Politicians, like the rest of us, are impressed with their self-importance. But the latest New Jersey Poll by the Eagleton Institute indicates that many Jerseyans either do not know or incorrectly identify the political party in power at the state level.

A statewide random sample of 1224 persons 18 years of age and older were surveyed by telephone between March 23 and 31. For each level of government—county and state—respondents were asked to identify the party which "runs things most of the time."

At the state level, only 46% of the sample correctly identified the Republicans as the party in power, even though the Republicans control the executive branch and both houses of the legislature. 21% said they thought the Democrats ran things while another 21% said they did not know who ran things at the state level. 11% thought both parties had power, and 1% answered that neither party ran the state government.

The pattern is the same at the county level, even in those counties which are known as one-party strongholds. Many people do not know which party exercises control.

Samples taken in counties generally thought of as Republican strongholds—Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Monmouth, Morris, Somerset and Union—showed that 13% of the population in these counties thought that the Democrats controlled their county's politics, while 21% said they did not know who ran things at the county level.

Even in Bergen County, which many observers believe to be the key to statewide
Republican electoral victories, 24% of the people thought that Democrats ran the county.

Most Democratic counties show comparable patterns. In Passaic and Essex, where strong Democratic county party organizations have existed for years and where Democrats usually control county government, people in the sample divided evenly in naming the party that runs the county. In Mercer and Middlesex, 23% of the sample thought the Republicans ran things in the county, while only 41% correctly identified the Democrats as the party in power. Another 25% of this sample responded that they did not know which party ran things in the county.

Hudson County, a Democratic stronghold and known to be the most thoroughly one-party county in the state, was an exception. Only 15% of the sample here believed that the Republicans were in control, while 67% correctly identified the Democrats as the party in power. Only 9% of the Hudson sample said they didn't know who was in power—the lowest rate of "don't know" responses for all the county samples.

Samples from the less densely populated counties were not large enough to permit statistical analysis.

Results from the Sixth New Jersey Poll were tabulated by the Opinion Research Corp. of Princeton, N.J.

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The data and questions on which this analysis is based are as follow.

"From your experience, which political party, the Democrats or the Republicans, do you think runs things most of the time in:"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The County</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The State</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In discussing county results we grouped some counties to increase sample sizes, thus making the results from the aggregated samples statistically more reliable. The Hudson sample is the second largest among the counties, thus we felt justified in discussing it separately. Bergen and Union were next. Essex has the largest sample, but Passaic's is relatively small, but results from the two were very similar, thus we pooled these two. Middlesex and Mercer were pooled because individually they were too small to analyze and because, like Essex and Passaic, results for the two were quite similar.