

# The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

EMBARGOED – NOT FOR RELEASE UNTIL: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1994

RELEASE: SL/EP 49-1 (EP 99-1)

CONTACT: JANICE BALLOU (908)828-2210, Ext. 240  
OR KEN DAUTRICH (908)828-2210, Ext. 241

## 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*."

## THE U.S. SENATE RACE: MAJORITY OF VOTERS

### HAVE NOT DECIDED ON A CANDIDATE

In this release the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll introduces a classification of likely voters that is based on how firmly they support a candidate. A firm voter is one who selects a candidate and says they are "very sure" about their choice and will not change their mind before the election. "Not firm" voters are those who select a candidate and say they might change their mind or who are initially undecided. Traditionally election studies have grouped voters who "lean" toward a candidate with those who are "undecided." Voters who are "firm" in their choice of candidate or those who say they "might change" have been allocated to a specific candidate. A 1993 Eagleton post-election study showed that this traditional classification underrepresents the larger group of voters who might change their minds prior to or even on Election Day.

With about two months to go until Election Day, the largest group of likely voters in New Jersey—58 percent—do not firmly support either candidate for U.S. Senate while 26 percent firmly support Democratic incumbent Frank Lautenberg and 16 percent firmly support Republican challenger Garabed (Chuck) Haytaian. Neither candidate has added to his base of support since the June 1994 poll.

Over the summer neither candidate gained any additional recognition among likely voters. Three-in-four voters either do not know or have not formed an opinion of Chuck Haytaian and 4-in-10 do not have a general impression of Lautenberg the twelve year Democratic incumbent. This is about the same level of awareness as in the June 1994 poll.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll which was conducted by telephone from August 30 to September 6, 1994 with 598 voters who say they are likely to vote in this November's election found that 40 percent say Lautenberg deserves to be re-elected to the U.S. Senate. This is a modest increase of 5 percentage points since June, but continues the trend from February of an increasing percentage of voters willing to consider re-electing the incumbent.

"The U.S. Senate race appears to be following the pattern of recent elections in New Jersey," commented Janice Ballou, the Director of the Poll. "Fewer voters are making early commitments to a candidate. That means neither candidate has the advantage of beginning the campaign with a stable base of firm voters that is large enough to win the election."

Statewide voters are evenly divided between the Democratic and the Republican candidates in the U.S. Congressional races. Thirty-three percent say they will vote for a Democratic candidate, 33 percent support a Republican candidate, and 33 percent remain undecided. The support for Democratic candidates is an 11 percentage point decrease from a September 1992 poll.

### ***THE SENATE RACE***

Since the June 1994 poll there has been very little change in voter preferences for the two candidates for U.S. Senator. In the current poll Haytaian has support from 26 percent who say they are

firm and will not change their mind (15%) or who select him, but say they might change their mind (11%). This is about the same as the 29 percent who were in these categories in June. In comparison, Lautenberg currently has support from 52 percent who say they are firm and will not change their mind (26%) or who select him, but say they might change their mind (26%) which is similar to the 55 percent who were in these categories in the last poll. Voters who are initially undecided about the candidates increased from 13 percent to 21 percent.

At this point in the campaign, a majority of New Jersey voters do not firmly support a specific candidate. Overall, 58 percent of likely voters are undecided (21%) or select either Lautenberg (26%) or Haytaian (11%) but report that they might change their mind before Election Day. In comparison, 41 percent of likely voters are firm supporters of either Lautenberg (26%) or Haytaian (15%) and say that they are not going to change their minds.

Likely voters who have a partisan identification are more likely to firmly support a candidate than those who consider themselves to be independents. Among Democrats, 50 percent are firm supporters of Lautenberg, 49 percent are not yet firm supporters of any candidate, and 1 percent firmly support Haytaian. Forty-one percent of Republicans firmly support Haytaian, 52 percent do not firmly support any candidate, and 7 percent say they firmly support Lautenberg. Most independent voters (68%) do not firmly support any candidate while 10 percent say they are firm in their choice of Haytaian, and 22 percent firmly support Lautenberg.

Among those who say Lautenberg deserves to be re-elected, 52 percent firmly support him, compared to 47 percent that are not firm. Not surprisingly, Haytaian (35%) gets more support from those who say it is time for a change than Lautenberg (8%), but 57 percent of this group does not firmly support either candidate. Voters who are not sure if Lautenberg should be re-elected are the most likely not to firmly support a candidate. Among this group, 86 percent do not firmly support any candidate compared to 3 percent who are firm for Haytaian and 11 percent who are firm supporters of Lautenberg.

Looking at how voters' past choice of candidates affects the current election, 31 percent of New Jerseyans who voted for Governor Whitman in 1993 say that they firmly support Haytaian compared to 51 percent of Florio voters who are firm about their choice of Lautenberg. In addition, 45

percent of those who voted for President Clinton in 1992 say they firmly support Lautenberg while 35 percent of those who voted for Bush are firm about Haytaian. Most Perot voters (70%) do not firmly support any candidate, while 20 percent are firm for Lautenberg and 10 percent firmly support Haytaian.

Since the June 1994 poll there has been a slight increase in the percentage of voters who say Senator Lautenberg deserves re-election. This increase is part of a positive trend for Lautenberg. Currently, 40 percent of likely voters say Lautenberg deserves re-election which is a 5 percentage point increase from June when 35 percent felt this way, and an 11 percentage point increase from February 1994 when 29 percent said the incumbent Senator should be re-elected.

The potential volatility of this trend is indicated by the 13 percent of firm Lautenberg voters who also say it is time for a change. In addition, among the large group of voters who do not firmly support a candidate, 33 percent say he deserves re-election, 41 percent feel it's time for a change, and 21 percent don't have an opinion.

### ***CANDIDATE AWARENESS AND IMPRESSIONS***

As the 12 year incumbent Senator, Frank Lautenberg has a higher level of name recognition than Chuck Haytaian. Thirty-three percent of the voters can name Lautenberg as the Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate, and an additional 64 percent recognize his name for a total name recognition of 97 percent. In comparison, Haytaian, the Speaker of the New Jersey Assembly, is named as the Republican candidate by 22 percent and recognized by an additional 36 percent for a total name recognition of 58 percent. The awareness of both of these candidates has not changed since the June poll.

As would be expected, because of his lower level of awareness, fewer voters have an impression of Haytaian than of Lautenberg. Seventy-four percent of the voters either do not

- more -

recognize Haytaian (42%) or don't have an opinion of him (32%). Among the 26 percent who do have an impression of the Republican challenger, 15 percent have a very (5%) or somewhat (10%) favorable

impression, and 11 percent have a very (5%) or somewhat (6%) unfavorable impression. These are similar to the impressions voters had of Haytaian in June.

In comparison, 43 percent either don't recognize (4%) or don't have an opinion (39%) of the incumbent Senator. Among the 57 percent who do have an impression of Lautenberg, 39 percent have a very (13%) or somewhat (26%) favorable impression and 18 percent have a very (9%) or somewhat (9%) unfavorable impression. These percentages are a slight change from June when 44 percent had favorable impressions of Lautenberg, 17 percent unfavorable, and 40 percent did not know the candidate or did not have an opinion about him.

### ***INFORMATION ABOUT THE CANDIDATES***

Since neither candidate has begun to actively campaign with paid commercial advertising, the information voters have received about Haytaian and Lautenberg has come primarily through news reports. Among those who have heard of Haytaian, 63 percent say they recall reading or hearing something about him in the news in the past few months. The Haytaian news reports that most voters remember are about him running for the U.S. Senate (23%), his wife not paying taxes on her salary (10%), support for the Whitman tax cut (9%), and his role in Megan's law (3%). Seventy-one percent of those who have heard of Lautenberg say they have read or heard something about him in the past few months. Among those who are aware of these news stories, 20 percent recall his effort to return the Abequa children to New Jersey, 11 percent mention his vote on the crime bill, 12 percent that he is running for the U.S. Senate, and 4 percent mention Lautenberg's action on the health care bill.

### ***THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RACE***

In addition to the statewide race for U.S. Senator, voters will be selecting representatives in their Congressional districts. While a statewide survey cannot be used to assess races in any specific Congressional district, a general trend indicates voter preferences may be moving toward the Republican candidates. Overall, likely voters are evenly divided between the Democratic (33%) and the Republican candidates (33%). In addition, 33 percent are still undecided about who they will vote for. However, at this time in 1992, the Democratic candidates (44%) had more support than the Republican candidates (31%).

Currently, Republicans (81%) are more likely than Democrats (72%) to say that they will support their party's candidate for Congress. Independent voters are about evenly divided between the Democratic (24%) and Republican (21%) candidates with the majority (53%) saying they are undecided about who they will vote for.

- 30 -

Copyright, September 11, 1994, The Eagleton Institute and Newark *Star-Ledger*.

**BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP49-1 (EP99-1), SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1994**

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll was conducted between August 30 and September 6, 1994, 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.

Figures are also reported for those considered most likely to actually vote in the November election. This subset, identified as **LIKELY VOTERS** in this background memo, contains 598 respondents. The sampling error for this subset is about  $\pm 4.0$  percent. Unless otherwise indicated all figures refer to this group of voters. Likely voters are people who say that they are registered to vote and will "definitely" or "probably" vote on Election Day.

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 interested are you in this election — very interested, somewhat interested, or not at all interested? [Q.5]

	<u>Very Interested</u>	<u>Somewhat Interested</u>	<u>Not At All Interested</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1994 - Likely Voters</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(598)</b>
<u>Vote Choice - Traditional</u>						
--Haytaian	49	48	2	1	100	(170)
--Undecided	28	61	8	3	100	(74)
--Lautenberg	34	59	5	2	100	(339)
<u>New Vote Choice</u>						
--Firm Haytaian	51	46	2	1	100	(91)
--Not Firm	29	64	5	2	100	(339)
--Firm Lautenberg	49	46	5	1	101	(153)

"Do you know who the (Republican/Democratic) candidate for Senator is? [Q.6, Q.10] ASKED OF THOSE NOT NAMING CANDIDATE: The (Republican/Democratic) candidate is (Chuck Haytaian/Frank Lautenberg) — have you ever heard of him before?" [Q.7/Q.11]

<u>Names</u>	<u>Recognizes</u>	<u>Doesn't Recognize</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
--------------	-------------------	------------------------------	--------------	------------

**HAYTAIAN**





**September, 1994 - Likely Voters**      **13%**      **26%**      **9%**      **9%**      **4%**      **39%**      **100% (598)**

Party ID

--Democrat	21	32	5	2	4	36	100	(191)
--Independent	12	26	5	11	4	42	100	(219)
--Republican	6	21	17	16	4	36	100	(170)

**PAST SURVEYS**

**HAYTAIAN**

June, 1994 - Likely Voters      6      7      4      4      44      34      99      (620)

Party ID

--Democrat	4	3	7	7	51	28	100	(214)
--Independent	4	9	5	4	39	39	100	(198)
--Republican	13	11	2	1	39	34	100	(176)

**LAUTENBERG**

June, 1994 - Likely Voters      15      29      10      7      3      37      101      (620)

Party ID

--Democrat	23	36	4	2	3	32	100	(214)
--Independent	12	29	9	6	2	41	99	(198)
--Republican	6	20	19	15	3	36	99	(176)

"How much do you think you know about (Haytaian/Lautenberg) — a lot, some, or a little?" [Q.9/Q.13]

	<u>A</u> <u>Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A</u> <u>Little</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>Know</u> <u>Candidate</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b><i>HAYTAIAN</i></b>							
<b>September, 1994 - Likely Voters</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(598)</b>

***LAUTENBERG***

**September, 1994 - Likely Voters**      **12**      **37**      **46**      **4**      **--**      **99**      **(598)**

**PAST SURVEYS**

**HAYTAIAN**

June, 1994 - Likely Voters      4      15      37      44      1      101      (620)

**LAUTENBERG**

June, 1994 - Likely Voters      8      39      49      3      1      100      (620)

***AMONG THOSE WHO NAME OR RECOGNIZE LAUTENBERG:***

"In the past few months, have you read or heard anything in the news about Frank Lautenberg?" [Q.14]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1994 - Likely Voters</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(575)</b>

***AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE READ OR HEARD ANYTHING IN THE NEWS:***

"And, what do you remember reading or hearing about Lautenberg in the news?" [Q.15]

Total

Top Mentions

--Returning Abequa children to New Jersey	20%
--Vote on Crime Bill	11
--Running for Senate	12
--Action on Health Care Bill	4
--Don't Know	37

*AMONG THOSE WHO NAME OR RECOGNIZE HAYTAIAN:*

"In the past few months have you read or heard anything in the news about Garabed (Chuck) Haytaian?" [Q.16]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1994 - Likely Voters</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(347)</b>

*AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE READ OR HEARD ANYTHING IN THE NEWS:*

"And, what do you remember reading or learning about Haytaian in the news?" [Q.17]

	<u>Total</u>
<u>Top Mentions</u>	
--Running for Senate	23
--Wife receiving non-taxed salary	10
--Support for Whitman tax cut	9
--Action on Megan's Law	3
--Don't Know	34

"Suppose the election for Senator was held today and you had to choose right now. Would you vote for Chuck Haytaian, the Republican; or Frank Lautenberg, the Democrat? [Q.18] (Candidates' names are rotated) (IF CHOOSES CANDIDATE, PROBE: Are you very sure about your choice, or might you change your mind before the election?) [Q.20] (IF WOULDN'T VOTE NOW, PROBE: Would you not vote because you're undecided now, or don't you plan to vote in the election?" [Q.19]

	<i>(Firm)</i> <u>Sure About Haytaian</u>	<i>(Soft)</i> <u>Picks Haytaian</u> <small>(But might change)</small>	<u>Initially Undecided</u>			<i>(Soft)</i> <u>Picks Lautenberg</u> <small>(But might change)</small>	<i>(Firm)</i> <u>Sure About Lautenberg</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
			<u>Leans Haytaian</u>	<u>Does Not Lean</u>	<u>Leans Lautenberg</u>					
<b>September, 1994 - Likely Voters</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(595)</b>

Party ID

--Democrat	1	3	--	6	8	32	50	1	101	(191)
--Independent	10	11	2	18	6	29	22	2	100	(216)
--Republican	39	19	6	6	2	16	6	4	98	(170)

Does Lautenberg Deserve Re-election?

--Re-election	1	2	--	4	5	35	51	--	98	(237)
--Time for change	34	19	5	10	5	16	8	4	101	(255)
--Not sure	3	10	2	38	8	28	11	1	101	(103)

Past Voting 1993

--Voted Whitman	30	16	4	9	6	21	11	3	100	(272)
-----------------	----	----	---	---	---	----	----	---	-----	-------

--Voted Florio	4	5	1	7	5	27	51	--	100	(213)
----------------	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	-----	-------

1992

--Voted Clinton	3	5	2	8	5	32	44	2	101	(248)
--Voted Bush	34	16	3	10	5	19	11	2	100	(216)
--Voted Perot	10	16	1	16	10	27	20	1	101	(71)

**PAST SURVEYS**

June, 1994 - Likely Voters	17	12	1	9	3	30	25	3	100	(620)
----------------------------	----	----	---	---	---	----	----	---	-----	-------

Party ID

--Democrat	3	3	--	5	2	35	51	--	99	(214)
--Independent	12	14	2	11	6	36	16	4	101	(198)
--Republican	42	20	1	10	1	18	6	3	98	(176)

Does Lautenberg  
deserve Re-election?

--Re-election	1	--	--	2	2	36	59	--	100	(215)
--Time for change	39	24	1	8	2	17	6	3	100	(261)
--Not sure	3	7	1	23	8	46	8	5	101	(144)

VOTE CHOICE - TRADITIONAL\*

Note: The traditional method of simplifying the vote choice has been to group the people who are "firm" and "soft" supporters of a candidate and combine people who "lean" towards a candidate with the undecided voters.

	<u>Haytaian</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Lautenberg</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1994 - Likely Voters</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(583)</b>

**PAST SURVEYS**

June, 1994 - Likely Voters	30	14	57	100	(604)
----------------------------	----	----	----	-----	-------

NEW VOTE CHOICE\*

Note: During this election the *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll will be tracking the dynamics of voter "stability". Post-election analysis has substantiated the phenomena of voters "switching" candidates as late as Election Day. Firm voters are those who pick a candidate they support and say they will not change their minds prior to Election Day; voters who are not firm are either initially undecided or say that they might change their mind about who they will vote for. The data for these classifications are based on Q.18 and Q.19.

	<u>Firm Haytaian</u>	<u>Not Firm</u>	<u>Firm Lautenberg</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b><u>New Vote Choice</u></b>					
<b>September, 1994</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(583)</b>

Party ID

--Democrat	1	49	50	100	(189)
--Independent	10	68	22	100	(212)
--Republican	41	52	7	100	(164)

Does Lautenberg  
deserve Re-election?

--Re-election	1	47	52	100	(236)
--Time for change	35	57	8	100	(245)
--Not sure	3	86	11	100	(102)

Past Voting1993

--Voted Whitman	31	58	11	100	(264)
--Voted Florio	4	45	51	100	(213)

1992

--Voted Clinton	3	52	45	100	(243)
--Voted Bush	35	54	11	100	(211)
--Voted Perot	10	70	20	100	(70)

\*Omits 2% of voters who select an "other" candidate.

"Thinking about the job that Frank Lautenberg has done as U.S. Senator, do you think he deserves to be re-elected, or do you think it's time for a change?" [Q.34]

	<u>Deserves Re-election</u>	<u>Time For Change</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1994 - Likely Voters</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(598)</b>
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	65	18	4	12	99	(191)
--Independent	37	45	5	13	100	(219)
--Republican	18	69	1	12	100	(170)
<u>Vote Choice - Traditional</u>						
--Haytaian	4	87	1	8	100	(170)
--Undecided	14	34	9	43	100	(74)
--Lautenberg	65	21	4	11	101	(339)
<u>New Vote Choice</u>						
--Firm Haytaian	2	95	--	3	100	(91)
--Not Firm	33	41	5	21	100	(339)
--Firm Lautenberg	80	13	3	5	101	(153)
<b><u>PAST SURVEYS</u></b>						
June, 1994 - Likely Voters	35	42	7	17	101	(620)
February, 1994	29	48	6	17	100	(680)

Combined Lautenberg re-elect [Q.34] and "What do you think you will do on Election Day?" [Q.35]

	Vote for One					
	Vote To Re-elect	Vote for Chuck	Stay Home And Not	Of The Independent	Vote for Frank	Other/ Don't

	<u>Lautenberg</u>	<u>Haytaian</u>	<u>Vote</u>	<u>Candidates</u>	<u>Lautenberg</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1994 - Likely Voters</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(598)</b>
<u>New Vote - Traditional</u>								
--Haytaian	4	69	1	8	2	16	100	(170)
--Undecided	14	4	3	9	--	70	100	(74)
--Lautenberg	65	3	1	4	13	15	101	(339)
<u>New Vote Choice</u>								
--Firm Haytaian	2	89	--	4	1	3	99	(91)
--Not Firm	33	14	1	7	9	36	100	(339)
--Firm Lautenberg	80	1	--	3	11	5	100	(153)

"There will also be an election for the U.S. House of Representatives in your district in November. If you were voting today, would you vote for the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?" [Q.36]

	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent/ Other</u>	<u>Undecided/ Don't Know</u>	<u>Won't Vote</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>September, 1994 - Likely Voters</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(598)</b>
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	72	5	1	23	--	101	(191)
--Independent	24	21	1	53	--	99	(219)
--Republican	5	81	1	14	--	101	(170)
<u>Vote choice - Traditional</u>							
--Haytaian	6	74	--	19	1	100	(170)
--Undecided	16	16	1	66	--	99	(74)
--Lautenberg	51	16	1	32	--	100	(339)
<u>New Vote Choice</u>							
--Firm Haytaian	3	81	--	15	--	99	(91)
--Not Firm	29	31	1	38	--	99	(339)
--Firm Lautenberg	61	8	1	30	--	100	(153)
<b><u>PAST SURVEYS</u></b>							
September, 1992 - Registered Voters	44	31	1	24	--	100	(663)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	81	4	--	14	--	99	(202)
--Independent	37	26	1	36	--	100	(218)
--Republican	6	78	1	15	--	100	(172)