the outcome of *Planned Parenthood vs. Casey*, the abortion case that is being considered by the U.S. Supreme Court. In addition, 3-in-4 report that a candidate's position on abortion is important to them in making electoral decisions.

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ATTENTION RADIO STATIONS:

Audio is available after 5:00 P.M. on Saturday, May 9, 1992, from (908)932-3605 (Rutgers Feature Phone).

STATE RESTRICTIONS ON ABORTION

A solid majority of New Jerseyans oppose new laws in the state that would restrict a woman's right to have an abortion, but there is also strong support for a series of specific notification regulations. Sixty-six percent "strongly" (56%) or "mildly" (10%) oppose any new laws in New Jersey to restrict a woman's right to an abortion compared to 28 percent who "strongly" (21%) or "mildly" (7%) favor new state abortion regulations. Since September 1989, following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services, there has been an 8 point increase in the percentage who favor new state abortion laws. At that time 20 percent favored new state laws to restrict a woman's right to an abortion and 71 percent opposed them.

A strong majority of state residents favor four restrictions on abortion when they are suggested as possible regulations in New Jersey.

About 8-in-10 state residents favor two of the proposals. Seventy-nine percent are "strongly" (59%) or "mildly" (20%) in favor of "requiring a doctor to provide information such as the stages of fetal development and the alternatives to abortion" compared to 17 percent who "strongly" (11%) or "mildly" (6%) oppose this restriction.

"Requiring a woman under 18 years old to notify her parents if she is going to have an abortion" is favored by 78 percent (66% "strongly" and 12% "mildly"), while 19 percent oppose this type of notification "strongly" (8%) or "mildly" (11%).

Seven-in-ten New Jerseyans support two other suggested notification requirements.

"Requiring the abortion to be delayed at least 24 hours after a woman receives information such as the stages of fetal development and alternatives to abortion" is favored by 73 percent "strongly" (53%) or "mildly" (20%) and opposed by 22 percent "strongly" (14%) or "mildly" (8%).

And, "Requiring a woman to notify her husband if she is going to have an abortion"

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gets support from 70 percent (61% "strongly" and 9% "mildly") and is opposed by 28 percent (18% "strongly" and 10% "mildly").

Even among those who oppose new laws in New Jersey to restrict a woman's right to have an abortion, a solid majority favor the requirements to have a doctor provide information (77%), require an abortion be delayed for 24 hours (66%), require spousal notification (61%), and require parental

notification (73%). In addition, similar support is found among state residents who also agree that abortion is a private matter that should be left up to the women to decide.

"Often opinions about abortion seem contradictory because the issues involved are complex and diverse," commented Janice Ballou, Director of the Poll. "The opinions expressed by New Jersey residents suggest a reconciliation of this complexity based on the idea 'permit, but discourage' which blends support for a women's right to personally decide about an abortion with the placement of reasonable conditions on this right."

OVERVIEW OF ATTITUDES TOWARD ABORTION

Since 1973 about 8-in-10 New Jerseyans have agreed that the decision to have an abortion is a private matter which should be decided without government intervention. Consistent with that trend, in the current poll 79 percent agree that "the decision to have an abortion is a private matter that should be left to the woman to decide without government intervention," while 19 percent disagree.

In addition, 46 percent feel that "all women should have the right to an abortion in all circumstances," 46 percent say abortion should be allowed "only in certain circumstances," and 6 percent report abortion should not be "allowed for any circumstances."

U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISIONS

Currently the U.S. Supreme Court is reviewing an abortion case, Planned Parenthood vs. Casey, which may have an impact on the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision. About 2-in-3 state residents favor the 1973 Roe vs. Wade U.S. Supreme Court decision that ruled a woman may have an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy. Sixty-seven percent "strongly" (50%) or "mildly" (17%) favor this decision and 27 percent "strongly" (22%) or "mildly" (5%) oppose. These percentages are similar to a March 1989 statewide poll.

A majority of New Jerseyans are aware of Planned Parenthood vs. Casey. Overall, 58 percent of the state's residents have read or heard "a great deal" (20%) or "some" (38%) about this abortion case, while 41 percent have read or heard "not much" (21%) or "nothing at all" (20%). Forty-six

percent of New Jerseyans are "very concerned" about the outcome of this decision, 40 percent are somewhat concerned, and 12 percent are not at all concerned.

ABORTION AS A MORAL ISSUE

Forty-seven percent of New Jerseyans feel that "abortion is not murder because the fetus really is not a child" compared to 38 percent who agree "abortion is the same thing as murdering a child." In addition, 5 percent say it depends on the month of pregnancy and 10 percent did not give an opinion.

Men (51%) are more likely than woman (43%) to feel abortion is not murder. In addition, residents who are 18 - 29 years old (57%) are more likely than those who are 30 - 49 years old (54%) or those 50 years old or older (35%) to say abortion is not murder. From a religious perspective, fewer Catholics (38%) than Protestants (55%) or people of other religions (59%) feel abortion is not murder.

ABORTION AS AN ELECTION ISSUE

The abortion issue may be a factor in upcoming elections. Three-in-four state residents say that the candidate's position on abortion is "very important" (32%) or "somewhat important" (43%) when they decide on who to vote for. In comparison, 24 percent say it is "not very important" (15%) or "not at all important" (9%). New Jerseyans who agree abortion is a woman's private decision (27%) are less likely than those who disagree with this opinion (55%) that a candidate's position on abortion is very important in their electoral choice.

BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP38-2 (EP88-2), SUNDAY, MAY 10, 1992

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll was conducted between April 22 and April 30, 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 ± 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.

"Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The decision to have an abortion is a private matter that would be left to the woman to decide without government intervention. (PROBE: Do you agree/disagree strongly or mildly?)" [Q.21]

	<u>Agree Strongly</u>	<u>Agree Mildly</u>	<u>Disagree Mildly</u>	<u>Disagree Strongly</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
April, 1992	69%	10%	3%	16%	3%	101%	(800)

PAST SURVEYS

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1989	79%	17%	--	4%	100%	(999)
March, 1989	80	18	2%	1	101	(800)
November, 1974*	80	18	--	2	100	(1,005)
February, 1974*	78	19	--	3	100	(1,226)
January, 1973*	79	16	--	5	100	(1,291)

"In general, which of the following three views comes closest to your own:" [Q.22]

	<u>All women should have the right to an abortion in all circumstances.</u>	<u>All women should be allowed to have an abortion, but only in certain circumstances.</u>	<u>No Women should be allowed an abortion for any circumstances.</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
April, 1992	46%	46%	6%	2%	100%	(800)

PAST SURVEYS

September, 1989	48	44	5	3	100	(998)
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* Wording was: "The decision to have an abortion is a private matter that should be left to the parents to decide without government intervention."

"In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a woman may go to a doctor to have an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy. Do you favor or oppose this ruling? (IF "FAVOR" or "OPPOSE," PROBE: Do you strongly or mildly (favor/oppose) this?)" [Q.23]

	<u>Strongly Favor</u>	<u>Mildly Favor</u>	<u>Mildly Oppose</u>	<u>Strongly Oppose</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
April, 1992	50%	17%	5%	22%	--	5%	99%	(800)

PAST SURVEYS

March, 1989	51	18	3	22	3%	3	100	(799)
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"The U. S. Supreme Court is hearing a case which may change its 1973 ruling on abortion. How much have you read or heard about Planned Parenthood vs. Casey, the Pennsylvania abortion case that is being considered by the U. S. Supreme Court? Have you read or heard a great deal, some, not much, or nothing at all?" [Q.24]

	<u>Great Deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not Much</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
April, 1992	20%	38%	21%	20%	1%	100%	(800)

PAST SURVEYS

	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Nothing At All</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
March, 1989*	18%	31%	25%	24%	1%	99%	(800)

"Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned or not at all concerned with the outcome of the Supreme Court's decision this year on abortion?" [Q.25]

	<u>Very Concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat Concerned</u>	<u>Not At All Concerned</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
April, 1992	46%	40%	12%	2%	100%	(800)

Gender

--Male	38	45	15	2	100	(400)
--Female	54	35	9	2	100	(400)

PAST SURVEYS

March, 1989**	43	41	14	2	100	(798)
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*Question in 1989 was about the Webster case. The wording was: "This year the U.S. Supreme Court will be deciding on a case which may change their 1973 ruling on abortion. How much have you heard or read about the Supreme Court's review of this case--a lot, some, a little or nothing at all?"

**Question referred to the 1989 Webster decision.

"The following are some regulations that individual states may consider to restrict abortions. Do you favor or oppose having regulations in New Jersey? (READ ITEM) PROBE: Do you strongly or mildly (favor/oppose)?" [Q.27]

	<u>Strongly Favor</u>	<u>Mildly Favor</u>	<u>Mildly Oppose</u>	<u>Strongly Oppose</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Requiring a doctor to provide information such as the stages of fetal development and the <u>alternatives to abortion</u>							
April, 1992	59%	20%	6%	11%	4%	100%	(800)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	54	23	7	12	4	100	(400)
--Female	64	17	4	10	5	100	(400)
Requiring the abortion to be delayed at least 24 hours after a woman receives information such as the stages of fetal development and alternatives <u>to abortion</u>							
April, 1992	53	20	8	14	5	100	(800)
Requiring a woman to notify her husband if she is going to have <u>an abortion</u>							
April, 1992	61	9	10	18	3	101	(800)
<u>Gender</u>							
--Male	63	10	9	14	3	99	(400)
--Female	59	8	10	21	3	101	(400)
Requiring a woman under 18 years old to notify her parents if she is <u>going to have an abortion</u>							
April, 1992	66	12	8	11	2	99	(800)
<u>Age</u>							
--18 - 29	60	12	13	13	1	99	(165)
--30 - 49	62	15	8	13	2	100	(313)
--50 or over	76	10	5	7	2	100	(310)

MILDLY/STRONGLY FAVOR REQUIREMENTS FOR:

	<u>Doctor To Provide Information</u>	<u>Delay Abortion 24 Hours</u>	<u>Notify Husband</u>	<u>Notify Parents</u>
TOTAL--April, 1992	79%	73%	70%	78%
<u>Attitude toward overall restrictions in the state</u> [Q.26]				
--Favor (n=224)	87	90	90	92
--Oppose (n=525)	77	66	61	72
<u>Attitudes toward abortion</u> [Q.22]				
--Right to abortion in all circumstances (n=366)	76	63	51	65
--Allowed to have abortion in certain circumstances (n=363)	85	85	86	91
--Not allowed to have an abortion in any circumstances (n=51)	71	69	93	95
<u>Abortion is a private matter</u> [Q.21]				
--Mildly/Strongly agree (n=624)	79	72	64	76
--Mildly/Strongly disagree (n=149)	84	82	93	91

"If the Supreme Court overturns its decision on abortion and leaves it up to individual states to decide, would you favor or oppose new laws in New Jersey to restrict a woman's right to have an abortion? (IF FAVOR OR OPPOSE, PROBE: Would you strongly (favor/oppose) or not?)" [Q.26]

	<u>Strongly Favor</u>	<u>Not Strongly Favor</u>	<u>Not Strongly Oppose</u>	<u>Strongly Oppose</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
April, 1992	21%	7%	10%	56%	2%	4%	100%	(800)
<u>Gender</u>								
--Male	21	8	11	54	2	4	100	(400)
--Female	21	5	9	58	2	4	99	(400)
<u>Party</u>								
--Democrat	26	4	8	57	1	3	99	(220)
--Independent	17	8	12	61	1	2	101	(314)
--Republican	25	8	9	49	2	6	99	(238)

PAST SURVEYS

September, 1989*	14	6	12	59	3	6	100	(999)
March, 1989**	16	7	12	56	4	5	100	(799)

*Wording was: "As you know, the Webster decision on abortion leaves it up to the states to decide if they want to regulate abortions. Would you FAVOR or OPPOSE new laws in New Jersey to restrict a woman's right to have an abortion? (IF "FAVOR" or "OPPOSE", PROBE: Do you (favor, oppose) strongly or mildly?)"

**Wording was: "If the Supreme Court overturns its decision on abortion, and leaves it up to individual states to decide, would you favor or oppose new laws in New Jersey to restrict a woman's right to have an abortion? (IF FAVOR OR OPPOSE, PROBE: Would you strongly (favor/oppose) or not?)"

"Which of these statements comes closer to your opinion: abortion is the same thing as murdering a child, or abortion is not murder because the fetus really isn't a child?" [Q.28]

	Abortion is the same thing as murdering a child.	Abortion is not murder because the fetus really isn't a child.	Depends on the month of pregnancy. (VOL)	Don't Know	Total	(n)
April, 1992	38%	47%	5%	10%	100%	(800)
<i>Gender</i>						
--Male	36	51	3	10	100	(400)
--Female	40	43	6	11	100	(400)
<i>Age</i>						
--18 - 29	32	57	3	8	100	(165)
--30 - 49	35	54	2	9	100	(313)
--50 or over	45	35	8	13	101	(310)
<i>Religion</i>						
--Catholic	45	38	5	11	99	(406)
--Protestant	32	55	5	9	101	(193)
--Other	29	59	3	10	101	(201)

"When you decide about voting for a candidate for office, how important to you is the position the candidate has on abortion--very important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all important?" [Q.30]

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	Don't Know	Total	(n)
April, 1992	32%	43%	15%	9%	2%	101%	(800)
--Registered Voters	34	41	14	9	2	100	(624)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	39	39	16	4	3	101	(220)
--Independent	29	44	16	11	--	100	(314)
--Republican	29	48	12	11	--	100	(238)
<i>Gender</i>							
--Male	27	47	16	9	1	100	(400)
--Female	37	39	13	9	2	100	(400)
<i>Abortion is a Private Matter [Q.21]</i>							
--Strongly/Mildly agree	27	47	16	10	1	101	(624)
--Strongly/Mildly disagree	55	29	9	5	2	100	(149)