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CONTACT: CLIFF ZUKIN or
STEPHEN A. SALMORE

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THE 1980 ELECTION PART 2: CARTER, KENNEDY REVERSE FRONTRUNNER
POSITIONS; FORD STILL MOST POPULAR REPUBLICAN

President Jimmy Carter has made dramatic gains against possible Republican challengers while his principal opponent, Senator Edward Kennedy, has lost ground to all major Republican challengers in equally dramatic fashion over the last four months. The latest Eagleton Poll of New Jersey residents, conducted just before the New Hampshire primary, found that Carter had replaced Kennedy as the strongest Democratic candidate. While George Bush ran stronger races against both Carter and Kennedy than Ronald Reagan, former President Gerald Ford remains the strongest candidate Republicans could offer New Jerseyans in next Fall's elections.

The Rutgers-based survey, conducted between February 16 and 24, asked a random sample of New Jerseyans to choose between pairs of Democratic and Republican candidates. President Carter held a lead of 44 percentage points against John Connally, 35 points over Reagan, 29 points over Senator Howard Baker, 13 points over Bush and a 2 point lead--a virtual tie--over Ford.

This is a dramatic reversal from last October when Carter trailed Ford by 24 points, led Reagan by only 4 percentage points, Baker by only 8 points and Connally by 16 points. Carter's gains over the period from October to February ranged from a low of 21 points against Baker to a high of 31 points against Reagan.

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Kennedy's losses have been equally as staggering. He now trails Ford by 27 percentage points, Bush by 15 points, and Baker by 6 points while running evenly against Reagan and Connally. In October Kennedy led Connally, Baker, Reagan and Ford by margins of between 17 and 31 percentage points. Kennedy's losses between October and February ranged from low of 23 points against Connally to a high of 44 points when matched against Ford.

While noting that as a campaigner Kennedy has not fulfilled the public's high expectations, Poll Director Cliff Zukin commented that the situation in Iran was probably responsible for the major shifting of Democratic fortunes. "The Iranian crisis has shifted public attention from domestic problems. Carter has been the beneficiary of a 'rally round the flag' effect, where people rush to support the President in times of crisis." Zukin also cautioned that, "once that situation is resolved we might again see a massive change in how the public evaluates the candidates."

Former President Ford, who is not now actively campaigning for the Republican nomination, easily outpolled Kennedy by a margin of 54 to 27 percent with 19 percent undecided or saying they would not vote. He ran even with Carter getting 40 percent to Carter's 42 percent, with the remainder not expressing a preference.

George Bush ran ahead of Kennedy by a margin of 47 to 32 percent with the remainder not expressing a preference, and trailed Carter by a similar margin of 45 to 32 percent with the remainder undecided or saying they wouldn't vote.

Senate minority leader Howard Baker also trailed Carter but ran ahead of Kennedy. He received 26 percent to Carter's 55 percent with 19 percent not choosing. Baker held a slight lead over Kennedy of 41 to 35 percent with the remainder undecided.

At the time the survey was taken, before Reagan's convincing victory in the New Hampshire primary, the former California Governor trailed Carter badly--by a margin of 58 to 23 percent with 19 percent undecided or saying they would not vote. Reagan ran evenly when matched against Kennedy, receiving 38 percent to Kennedy's 37 percent.

Former Texas Governor John Connally trails the Republican field. Carter swamps Connally in a head-to-head matchup by 61 to 17 percent with 22 percent expressing no preference. Connally ran an even race against Kennedy with both candidates receiving 39 percent.

Zukin noted that "Reagan is now probably stronger than our survey indicates as the New Hampshire results will have helped him. However, it is still clear that Ford is quite popular in New Jersey and Bush ran stronger among both Republicans and Independents than did Reagan."

Kennedy's support from New Jersey Democrats dropped while Carter's increased over the past four months. Kennedy's support ranged from a high of 58 percent against Connally and Baker to a low of 46 percent against Ford. In October his support from New Jersey Democrats ranged from 64 to 78 percent.

Carter's democratic support in the February Eagleton survey ranged from a high of 76 percent against Connally and Reagan to a low of 57 percent when matched against Ford. Last October democratic support for Carter ranged from 48 to 68 percent.

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All Republican candidates have lost support from fellow partisans over the last four months when matched against Carter. On the February Poll 65 percent of New Jersey Republicans preferred Ford, down from 87 percent in October. Less than half--48 percent--supported Reagan against Carter in February, dramatically down from the 77 percent who supported Reagan in February. Forty-five percent of Republicans supported Baker over Carter--down from 63 percent in October, and only 34 percent of New Jersey Republicans supported Connally over Carter--down 30 points from October. George Bush was the only Republican besides Ford to get a majority of Republican support--57 percent--when matched against the President in the February survey.

Bush also does well at holding Republican support when matched against Kennedy--76 percent of New Jersey Republicans said they would favor him. Baker and Connally also picked up some Republican support from October to February in their races against Kennedy. Baker received backing from 66 percent of New Jersey Republicans -- up from 53 percent in October; while Republican support for Connally increased slightly from 60 to 64 percent.

Ford received support from 77 percent of New Jersey Republicans when matched against Kennedy -- down slightly from 81 percent in October. Reagan also lost some Republican support when pitted against Kennedy -- from 78 percent in October to 70 percent in February.

The latest Eagleton Poll was conducted between February 16 and 24 when two scientifically selected samples of New Jersey residents, 18 and older, were interviewed by telephone. Each sample was of 600 people. One sample was asked to choose between Ford vs. Kennedy and

Ford vs. Carter; and between Reagan vs. Kennedy and Reagan vs. Carter. The second sample was asked to choose between the two democrats paired against Baker, Bush and Connally.

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BACKGROUND MEMO--RELEASE 39-1, TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 1980

The questions and figures referred to in this release follow. The numbers in parentheses are the numbers of respondents answering each question. All figures refer to the total statewide sample rather than some sub-set such as registered voters. The figures for October in this release and background memo may vary slightly from the figures in Release 38-1 of November 13, 1979. At that time Eagleton reported figures for all those saying they were registered to vote. Those figures have been adjusted in this release and background memo to include the entire sample so as to make direct comparisons with Poll 39 (February) meaningful. The change from a "registered only" to "total sample" base in no case significantly changes the results or substantive interpretation.

Poll 39, like Poll 38, consisted of two matched samples of 600 respondents. One sample was asked to choose between Carter, Kennedy and Connally, Baker and Bush. The other sample was asked to choose between Carter, Kennedy and Ford and Reagan. The sampling error for each 600 person sample is ± 7 percent.

"If the election were held today, would you vote for name the Republican, or name the Democrat?"

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Will Not Vote</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>February 1980</u>						
Connally vs. Carter	17	61	13	9	100%	(601)
-- Democrats	7	76	8	9	100%	(181)
-- Independents	19	57	12	11	99%	(293)
-- Republicans	34	49	14	4	101%	(115)
<u>October 1979</u>						
Total	29	45	15	11	100%	(603)
-- Democrats	13	68	8	11	100%	(204)
-- Independents	31	41	17	10	99%	(279)
-- Republicans	64	12	15	9	100%	(104)
<u>February 1980</u>						
Connally vs. Kennedy	39	39	13	10	101%	(600)
-- Democrats	23	58	12	7	100%	(180)
-- Independents	42	34	13	11	100%	(293)
-- Republicans	64	16	10	10	100%	(115)
<u>October 1979</u>						
Total	29	52	15	6	102%	(603)
-- Democrats	14	69	11	6	100%	(204)
-- Independents	28	50	16	6	100%	(279)
-- Republicans	60	20	14	6	100%	(104)

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Will Not Vote</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>February 1980</u>						
Baker vs. Carter	26	55	15	4	100%	(600)
-- Democrats	12	74	10	5	101%	(180)
-- Independents	30	51	15	4	100%	(293)
-- Republicans	45	38	15	2	100%	(115)
<u>October 1979</u>						
Total	33	41	18	8	100%	(603)
-- Democrats	16	64	12	7	99%	(204)
-- Independents	37	33	21	9	100%	(279)
-- Republicans	63	18	15	4	100%	(104)
<u>February 1980</u>						
Baker vs. Kennedy	41	35	17	8	101%	(600)
-- Democrats	25	58	12	6	101%	(180)
-- Independents	44	29	17	10	100%	(293)
-- Republicans	66	10	17	7	100%	(115)
<u>October 1979</u>						
Total	28	48	18	5	99%	(603)
-- Democrats	20	64	11	4	99%	(204)
-- Independents	27	45	22	6	100%	(279)
-- Republicans	53	26	17	5	101%	(104)
<u>February 1980</u>						
Ford vs. Carter	40	42	14	5	101%	(601)
-- Democrats	25	57	15	2	99%	(193)
-- Independents	43	41	11	5	100%	(272)
-- Republicans	65	21	10	3	99%	(114)
<u>October 1979</u>						
Total	54	30	10	6	100%	(603)
-- Democrats	38	48	10	5	101%	(222)
-- Independents	56	24	12	7	99%	(269)
-- Republicans	87	6	3	4	100%	(100)
<u>February 1980</u>						
Ford vs. Kennedy	54	27	9	10	100%	(601)
-- Democrats	32	46	10	13	101%	(193)
-- Independents	61	22	8	8	99%	(272)
-- Republicans	77	11	6	6	100%	(114)
<u>October 1979</u>						
Total	34	51	10	6	101%	(603)
-- Democrats	16	71	10	3	100%	(222)
-- Independents	33	48	11	7	99%	(269)
-- Republicans	81	13	2	5	101%	(100)

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Will Not Vote</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>February 1980</u>						
Reagan vs. Carter	23	58	13	6	100%	(601)
-- Democrats	9	76	12	3	100%	(193)
-- Independents	23	59	12	7	101%	(272)
-- Republicans	48	35	13	4	100%	(114)
<u>October 1979</u>						
Total	40	44	11	6	101%	(603)
-- Democrats	24	61	9	5	99%	(222)
-- Independents	42	39	12	7	100%	(269)
-- Republicans	77	15	7	2	101%	(100)
<u>February 1980</u>						
Reagan vs. Kennedy	38	37	12	12	99%	(601)
-- Democrats	18	57	13	12	100%	(193)
-- Independents	41	33	13	14	101%	(272)
-- Republicans	70	16	9	6	101%	(114)
<u>October 1979</u>						
Total	29	60	7	4	100%	(603)
-- Democrats	12	78	8	2	100%	(222)
-- Independents	26	61	8	6	101%	(269)
-- Republicans	78	19	2	2	101%	(100)
<u>February 1980</u>						
Bush vs. Carter	32	45	19	5	101%	(600)
-- Democrats	14	67	15	4	100%	(180)
-- Independents	36	38	21	5	100%	(293)
-- Republicans	57	27	13	3	100%	(115)
<u>February 1980</u>						
Bush vs. Kennedy	47	32	15	5	99%	(600)
-- Democrats	27	56	12	5	100%	(180)
-- Independents	53	25	15	7	100%	(293)
-- Republicans	76	9	13	2	100%	(115)