

The Star-Ledger/**Eagleton-Rutgers Poll**

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CONTACT: PATRICK MURRAY
OR CLIFF ZUKIN

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TORRICELLI LOSES GROUND IN SENATE RACE STILL LARGELY UNKNOWN, FORRESTER MAKES GAINS

Senator Robert Torricelli's ethics problems, highlighted in the early debates and Republican campaign advertisements, seem to be having a continued impact on voters. The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* shows challenger Douglas Forrester with a 47 percent to 34 percent lead over the incumbent among potential voters. In a poll taken two weeks prior, the two candidates were in a statistical tie – 40 percent for the Republican and 41 percent for the Democrat. Forrester has made these gains even though a majority of voters say they still don't know enough to have an opinion about him.

These are some of the main findings of the latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*, conducted by telephone with a statewide sample of 805 New Jerseyans age 18 and older between September 19 and 25. This release is based on 547 potential voters – registered voters who say they "definitely" or "probably" will vote on November 5. The sampling error is ± 4 percentage points for this group.

The all-important group of independent voters has made a major swing in Forrester's favor -- 50 percent support him now compared to 36 percent two weeks ago. At the same time, Torricelli's support seems to be slipping among this group, from 38 percent in early September to 31 percent now.

Torricelli is also having a problem solidifying his own base at this point in the campaign. Currently, only 46 percent of Democratic voters put themselves firmly in the

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll • Eagleton Institute of Politics

185 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Director: Cliff Zukin x247 • Associate Director: Patrick Murray x243

Graduate Research Assistants: Kelly Sand • Robert Suls

Phone: 732-932-9384 - Website: <http://slerp.rutgers.edu> - Fax: 732-932-1551

senator's column, saying they won't change their minds before election day. In comparison, Forrester garners firm support from 66 percent of Republicans. Among women, a key group in the senator's re-election bid, Torricelli trails Forrester by a 35 to 45 percent margin. Two weeks ago, the incumbent enjoyed a slight 42 to 36 percent lead among female voters.

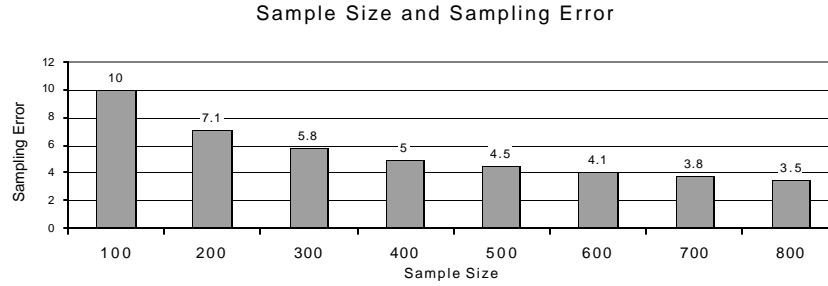
Patrick Murray, associate director of the poll remarked, "While Doug Forrester has made a sizable gain among potential voters in the past two weeks, it's still early going. Many of the voters who currently support Forrester admit they don't know anything about him. This gives Bob Torricelli an opportunity to highlight differences between the two, but the Senator needs to act soon, as his own negatives are growing."

In terms of overall opinion of the candidates, Torricelli's negative unfavorable ratings have gone up – from 36 percent in early September to 43 percent in the current poll, while his favorable ratings have gone down – 29 percent two weeks ago to 24 percent now. While Democrats' and Republicans' opinions of Torricelli have remained stable over the past two weeks, a bare majority – 51 percent – of independent voters now have an unfavorable view of the senator – up from 38 percent two weeks ago.

As for the Republican challenger, a majority of voters – 57 percent – still have no opinion of Doug Forrester. However, his favorable ratings have gone up somewhat – from 27 percent in early September to 34 percent now – while his negatives have remained low at 9 percent. In both cases, the increases – in Torricelli's negative ratings and Forrester's positive ratings – followed immediately on the heels of Presidents Bush's September 23rd visit to the Garden State.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP-Senate-2002) September , 2002

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted by telephone from September 19 to September 25 with a scientifically selected random sample of 805 New Jersey adults. The figures in this release are based on subgroups of 628 registered voters as well as 547 potential voters – New Jerseyans who identified themselves as registered voters who will “definitely” or “probably” go to the polls this November. All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error is ± 4 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of potential voters in New Jersey were found to have a lot of interest in the election for senator, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 45.8 and 54.2 percent (50 ± 4.2) had all registered voters in New Jersey been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported for Republicans, Independents or Democrats, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. The following chart shows the relationship between sample size and sampling error.



Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects. The verbatim wording of all questions asked is reproduced in this background memo. The sample has been stratified based on county and the data have been weighted on age and education to insure an accurate proportional representation of the state. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

“As you may know, there will be an election for United States Senator from New Jersey this coming November. Do you think you will definitely vote, probably vote, probably NOT vote, or definitely not vote in the election for Senator?” [Q2]

	Definitely	Probably	Probably Not	Definitely Not	DK	Total	(n)
Late September Registered Voters	60%	27%	7%	2%	3%	99%	(628)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
-- Democrat	64	25	8	1	3	101	(177)
-- Independent	61	27	5	2	4	99	(195)
-- Republican	61	27	6	1	4	99	(186)
<i>Interview Date</i>							
--Before Bush visit	59	29	7	2	3	100	(332)
--After Bush visit	62	24	8	2	4	100	(296)
<i>Past Surveys:</i>							
Early September Registered Voters	58%	28%	8%	2%	4%	100%	(622)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
-- Democrat	57	31	6	3	3	100	(208)
-- Independent	58	27	9	2	4	100	(165)
-- Republican	64	24	8	1	3	100	(187)

COMPOSITE -- SENATE VOTE:

“If the election for United States Senator were held today, for whom would you vote— Bob Torricelli, the Democrat, or Doug Forrester, the Republican?” [Q3]

ASKED OF THOSE WHO MADE A CHOICE IN Q3: “Are you very sure about voting for [CANDIDATE FROM Q3] or might you change your mind before election day?” [Q4a]

IF “UNDECIDED” OR “DON'T KNOW” TO Q3 ASK: “At this moment do you lean more towards Torricelli or more towards Forrester?” [Q4b]

	TORRICELLI			Undec -ided	FORRESTER			Other	Total	(n)
	Firm	Soft	Lean		Lean	Soft	Firm			
Late September Potential Voters	19%	10%	5%	15%	6%	9%	32%	2%	98%	(547)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>										
--Democrat	46	17	6	12	5	2	11	1	100	(156)
--Independent	11	13	7	17	10	13	27	2	100	(172)
--Republican	3	2	2	7	5	14	66	1	100	(165)
<i>Region of NJ</i>										
--North	20	17	3	14	5	9	32	1	101	(267)
--Central	16	4	7	17	6	15	33	2	100	(128)
--South	21	4	9	17	10	5	31	2	99	(143)
<i>Gender</i>										
--Male	20	9	5	13	6	9	37	2	101	(263)
--Female	19	10	6	18	7	10	28	1	99	(284)
<i>Interview Date</i>										
--Before Bush visit	20	10	6	16	9	8	28	2	99	(290)
--After Bush visit	19	9	5	14	4	11	38	1	101	(257)
<i>Past Surveys</i>										
Early September Potential Voters	23%	14%	4%	19%	7%	9%	24%	2%	102%	(537)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>										
--Democrat	50	20	4	16	2	3	4	1	100	(184)
--Independent	9	22	7	24	8	9	19	2	100	(142)
--Republican	4	1	1	11	10	17	56	--	100	(165)
<i>Region of NJ</i>										
--North	23	15	4	17	7	9	23	2	100	(214)
--Central	27	12	4	17	10	6	23	1	100	(152)
--South	19	15	3	22	3	11	26	2	101	(170)
<i>Gender</i>										
--Male	22	14	3	17	4	9	29	2	100	(248)
--Female	24	14	4	20	9	8	19	2	100	(289)

“Is your opinion of Bob Torricelli favorable or unfavorable, or don’t you really have an opinion of him? *IF FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE*: Is that very [favorable/unfavorable] or somewhat [favorable/unfavorable]?” [Q5]

	Favorable		Unfavorable		DK	Total	(n)
	Very	Somewhat	Somewhat	Very			
Late September Potential Voters	8%	16%	17%	26%	33%	100%	(547)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
-- Democrat	20	25	10	9	36	100	(156)
-- Independent	4	17	24	27	29	101	(172)
-- Republican	2	5	19	45	28	99	(165)
<i>Vote Choice</i>							
--Torricelli	25	38	6	1	30	100	(153)
--Forrester	1	3	24	56	16	100	(237)
--Undecided	2	12	16	6	64	100	(147)
<i>Interview Date</i>							
--Before Bush visit	7	17	13	23	39	99	(290)
--After Bush visit	9	14	20	30	26	99	(257)
<i>Registered voters who say they won't go to the polls</i>	4	3	6	6	81	100	(80)
<i>Past Surveys:</i>							
Early September Potential Voters	10%	19%	15%	21%	35%	100%	(537)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
-- Democrat	19	31	8	6	35	99	(184)
-- Independent	4	23	14	24	35	101	(142)
-- Republican	5	3	25	40	27	100	(165)
<i>Vote Choice</i>							
--Torricelli	23	41	7	2	27	100	(193)
--Forrester	2	1	23	56	19	101	(182)
--Undecided	2	12	18	5	63	100	(153)

“Is your opinion of Doug Forrester favorable or unfavorable, or don’t you really have an opinion of him? *IF FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE*: Is that very [favorable/unfavorable] or somewhat [favorable/unfavorable]?” [Q6]

	Favorable		Unfavorable		DK	Total	(n)
	Very	Somewhat	Somewhat	Very			
Late September Potential Voters	13%	21%	3%	6%	57%	100%	(547)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
-- Democrat	3	8	4	13	71	99	(156)
-- Independent	13	26	3	3	55	100	(172)
-- Republican	27	33	--	1	39	100	(165)
<i>Vote Choice</i>							
--Torricelli	3	3	8	17	70	101	(153)
--Forrester	29	40	--	--	30	99	(237)
--Undecided	2	14	1	1	83	101	(147)
<i>Interview Date</i>							
--Before Bush visit	11	19	3	5	62	100	(290)
--After Bush visit	16	24	2	6	51	99	(257)
<i>Registered voters who say they won't go to the polls</i>	--	3	2	2	93	100	(80)
<i>Past Surveys:</i>							
Early September Potential Voters	10%	17%	5%	5%	63%	100%	(537)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
-- Democrat	3	7	6	7	77	100	(184)
-- Independent	9	18	8	6	59	100	(142)
-- Republican	23	30	2	1	44	100	(165)
<i>Vote Choice</i>							
--Torricelli	1	4	11	12	72	100	(193)
--Forrester	29	38	--	--	34	101	(182)
--Undecided	2	11	3	1	84	101	(153)