

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

## CLINTON RATINGS DOWN

### — BUT PRESIDENT VIEWED AS BETTER THAN BUSH

President Bill Clinton's job performance ratings have declined 16 percentage points in the past four months. While about 3-in-10 state residents give the President positive ratings, more than twice as many — 7-in-10 — rate his overall performance in office negatively.

However, 4-in-10 state residents feel that compared to President George Bush, Clinton represents a change for the better, while 1-in-4 say he is a change for the worse.

The telephone survey was conducted with 801 New Jerseyans from June 10 to 16 which was before the Iraqi air strike. It is expected that the evaluations of the President may have been somewhat higher because of a "rally" effect if the interviews had been conducted

In a recent national survey conducted by the *New York Times* individuals who answered similar questions about Bill Clinton's job performance were re-interviewed after the Iraqi air strike. This poll showed that Clinton's overall job approval rating increased about 10 percent (39% pre air strike/50% post air strike) and there was a similar increase in the assessment of his handling of foreign policy (38% pre air strike/49% post air strike). This increase is attributed to a "rally" effect that draws support for a President. However, the poll did not show any change in the rating of Clinton ratings based on the economy (34% pre air strike/36% post air strike).

DATA SOURCE: *New York Times*, June 29, 1993

### ATTENTION RADIO STATIONS:

Audio is available after 8:00 A.M. on Monday, July 5, 1993, from (908)932-3605 (Rutgers Feature Phone).

after the air strike. However, it is less likely that the questions asked about economic issues would have been influenced by the air strike.

The *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll also finds that New Jerseyans are divided on the impact of Clinton's economic proposals. A third say his policies will help the economy, about a third feel they will hurt the economy, and a third do not feel his economic policies will make any difference.

More residents think Clinton's economic proposals will increase the deficit than say they will decrease the deficit. And while only 16 percent think the President's economic program will benefit their family in the next year, twice that number feel there will be improvements in the next three years.

### ***PRESIDENTIAL JOB PERFORMANCE RATINGS***

President Bill Clinton, the first Democratic candidate to win in New Jersey since 1964, has experienced a 16 percentage point decline in his job performance ratings. While 28 percent feel that the President is doing an excellent (5%) or good (23%) job, 70 percent rate his performance as only fair (45%) or poor (25%) and 2 percent do not give a rating. The first job performance rating given by New Jerseyans was a 44 percent positive rating of excellent (15%) or good (29%) and 44 percent also rated him as only fair (26%) or poor (18%). In February, 12 percent did not know how to rate the President.

There are distinct partisan differences in the positive job performance ratings for the President. While 46 percent of the Democrats rate him as excellent or good, 26 percent of the independents and 6 percent of the Republicans give him this evaluation. For all of these partisan groups there is a similar decline in positive ratings of about 17 percentage points since February.

New Jerseyans also rated Clinton's job performance on six specific policy issues. The President receives his highest positive ratings for his efforts to cut federal spending (31%) and health care reform (28%). One-in-four residents give him excellent or good ratings for handling the nation's foreign affairs (25%) and the nation's social problems (25%), and 1-in-5 rate his tax program (22%) and the way he has handled economic problems (21%) positively.

All of these ratings are similar along partisan lines with an average of about 1-in-3 Democrats giving him a positive rating, 1-in-4 independents, and 1-in-10 Republicans assessing his job performance as excellent or good.

Overall, New Jerseyans' are divided on their general impression of Clinton. Forty percent have a very (15%) or somewhat (25%) favorable impression of the President and 42 percent have a very (24%) or somewhat (18%) unfavorable impression. Eighteen percent do not know what impression they have of Clinton.

### ***COMPARISON WITH BUSH***

When Bill Clinton's job as President is compared to George Bush, more New Jerseyans view Clinton as being better. While 40 percent say the President represents a change for the better, 30 percent say that Clinton's job performance is about the same as Bush, and 26 percent say Clinton is a change for the worse.

Attitudes on the Clinton/Bush comparison are very partisan with 62 percent of Democrats saying Clinton is a change for the better while 58 percent of the Republicans feel he is a change for the worse. Independents are more likely to say Clinton is a change for the better than for the worse by a margin of 38 to 25 percent.

"A key theme in the Presidential election was change," commented Janice Ballou, Director of the Poll. "And although Bill Clinton has not met New Jerseyans' expectations in achieving specific policy changes, he is still perceived more as an agent of change than former President Bush."

### ***THE IMPACT OF CLINTON'S ECONOMIC PROPOSALS***

Overall, there is not a consensus on President Clinton's economic proposals. Almost equal percentages of state residents say his economic programs will help the economy (33%) as feel these policies will hurt the economy (28%) or not make any difference (33%). New Jerseyans with annual family incomes of under \$20,000 (37%) and \$20,001-\$30,000 (42%) are more likely than those with family incomes of \$30,001-\$50,000 (29%) and over \$50,000 (31%) to say these programs will help the economy.

When New Jerseyans focus on the impact of Clinton's economic proposals on the federal budget deficit, 48 percent say these programs will increase the deficit compared to 41 percent who think they will decrease the deficit.

The majority (51%) of New Jerseyans do not expect any changes in their own financial situation in the next year as a result of Clinton's economic programs. However, 29 percent think their financial situation will get worse and 16 percent think it will be better. New Jerseyans with annual family incomes between \$20,001 and \$30,000 (27%) are more likely than those who have family incomes under \$20,000 (18%) or those between \$30,001 and \$50,000 (14%) or over \$50,000 (12%) to say their financial situation will improve in the next year.

Residents are somewhat more optimistic about the long term effect of Clinton's economic programs with 31 percent saying their own financial situation will be better in three years while 27 percent think their financial situation will get worse and 30 percent say it will be about the same. These percentages are similar for all income groups.

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**BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP43-3 (EP93-3), SUNDAY, JULY 4, 1993**

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll was conducted between June 10 and June 16, 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  $\pm 3.5$  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.

"Is your general impression of Clinton Favorable or unfavorable, or don't you have an opinion about him? (IF FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE, PROBE: Is that very (favorable/unfavorable) or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable)?" [Q.36]

	<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>
<b>June, 1993--Total</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	27	38	13	5	17	100	(261)
--Independent	11	21	21	25	21	99	(315)
--Republican	1	12	24	51	12	100	(201)
<i>Race</i>							
--White	12	24	21	27	16	100	(645)
--Non-white	23	31	10	12	24	100	(141)

"How would you rate the job Bill Clinton is doing as President--excellent, good only fair or poor?" [Q.37]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>June, 1993--Total</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	7	39	42	10	2	100	(261)
--Independent	5	21	49	25	1	101	(315)
--Republican	2	4	42	52	--	100	(201)
<b><u>PAST SURVEYS</u></b>							
February, 1993	15	29	26	18	12	100	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	25	38	19	5	12	99	(274)
--Independent	14	29	27	16	15	101	(299)

--Republican 4 17 33 40 6 100 (202)

"How would you rate his handling of (SEE ITEM) excellent, good, only fair or poor?" [Q.38]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>The nation's foreign affairs</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	6	32	47	13	2	100	(261)
--Independent	3	19	47	25	6	100	(315)
--Republican	--	9	48	38	4	99	(201)
<b>Problems of the economy</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	5	30	48	16	1	100	(261)
--Independent	4	14	43	37	2	100	(315)
--Republican	--	5	38	52	4	99	(201)
<b>The nation's social problems</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	6	30	49	11	4	100	(261)
--Independent	4	20	42	28	6	100	(315)
--Republican	--	11	40	44	6	101	(201)
<b>Health care reform</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	14	27	32	16	11	100	(261)
--Independent	4	23	31	30	12	100	(315)
--Republican	--	9	33	46	11	99	(201)
<b>Efforts to cut federal spending</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	9	35	36	17	3	100	(261)
--Independent	6	24	32	33	4	99	(315)
--Republican	2	11	30	50	6	99	(201)
<b>Tax program</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	7	26	47	13	6	99	(261)
--Independent	3	15	35	42	5	100	(315)
--Republican	--	8	26	61	5	100	(201)

"Based on what you know, would you say that Clinton's economic proposals will help the economy, hurt the economy, or won't it make much difference one way or the other?" [Q.39]

	<u>Help The Economy</u>	<u>Hurt The Economy</u>	<u>No Difference</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>June, 1993--Total</b>	33%	28%	33%	1%	6%	101%	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	51	11	31	--	7	100	(261)
--Independent	27	30	36	2	5	100	(315)
--Republican	13	52	31	--	4	100	(201)
<i>Total Annual Family Income</i>							
--Under \$20,000	37	22	36	--	5	100	(111)
--\$20,001 - \$30,000	42	21	28	1	8	100	(104)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	29	28	38	1	4	100	(233)
--Over \$50,000	31	36	29	1	3	100	(284)

"And, based on what you know, would you say that Clinton's economic proposals will increase or decrease the federal budget deficit?" [Q.40]

	<u>Increase The Deficit</u>	<u>Decrease The Deficit</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>June, 1993--Total</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>						
--Democrat	33	54	2	10	99	(261)
--Independent	51	40	3	7	101	(315)
--Republican	69	23	1	7	100	(201)
<i>Total Annual Family Income</i>						
--Under \$20,000	39	40	1	19	99	(111)
--\$20,001 - \$30,000	47	47	1	6	101	(104)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	50	42	3	5	100	(233)
--Over \$50,000	53	38	2	6	99	(284)

"If Clinton's economic program is enacted, do you think that a year from now you and your family will be better off financially, worse off financially, or about the same as you are now?" [Q.41A]

"What about three years from now?" [Q.41B]

	Better <u>Off</u>	Worse <u>Off</u>	About <u>The Same</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b><u>ONE YEAR</u></b>						
<b>June, 1993--Total</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>						
--Democrat	23	13	58	6	100	(261)
--Independent	16	31	50	4	101	(315)
--Republican	8	50	40	2	100	(201)
<i>Total Annual Family Income</i>						
--Under \$20,000	18	21	52	9	100	(111)
--\$20,001 - \$30,000	27	21	45	6	99	(104)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	14	29	54	2	99	(233)
--Over \$50,000	12	36	49	2	99	(284)

**THREE YEARS**

<b>June, 1993--Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>						
--Democrat	43	14	31	12	100	(261)
--Independent	30	29	31	9	99	(315)
--Republican	17	45	24	14	100	(201)

"Compared to the way George Bush handled the job of president, do you think Bill Clinton represents a change for the better, a change for the worse, or is he doing about the same job as Bush?" [Q.42]

	Change For The <u>Better</u>	Change For The <u>Worse</u>	About <u>The Same</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>June, 1993--Total</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(801)</b>
<i>Party ID</i>						
--Democrat	62	8	28	2	100	(261)
--Independent	38	25	32	5	100	(315)
--Republican	12	58	27	2	99	(201)