

# 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*."

## NEITHER FLORIO NOR WHITMAN SEEN AS BETTER

### ON HANDLING THE ECONOMY

**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.**

With nearly 4-in-5 voters describing economic conditions in New Jersey as in bad times, majorities do not think that the election of either Jim Florio or Christine Todd Whitman as governor will make any difference in improving economic conditions in the state (51%) or in creating new jobs in New Jersey (61%).

Reflecting on the 1990 increases in state taxes, more residents believe that raising taxes was something Governor Florio had to do to deal with an unexpected budget crisis (54%) than feel that he went back on his campaign promise that no new taxes were necessary (41%).

Looking at perceptions of how the 1990 tax package affected them personally, about one-third of voters report that the taxes they pay went up a lot, while half report that their own state taxes went up a little.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll, conducted by telephone between September 10 and 15, 1993 with 591 New Jerseyans who are likely to vote in the upcoming gubernatorial election

#### **ATTENTION RADIO STATIONS:**

Audio is available after 8:00 A.M. on Monday, September 27, 1993, from (908) 932-3605 (Rutgers Feature Phone).

shows that as voters look back on Florio's first term as governor, nearly half feel that the economic policies of his administration have neither helped nor hurt the state's economy.

### ***FLORIO VS. WHITMAN ON THE ECONOMY AND JOBS***

A majority (51%) of New Jerseyans who are likely to vote in the November gubernatorial election say that neither Florio nor Whitman would do a better job of improving economic conditions in the state. About equal percentages feel either of the candidates would do a better job of improving economic conditions in the state — 26 percent of voters say that Florio would do better compared to 23 percent who feel Whitman would be better.

On the issue of creating jobs, about six-in-ten voters (61%) say that it makes no difference who is elected. One-in-five voters favor Florio (20%) and the about the same number (19%) feel Whitman would do better at creating new jobs in New Jersey.

Ken Dautrich, Associate Director of the Poll, commented, "Many voters don't see much difference between the candidates on the bread and butter issues which are most important in this election. They are skeptical about Florio's performance and uncertain about Whitman. With the announcement of Whitman's economic plan this past week, the onslaught of political ads and the October debates, voters will have more information to decide which candidate can better move New Jersey in the right economic direction."

In looking back at Florio's first term as governor, nearly half of voters do not feel that his administration's policies have either helped or hurt New Jersey's economy. Among those who do have a position on the issue, more feel that the Governor's policies have hurt (30%) rather than helped (23%).

### ***RETROSPECTIVE ON FLORIO TAX HIKES***

In his 1989 campaign for governor, Jim Florio indicated that he saw no need to increase state taxes. Early in his first term, however, the Governor signed into law a set of controversial sales and income tax increases, claiming they were necessary due to budget problems he was not aware of in the campaign. Voters were asked on the latest survey how they felt about this — and a majority (54%) indicate that raising taxes was something Florio had to do for the good of the state, compared to 41 percent who feel that Florio went back on his word.

Dautrich commented, "An important part of the voters' choice for governor includes a decision about which candidate has more credibility. The test of credibility for Florio is whether his

tax increase was justifiable, and he seems to have passed that test with about half of the voters. The test for Whitman lies in her ability to convince voters that her plan to cut taxes is realistic."

Feelings about Florio's actions cut largely along partisan lines with three-quarters of Democrats saying that raising taxes was something Florio had to do for the good of the state, compared to 53 percent of independents and 28 percent of Republicans.

As a result of the tax increases passed under the Florio administration, about one-third (35%) of voters say the state taxes they pay increased a lot, while an additional 52 percent say they increased a little. Seven percent say their own state taxes did not increase at all.

### ***ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN NEW JERSEY***

Fully 77 percent of New Jerseyans who are likely to vote in the November gubernatorial election describe the state's economic situation as being in bad times while only 17 percent feel the economy is experiencing good times right now. Democrats (65%) are less likely to describe the state's economy as in bad times than either Republicans (86%) or independents (81%).

### ***FLORIO VS. WHITMAN ON TAXES***

At the time this survey was conducted, which was before Whitman announced her economic plan, New Jersey voters were more likely to think that state taxes would increase if Florio is re-elected than if Whitman becomes governor. If the Governor is re-elected for a second term, about half (49%) of voters believe taxes would increase, 40 percent say they will stay the same and 2 percent say they will decrease. Sixty percent of Republicans say state taxes will go up if Florio is elected compared to 51 percent of independents and 40 percent of Democrats.

If Whitman is elected Governor, 31 percent believe state taxes will go up, 44 percent say they will stay the same, and 9 percent think they will decrease. Republicans (20%) are less likely than independents (32%) and Democrats (38%) to feel that taxes will increase if Whitman is elected.

## BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP44-2 (EP94-2), SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1993

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll was conducted between September 10 and 15, 1993, when a random sample of 801 New Jerseyans, 18 years and older, was interviewed by telephone. This release is based on a subgroup of 591 likely voters. These are people who are registered to vote and say they will probably or definitely vote on Election Day. Figures based on this sample size are subject to a sampling error of about  $\pm 4$  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 would you generally describe economic conditions in New Jersey now — Would you say that economically New Jersey is in good times or bad times right now?" [Q.24]

	<u>Good Times</u>	<u>Bad Times</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1993</b>					
--Likely voters	17%	77%	6%	100%	(590)
<u>Party Identification</u>					
--Democrat	28	65	7	100	(199)
--Independent	12	81	7	100	(224)
--Republican	10	86	5	101	(146)
<u>Vote Intentions</u>					
--Florio	26	66	8	100	(276)
--Undecided	13	83	3	99	(89)
--Whitman	6	89	5	100	(219)

"Do you think that the economic policies of Governor Florio's administration have helped the state's economy, hurt the state's economy, or haven't they made much difference?" [Q.25]

	<u>Helped</u>	<u>Hurt</u>	<u>No Difference/ Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1993</b>					
--Likely voters	23%	30%	47%	100%	(590)
<u>Party Identification</u>					
--Democrat	39	13	49	101	(199)
--Independent	19	32	49	100	(224)
--Republican	10	50	39	99	(146)
<u>Vote Intentions</u>					
--Florio	43	5	51	99	(276)

--Undecided	11	28	61	100	(89)
--Whitman	3	62	35	100	(219)

"Which candidate for Governor do you think would do a better job of improving economic conditions in New Jersey — Jim Florio or Christie Whitman, or don't you think it makes much difference?" [Q.26]

	<u>Florio</u>	<u>Whitman</u>	<u>No Difference/ Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1993</b>					
--Likely voters	<b>26%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(589)</b>
<i>Party Identification</i>					
--Democrat	46	9	46	101	(199)
--Independent	21	19	59	99	(223)
--Republican	8	51	42	101	(146)

"Which candidate, Florio or Whitman, would do a better job of creating new jobs in New Jersey, or don't you think it will make much difference?" [Q.27]

	<u>Florio</u>	<u>Whitman</u>	<u>No Difference/ Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1993</b>					
--Likely voters	<b>20%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(590)</b>
<i>Party Identification</i>					
--Democrat	35	11	55	101	(199)
--Independent	17	17	67	101	(224)
--Republican	6	36	58	100	(146)

"In his 1989 campaign for Governor, Jim Florio said he saw no need to increase state taxes. However, Florio signed into law increases in the state sales and income taxes. He said this was necessary because of budget problems he did not find out about until after he was elected.

How do you feel about this — does it make you think of Jim Florio as a politician who goes back on what he says, or do you think raising taxes was something he had to do for the good of the state?" [Q.28]

	<u>Jim Florio Went Back On Word</u>	<u>For Good of State</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1993</b>					
--Likely voters	<b>41%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(590)</b>
<i>Party Identification</i>					

--Democrat	20	75	5	100	(199)
--Independent	42	53	5	100	(224)
--Republican	69	28	3	100	(146)

Vote Intentions

--Florio	12	84	3	99	(276)
--Undecided	49	39	11	99	(89)
--Whitman	75	21	4	100	(219)

"As a result of the tax increases approved during the Florio administration, have the state taxes that you pay gone up a lot, a little, or not at all?" [Q.29]

	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1993</b>						
--Likely voters	<b>35%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(590)</b>

Party Identification

--Democrat	27	53	11	9	100	(199)
--Independent	33	57	5	4	99	(224)
--Republican	45	46	6	3	100	(146)

Taxable Income

--Single, under \$20,000	28	50	12	10	100	(103)
--Single, \$35,000 and over	31	56	6	6	99	(107)
--Married, under \$70,000	35	55	7	3	100	(226)
--Married, \$70,000 and over	44	45	3	7	99	(108)

Vote Intentions

--Florio	18	63	9	9	99	(276)
--Undecided	42	47	7	4	100	(89)
--Whitman	52	41	5	3	101	(219)

"If Jim Florio is elected Governor, do you think the state taxes you pay will be increased, decreased, or stay the same?" [Q.30]

	<u>Increased</u>	<u>Decreased</u>	<u>Stay Same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1993</b>						
--Likely voters	<b>49%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(588)</b>

Party Identification

--Democrat	40	5	44	11	100	(198)
--Independent	51	1	40	8	100	(224)
--Republican	60	--	37	3	100	(145)

"If Christie Whitman is elected Governor, do you think the state taxes you pay will be increased, decreased, or stay the same?" [Q.31]

Stay Don't

	<u>Increased</u>	<u>Decreased</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1993</b>						
--Likely voters	<b>31%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(589)</b>
<i><u>Party Identification</u></i>						
--Democrat	38	8	36	18	100	(199)
--Independent	32	6	47	15	100	(224)
--Republican	20	14	53	13	100	(145)