

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, March 20, 1993. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*."

CRIME SEEN AS SERIOUS PROBLEM IN NEW JERSEY;

PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY IN NEIGHBORHOOD AND HOME DECLINE

Fully two-thirds of New Jersey residents feel that crime is a very serious problem in the state. In addition, three-in-ten residents feel crime has increased in their neighborhood over the past year while only 1-in-20 say it has gone down; and more than half now say that crime is at least a somewhat serious problem in their own neighborhood.

A *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll, conducted by telephone with 801 New Jersey residents between February 16 and 24, 1993, also shows that residents do not feel as safe at night in their neighborhoods and in their own homes as they did five years ago. Currently, 4-in-10 feel very safe in their neighborhood at night, down about 10 points from 1987. And while 67 percent now feel very safe in their own home at night, this is also down 10 points from 1987.

The survey also shows that about 1-in-7 residents say they have been the victim of the following crimes in the past six months: had property vandalized and had money or property stolen. In 1987, fewer than 1-in-10 reported these crimes.

In evaluating the job performance of their local police, three-quarters of state residents give positive grades of excellent or good.

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ATTENTION RADIO STATIONS:

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THE SERIOUSNESS OF CRIME STATEWIDE AND IN NEIGHBORHOODS

Two-thirds of New Jersey residents say that crime is a very serious problem in the state, while another 31 percent say it is somewhat serious. Those living in the state's cities and older suburbs are more likely than newer suburban and rural residents to feel that crime is a very serious state problem by a margin of 73 percent to 62 percent.

In thinking about their own neighborhoods, New Jerseyans are much less likely to consider crime as a very serious problem. Eleven percent say crime is a very serious problem in the neighborhood in which they live, 44 percent say it is somewhat serious, and 43 percent say it is not at all serious.

Residents of cities and older suburbs in New Jersey view crime as more serious in their own neighborhoods. One-quarter (23%) of those in the more urban areas say crime where they live is a very serious problem, compared to six percent of residents living in newer suburban and rural areas.

The majority of New Jersey residents (62%) say that the level of crime in their own neighborhood has stayed about the same over the past year. However, by better than a 4-to-1 margin, those reporting that crime has gone up (28%) outnumber those saying it has gone down (6%). Residents under 30 years old (34%) and those in the state's more urban areas (35%) are most likely to say crime has increased in their own neighborhood over the last 12 months.

Associate Poll Director Ken Dautrich commented, "While concern about crime is high and increasing among all residents, it is a dominant concern among those in more urban areas. Those who live in cities and older suburbs are more likely than others to be concerned about crime, to fear for their personal safety, and to actually report being a crime victim. These results are testimony to the difficulties which those living in urban areas must face."

SAFETY OF NEIGHBORHOODS

New Jerseyans are much more likely to feel safe in their neighborhoods during the daytime compared to the nighttime. About two-thirds (68%) feel their own neighborhood is very safe during the day, while only 42 percent feel it is very safe at night. The 42 percent who feel very safe in their neighborhood at night is down from 51 percent who felt that way five years ago.

The current survey demonstrates that those living in New Jersey's newer suburban areas and rural areas are much more likely to feel very safe than those in the cities and older suburbs. Among those in the less urban areas, three-quarters feel very safe during the day and half feel very safe at night in their neighborhood. Among residents in urban locations, half feel very safe during the day, and only 1-in-5 feel very safe at night.

Two-thirds of all residents report feeling very safe in their own home at night, while 3-in-10 feel somewhat safe, and 3 percent do not feel safe at all. The number of those feeling very safe dropped 10 points since 1987.

Again, there are sharp differences in perceptions of the safety of one's home at night when comparing urban and non-urban residents. For the former group, 55 percent report feeling very safe in their home at night, compared to 73 percent for the latter.

RATING OF LOCAL POLICE

Nearly three-quarters of state residents give their local police a positive job performance rating of either excellent (27%) or good (46%). Twenty-one percent say their local police are doing an only fair job, and 5 percent say they are performing poorly.

Residents of newer suburban and rural areas are more likely than those in cities and older suburbs to rate the performance of their local police positively by a margin of 82 percent to 56 percent.

Also, 80 percent of whites offer positive ratings to their local police compared to half of minorities who rate their local police favorably.

CRIME VICTIMIZATION

The current survey shows an increase since 1987 in the number of residents who have had property vandalized or money/property stolen in the past six months. Sixteen percent say they have had property vandalized in the last six months, up from 9 percent who said this in 1987. Fourteen percent report having money or property stolen, which is up from 8 percent in 1987.

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of residents in the state's urban areas report having property vandalized in the past six months, compared to 13 percent of those in less urban locations. One-in-five urban dwellers say they had money or property stolen, which is twice that of those in non-urban areas.

Statewide, 12 percent say that they or someone in their household had a car stolen or broken into in the last half year, which is close to the 10 percent who claimed to have an automobile crime in 1987. Urban residents (19%) are twice as likely as non-urban residents (9%) to report experiencing this type of crime.

Four percent of residents say their home was broken into in the past six months. The same percentage reported being the victim of this crime in 1987. In the current survey, 8 percent of city/old suburb residents say their home was broken into, compared to 2 percent of residents in new suburbs and rural areas.

Three percent say that they or someone in their household was assaulted or mugged in the last six months. Six percent of those in urban areas report this crime compared to two percent of those in non-urban settings.

CRIME PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

New Jersey residents were asked whether they had done each of five activities over the past year to protect themselves from being the victim of a crime. One-quarter of residents indicate that they have purchased mace or some other type of spray; 15 percent say that they installed a car alarm and 12 percent installed an alarm in their home; 5 percent took a self-defense course; and 3 percent purchased a gun.

BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP42-4 (EP92-4), SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 1993

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll was conducted between February 16 and February 24, 1993, when a random sample of 801 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.

"How serious a problem do you feel crime is in New Jersey--very serious, somewhat serious, or not at all serious?" [Q.24]

	<u>Very Serious</u>	<u>Somewhat Serious</u>	<u>Not At All Serious</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1993	66%	31%	2%	1%	100%	(801)
<u>WHERE LIVES*</u>						
--City/Old suburb	73	26	1	1	101	(235)
--New suburb/Rural	62	34	2	2	100	(566)

"How serious a problem is crime in your neighborhood--very serious, somewhat serious, or not at all serious?" [Q.25]

	<u>Very Serious</u>	<u>Somewhat Serious</u>	<u>Not At All Serious</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1993	11%	44%	43%	1%	99%	(801)
<u>WHERE LIVES*</u>						
--City/Old suburb	23	54	23	1	100	(235)
--New suburb/Rural	6	40	53	1	100	(566)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>						
1987	12	38	50	--	100	(499)

"In the past year would you say that the amount of crime in your neighborhood has gone up, gone down, or remained the same?" [Q.26]

	<u>Gone Up</u>	<u>Gone Down</u>	<u>Stayed The Same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1993	28%	6%	62%	4%	100%	(801)
<u>WHERE LIVES*</u>						
--City/Old suburb	35	6	53	5	99	(235)
--New suburb/Rural	25	5	67	3	100	(566)
<u>AGE</u>						
--18 - 29	34	7	54	6	101	(139)
--30 - 49	30	5	62	2	99	(342)
--50 - 64	28	5	65	2	100	(157)
--65 or older	16	7	71	7	101	(148)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>						
1987	23	8	66	3	100	(499)

"How safe do you feel in your neighborhood during the day--very safe, somewhat safe, or not at all safe?" [Q.27]

	<u>Very Safe</u>	<u>Somewhat Safe</u>	<u>Not At All Safe</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1993	68%	28%	3%	1%	100%	(801)
<i><u>WHERE LIVES*</u></i>						
--City/Old suburb	52	40	6	1	99	(235)
--New suburb/Rural	75	23	2	--	100	(566)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>						
1987	69	26	4	--	99	(499)

"How about your neighborhood at night--very safe, somewhat safe, or not at all safe?" [Q.28]

	<u>Very Safe</u>	<u>Somewhat Safe</u>	<u>Not At All Safe</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1993	42%	44%	13%	--	99%	(801)
<i><u>WHERE LIVES*</u></i>						
--City/Old suburb	21	51	27	1	100	(235)
--New suburb/Rural	52	40	7	--	99	(566)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>						
1987	51	36	11	2	100	(499)

"And how safe do you feel in your own home at night--very safe, somewhat safe, or not at all safe?" [Q.29]

	<u>Very Safe</u>	<u>Somewhat Safe</u>	<u>Not At All Safe</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1993	67%	30%	3%	--	100%	(801)
<i><u>WHERE LIVES*</u></i>						
--City/Old suburb	55	40	4	--	99	(235)
--New suburb/Rural	73	25	2	--	100	(566)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>						
1987	77	21	2	--	100	(499)

"During the last six months have any of the following things happened to you or anyone in your household? Have you . . .?" [Q.30]

	<u>Percent Saying "YES"</u>			
	<u>1993 Total (n=801)</u>	<u>1993 City/ Old Suburb (n=235)</u>	<u>1993 Suburb/ Rural (n=516)</u>	<u>1987 Total (n=1,000)</u>
--had property vandalized	16%	23%	13%	9%
--money or property stolen	14	21	11	8
--your car stolen or broken into	12	19	9	10
--your home broken into	4	8	2	4
--been assaulted or mugged	3	6	2	2

"In the last year have you (READ ITEM) to protect yourself from being a victim of crime?" [Q.31]

	<u>Percent Saying "YES"</u>
	<u>1993 Total (n=801)</u>
--purchased mace or some other type of spray	24%
--installed alarms in your car	15
--installed alarms in your home	12
--taken a self-defense course	5
--purchased a gun	3

"How would you rate the job your local police are doing--excellent, good, only fair, or poor?" [Q.32]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
February, 1993	27%	46%	21%	5%	1%	100%	(801)
<i><u>WHERE LIVES*</u></i>							
--City/Old suburb	18	38	33	10	1	100	(235)
--New suburb/Rural	32	50	15	3	1	101	(566)
<i><u>RACE</u></i>							
--White	31	49	16	3	1	100	(640)
--Non-white	15	36	36	13	--	100	(156)

*Type of Place Respondent Lives In: All municipalities in the state have been classified into one of four groups, based on location, settlement patterns, population density and growth.

Cities: New Jersey's largest cities: Newark, Jersey City, Paterson, Elizabeth, Trenton and Camden.

Older Suburbs: This category is generally based on the cities of the state over 25,000 in population with the following exceptions: balance of Hudson and Union counties, included because of their high density. Long Branch and Vineland were excluded because of the rapid growth and their small proportion of their counties population. Woodbridge, South Amboy and Carteret were included because of there similarity to nearby high density areas of Union County.

New Suburbs: These are primarily "outside central city" proportions of the Census Bureau's Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, with the addition of Somerset and parts of Middlesex, Ocean and Monmouth because of their settlement patterns.

Rural Areas: Includes communities not in any of the three categories above. Salem, Warren and sections of Gloucester, Burlington, Middlesex and Monmouth are not classified as rural by the Census Bureau, but they are included here either because of the minor central cities toward which they are directed or because of their development patterns. Atlantic County outside of Atlantic City is included here because of its development pattern and similarity to surrounding rural areas.