

# 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 Tuesday's *Star-Ledger*. Other newspapers may also use this information in their Tuesday editions. Electronic media may release after 5:00 P.M. Monday, October 26, 1992. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*."

## THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NEW JERSEY:

### ISSUES AND CHARACTER

**ALL OF THE PERCENTAGES IN THIS RELEASE ARE BASED ON "LIKELY VOTERS"  
— NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS WHO REPORT THEY ARE CURRENTLY REGISTERED TO  
VOTE AND SAY THAT THEY ARE PROBABLY OR DEFINITELY GOING TO VOTE.**

New Jersey voters are making clear distinctions among the presidential candidates based on the issues that are being discussed in the campaign. On economic issues, Clinton is favored on controlling health care costs and providing jobs, while Bush is seen as better able to hold down taxes, and Perot is identified as the best to deal with the budget deficit problem.

On foreign policy issues, Republican incumbent George Bush is the preferred candidate among voters in the state; and Democratic challenger Bill Clinton is the voters' choice on most non-economic domestic issues.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*, was conducted by telephone with 801 New Jersey likely voters in two waves. The first wave of 401 voters was interviewed from October 16 - 18, the three-day period prior to the last presidential debate. The second wave of 400 voters was interviewed during the three-day period after the last presidential debate, October 20 - 22.

### ATTENTION RADIO STATIONS:

Audio is available after 5:00 P.M. on Monday, October 26, 1992, from (908)932-3605 (Rutgers Feature Phone).

The poll shows the electorate differentiates among the candidates on a variety of character issues. President Bush is seen by more voters as experienced, a strong leader, and trustworthy.

Governor Clinton, however, is described by more voters as caring more about people, having better vision for the future, and being better able to provide direction to the nation over the next four years. Ross Perot is viewed by more voters as being honest.

### ***ECONOMIC ISSUES***

More New Jersey voters think Bill Clinton would do the best job of providing jobs, controlling health care costs, and improving one's own financial situation. However, when thinking about which candidate would do the best job of tackling the budget deficit, Ross Perot is favored; and when voters focus on the candidate most likely to hold down taxes, President Bush is the voters' choice.

"The survey shows that each candidate has been successful on the specific economic issues he has highlighted in the campaign," commented Ken Dautrich, the Poll's Associate Director. "Clinton's main focus has been jobs and health care costs and that's where he obtains most support, while Bush has emphasized keeping a lid on taxes and voters think he'll do better on this. It also appears that Perot's strong focus on the deficit is catching voter attention."

Governor Bill Clinton is viewed as the candidate who would do the best in "providing jobs" — 42 percent of voters favor Clinton, while 27 percent favor Perot and 19 percent favor Bush on this issue. Clinton is also the candidate favored by more voters on the issue of "controlling health care costs" — 44 percent favor Clinton on this issue, compared to 25 percent who favor Bush and 17 percent who favor Perot.

The survey also asked voters which candidate, if elected, would be most likely to improve "your own financial situation." Thirty-four percent say Governor Clinton is more

likely to improve their financial situation, while 29 percent pick Bush and 15 percent select Perot. Voters with family incomes over \$50,000 say Bush is best able to improve their financial situation, while those with lower family incomes feel Clinton is more likely to help them improve financially.

More New Jersey voters (38%) favor Republican incumbent Bush, however, as the candidate who would do the best job of "holding down taxes." Twenty-seven percent say Clinton would do better job holding down taxes and 15 percent favor Perot on this issue.

Independent candidate Ross Perot's heavy concentration in the campaign on the budget deficit has attracted the attention of many New Jersey voters. Perot is preferred by a plurality of voters (39%) as the candidate who would do better at "reducing the budget deficit," while Clinton and Bush are

avored on this issue by 29 percent and 17 percent of state voters, respectively. Also, the Perot message that personal sacrifice will be necessary for reducing the deficit gets voters' support — nearly 4-in-5 voters say they would be "very" (24%) or "somewhat" (54%) willing to make personal sacrifices to help reduce the budget deficit. Those with family incomes over \$50,000 are most likely to be willing to make personal sacrifices to reduce the deficit.

On the issue of "managing the economy and keeping the country prosperous," Clinton and Perot are each selected by 33 percent of New Jersey voters, while Bush is favored by 1-in-4 voters.

### ***OTHER DOMESTIC ISSUES***

Bill Clinton is picked over both George Bush and Ross Perot as the candidate who is best able to handle most non-economic domestic problems. Preference for Clinton is strongest on the issues of "providing social services such as day care and aid to the needy" (65% prefer Clinton compared to 16% for Bush and 11% for Perot), "cleaning up and protecting the environment" (61% Clinton, 20% Bush, and 9% Perot), and "securing equal rights for women" (58% Clinton, 20% Bush, and 7% Perot).

More New Jersey voters also feel that the Democratic Party's candidate would do a better job at "improving race relations" (48% Clinton, 24% Bush, and 7% Perot), "improving the educational system" (47% Clinton, 26% Bush, and 16% Perot), and "reducing crime and drug use" (35% Clinton, 25% Bush, and 19% Perot). Bill Clinton is also the candidate more voters feel is likely to do "what you want done about abortion" (46% Clinton, 26% Bush, and 13% Perot).

On "promoting family values," however, George Bush is preferred by 41 percent of voters, compared to 30 percent who favor Clinton on this issue, and 12 percent who select Perot.

### ***FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES***

Incumbent President George Bush is identified by more voters as the candidate who would do the best job handling foreign policy issues. On "providing leadership in foreign policy," fully two-thirds say Bush would do a better job, compared to 20 percent for Clinton and only 6 percent who prefer Perot on this issue.

Also, two-thirds say Bush would do a better job "keeping the country militarily strong," compared to 16 percent who think Clinton would do best in this area, and 8 percent who say Perot. On

"reducing the risk of war," 48 percent believe Bush would do the best job, compared to 32 percent who feel Clinton would do best, and 6 percent who prefer Perot.

### ***CHARACTER ISSUES***

As with the policy-oriented issues, no single candidate emerges as the voters' choice on character issues. President Bush is the decisive favorite when voters focus on "experience."

Nearly 8-in-10 say Bush has most experience, while 1-in-10 say Clinton is more experienced, and 1-in-20 feel Perot is. Bush is viewed as the "stronger leader" by 45 percent of voters, while 27 percent say Clinton and 14 percent pick Perot. Also, more voters trust Bush (33%) than Clinton (26%) or Perot (24%).

Governor Clinton is perceived as "caring more about people like me" by more New Jersey voters (37% Clinton, 24% Perot, and 20% Bush). Also, slightly more voters (33%) believe that Clinton "has a clearer vision of the county's future," compared to Perot (27%) and Bush (26%).

In addition, more New Jersey voters say that Bill Clinton is the candidate who is best able to move the nation in the right direction over the next four years. More than four-in-ten (43%) feel that Clinton is best able to move the nation in the right direction, while 3-in-10 say that George Bush will provide the best direction for the country, and 2-in-10 name Ross Perot.

When voters focus on the question of honesty, Ross Perot is picked by more voters. Thirty-eight percent feel Perot is more honest, compared to 23 percent who say Bush is, and 14 percent who say Clinton.

Dautrich commented, "Overall, none of the candidates stand out as having greater character. On specific character issues, each candidate does better on the themes of his campaign. For example, Perot's 'straight-forward, tell it like it is' theme confers honesty; Clinton's emphasis on 'change' makes him more visionary; and Bush's emphasis on 'trust' has given him the lead on that aspect of character."

### ***WHO MIGHT MAKE SERIOUS MISTAKES?***

About half of New Jersey's likely voters feel that each of the three major candidates might make serious mistakes in office. Fifty-six percent feel that Perot might make serious mistakes, compared to 35 percent who think that he can be trusted to deal with all the

problems a president has to deal with. In thinking about Governor Clinton, 54 percent believe he might make serious mistakes, whereas 38 percent feel he can be trusted. For President Bush, 50 percent believe that he might make serious mistakes, while 45 percent trust him to deal with all the problems a president has to deal with.

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## BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP40-2 (EP90-2), TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1992

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll was conducted in two waves. Wave 1 was conducted with 401 likely voters between October 16 and 18, 1992; Wave 2 was conducted with 400 likely voters between October 20 and 22, 1992. New Jerseyans, 18 years and older, who reported being registered and say they would "definitely" or "probably" vote in November's election were interviewed by telephone. The figures in this release are based on the sample size of 801 likely voters and are subject to a sampling error of about  $\pm 3.5$  percent, results from the individual samples of 400 have a sampling error of about  $\pm 5$  percentage points. 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'm going to read you a list of different issues in the Presidential election. Regardless of which candidate you might favor, please tell me which one--Bush, Clinton, or Perot--you think would do a better job of (READ ITEM)?" [Q.13]\*

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Perot</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>Reducing the budget deficit</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	17%	29%	39%	14%	99%	(401)
<u>Doing what you want done about abortion</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	26	46	13	15	100	(401)
<u>Reducing the risk of war</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	48	32	6	14	100	(401)
<u>Reducing crime and drug use</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	25	35	19	21	100	(401)
<u>Keeping the country militarily strong</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	66	16	8	10	100	(401)
<u>Cleaning up and protecting the environment</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	20	61	9	10	100	(401)
<u>Providing social services</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	16	65	11	8	100	(401)
<u>Managing the economy</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	24	33	33	11	101	(401)
<u>Improving the educational system</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	26	47	16	11	100	(401)
<u>Securing equal rights for women</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	20	58	7	15	100	(401)
<u>Controlling health care costs</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	25	44	17	15	101	(401)

(continued)

(Q.13 continued)

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Perot</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>Providing jobs</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	19%	42%	27%	12%	100%	(401)
<u>Promoting family values</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	41	30	12	16	99	(401)
<u>Improving race relations</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	24	48	7	21	100	(401)
<u>Providing leadership in foreign policy</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	67	20	6	7	100	(401)
<u>Holding down taxes</u>						
--Likely voters - October, 1992	38	27	15	21	101	(401)

\*Question 13 was asked to the 401 respondents in Wave 1, and was not asked to Wave 2 respondents.

"Which candidate has a clearer vision of the country's future?" [Q.14]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Perot</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1992</b>						
--Likely Voters	<b>26%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>(801)</b>

"And who cares more about people like you?" [Q.15]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Perot</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1992</b>						
--Likely Voters	<b>20%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>(801)</b>

"Who is more honest?" [Q.16]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Perot</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1992</b>						
--Likely Voters	<b>23%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(801)</b>

"Who is more experienced?" [Q.17]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Perot</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1992</b>						
--Likely Voters	<b>79%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(801)</b>

"Which one is a stronger leader?" [Q.18]

Don't

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Perot</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October, 1992						
--Likely Voters	45%	27%	14%	15%	101%	(801)

"Which candidate do you trust more?" [Q.19]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Perot</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October, 1992						
--Likely Voters	33%	26%	24%	17%	100%	(801)

"Which of the candidates for president will be best able to move the nation in the right direction over the next 4 years?" [Q.20A]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Perot</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October, 1992	30%	43%	20%	7%	100%	(801)
--Likely Voters						

Party ID

--Democrat	5	83	8	4	100	(243)
--Independent	25	35	31	8	99	(316)
--Republican	71	9	15	5	100	(211)

"Do you think (INSERT NAME) can be trusted with all the problems a president has to deal with or do you think he might make serious mistakes?" [Q.20B]

	<u>Can be Trusted</u>	<u>Might Make Serious Mistakes</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b><u>GEORGE BUSH</u></b>					
October, 1992					
--Likely Voters	45%	50%	5%	100%	(801)

Vote Choice

--Bush	87	11	2	100	(354)
--Clinton	19	76	6	101	(252)
--Perot	40	57	4	101	(130)

**BILL CLINTON**

October, 1992					
--Likely Voters	38	54	8	100	(801)

Vote Choice

--Bush	9	85	7	101	(354)
--Clinton	67	26	7	100	(252)
--Perot	21	74	5	100	(130)

**ROSS PEROT**



**October, 1992**

--Likely Voters	35	56	9	100	(801)
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Vote Choice

--Bush	23	67	10	100	(354)
--Clinton	30	62	8	100	(252)
--Perot	70	28	2	100	(130)

"Many people feel that the budget deficit is one of the main reasons that the economy is in trouble and Americans will have to make sacrifices to reduce the deficit. Are you very willing, somewhat willing, or not very willing to make personal sacrifices to reduce the deficit?" [Q.20C]

	<u>Very</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Not Very</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1992</b>						
--Likely Voters	24%	54%	19%	3%	100%	(801)

Family Income

--Less than \$20,000	17	53	23	7	100	(100)
--\$20,001 to \$30,000	18	47	27	9	101	(103)
--\$30,001 to \$50,000	28	52	18	2	100	(200)
--Over \$50,000	27	58	14	1	100	(318)

Vote Choice

--Bush	25	54	19	2	100	(354)
--Clinton	22	55	20	3	100	(252)
--Perot	34	50	14	2	100	(130)

"Do you think your financial situation is more likely to improve if Republican George Bush is elected, if Democrat Bill Clinton is elected, or if Independent Ross Perot is elected?" [Q.20D]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Perot</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>October, 1992</b>						
--Likely Voters	29%	34%	15%	22%	100%	(801)

Family Income

--Less than \$20,000	11	46	12	31	100	(100)
--\$20,001 to \$30,000	19	41	15	25	100	(103)
--\$30,001 to \$50,000	27	34	20	19	100	(200)
--Over \$50,000	38	29	13	21	101	(318)