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CONTACT: SCOTT TAYLOR

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THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS
WOOD LAWN•NEILSON CAMPUS•NEW BRUNSWICK•NEW JERSEY 08901•201/828-2210

If the election for Governor were being held now, more New Jerseyans say they would vote for the Democratic candidate than the Republican, provided that the Democratic candidate is not Governor Brendan T. Byrne. The results of the latest Eagleton Poll, conducted during the last week in January, found that when asked whether they would vote for a Democratic candidate or a Republican candidate "if the election were being held today," New Jerseyans chose a Democrat over a Republican by a 37 percent to 24 percent margin, with 28 percent saying it would depend on who the candidates were, and 11 percent undecided.

However, when asked to choose between Brendan Byrne, running as a Democrat, and a Republican candidate, the state's voters chose the Republican by a 45 percent to 19 percent margin, with 24 percent saying it would depend on who the Republican candidate was, and 12 percent unsure.

Poll results also showed that many people who would ordinarily support a Democrat for Governor indicated that they would not support Byrne. Of those who said they would choose a Democrat, only 43 percent also said they would choose Byrne over a Republican opponent.

These findings are similar to results obtained just prior to last November's election. At that time New Jerseyans chose a Democrat over a Republican by a 35 percent to 29 percent margin, but preferred a Republican over Byrne by a margin of 53 percent to 19 percent.

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Attention Radio Stations:

Audio is available on 2/15/77 at 10:30 a.m. from 201-545-6193 (Rutgers Feature Phone)

Poll results also indicated that the state's voters take a negative view toward Byrne's performance as Governor. Only 22 percent gave him a positive rating of "excellent" or "good," while 72 percent gave him a negative rating of "only fair" or "poor." The remaining 6 percent were undecided.

Scott Taylor, the Associate Director of the Eagleton Poll, pointed out that "when one considers the present low level of voter support for Governor Byrne, in addition to New Jerseyans' consistently negative evaluation of his performance in office, one can't help but conclude that winning a second term is going to be a very difficult task for the Governor."

People who identified themselves as Democrats chose Byrne over a Republican candidate by only a slim 35 percent to 33 percent margin. Republicans chose their party's candidate over Byrne by an overwhelming 75 percent to 5 percent margin. And Independents chose the Republican over Byrne 44 percent to 13 percent.

At present Governor Byrne's only major source of support comes from New Jersey's non-white population. Even though a majority of this group (66 percent) gave him a negative rating when asked to evaluate his performance, in choosing between Byrne and a Republican candidate for governor, non-whites preferred Byrne by a substantial 44 percent to 24 percent margin, with 17 percent saying it would depend on who the Republican candidate was, and 15 percent undecided.

The Eagleton Poll is conducted regularly throughout the year by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University. The latest Poll was conducted between January 27 and February 1, when a scientifically selected sample of 1005 New Jersey adults, 18 years and older were interviewed by telephone.

BACKGROUND MEMO--RELEASE #24-3, TUESDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 15, 1977

The questions used for this release were as follows:

"Overall, how good a job do you think the Governor of New Jersey--Brendan Byrne--is doing--excellent, good, only fair, or poor?"

Excellent	2%
Good	20
Only Fair	39
Poor	33
Don't Know	7

"There will be an election for Governor coming up this November. If the election were being held today would you be in favor of a Democrat or a Republican? "

	<u>Jan.</u> <u>1977</u>	<u>Oct.</u> <u>1976</u>
Democrat	37%	35%
Republican	24	29
Depends on the Candidates	28	24
Don't Know	11	12

"If Brendan Byrne were running for reelection as Governor against a Republican candidate who would you vote for--Brendan Byrne the Democrat, or the Republican candidate?"

	<u>Jan.</u> <u>1977</u>	<u>Oct.</u> <u>1976</u>
Byrne	19%	19%
Republican	45	53
Depends on the Republican candidate	24	--
Don't Know	12	28