



FOR RELEASE: FRIDAY AFTERNOON
JUNE 11, 1976

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RELEASE: 21-4

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WOOD LAWN • NEILSON CAMPUS • NEW BRUNSWICK • NEW JERSEY 08901 • 201/828-2210

Confidence in state government has dropped sharply in the past two years, according to the latest New Jersey Poll conducted in May by the Eagleton Institute of Politics of Rutgers University. The Poll found that only 9 percent of the state's adult residents said they had "a lot of confidence" in the government in Trenton, as compared to 19 percent in March 1974 shortly after the Byrne administration took office. Even more dramatically, those who said they had "not much confidence" in state government have risen sharply from 16 percent in 1974 to 42 percent in 1976. Those with "some confidence" numbered 57 percent in 1974 and 45 percent in 1976. The small number remaining had no opinion.

While confidence in state government has fallen, confidence in the federal government has risen somewhat. Those with "a lot of confidence" in the government in Washington numbered 19 percent compared to 13 percent in 1974. Those with "not much confidence" remained stable at 33 percent presently and 32 percent two years ago.

Confidence in local government in New Jersey has also declined. Although those with "a lot of confidence" remains about the same -- 24 percent in 1976 and 25 percent in 1974 -- those without much confidence have risen from 22 percent to 30 percent.

Poll officials noted that different kinds of voters felt alienated from the state and the federal governments. Those with low confidence in the state government tended to be wealthier, residents of the suburbs, independent voters, older and white. Those

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with low confidence in the government in Washington tended to be Democrats and those who traditionally make up the Democratic voting coalition -- those of lower income, urban dwellers, nonwhites and younger residents.

Poll officials pointed to major events of the past two years as important explanatory factors in the public perceptions of the state and national governments. Alan Rosenthal, Director of the Eagleton Institute, commented that:- "You have to realize that in 1974, the Watergate scandal was at its height, and Brendan Byrne was still enjoying the traditional 'honeymoon' afforded new governors. On the other hand, at the present time, President Ford has succeeded somewhat in establishing an image of integrity in Washington, while New Jerseyans have been observing a continuing controversy over taxes and the budget, which involves the governor, the legislature, and even the court."

Officials of the Poll also noted that most state residents do not feel the government in Trenton "pays attention to what the people think", and believe "the state government is pretty much run for a few big interests." Those who think that "not much attention" or "none" is paid comprise 42 percent of the respondents, and those who think the state serves big interests rather than "all the people" include 61 percent.

Knowledge about state politics in New Jersey continues at a relatively low level. Although 82 percent of those surveyed could correctly name the Governor, only 70 percent knew he was a Democrat. On the legislative side, only 52 percent realize the Democrats control the state legislature, and only one in five - 20 percent - could name any state senator. Those senators mentioned by more than 1 percent of the sample included Joseph Maressa, Alene Ammond, Joseph Merlino, Frank Dodd, Anthony Imperiale, and

Matthew Feldman. Eagleton pollsters pointed out that these senators either occupied leadership positions in the Democratic party, or had recently made headlines by their own actions. Interestingly, no Republicans were included among the most frequently mentioned.

State government continues to be the level of U.S. politics followed the least closely by state residents. When asked what level of government the respondents followed most closely, 32 percent replied national, 27 percent said local, and only 19 percent said state politics. However, interest in national government declined from a level of 43 percent in May, 1974, while interest in state government rose from 14 percent two years ago.

The New Jersey Poll is conducted regularly throughout the year by the Eagleton Institute of Politics. The latest Poll was conducted between May 3 and May 13, when a scientifically selected sample of 800 adults 18 years and older were interviewed by telephone.

BACKGROUND MEMO--RELEASE #21-4, FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 11, 1976

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

"Could you tell me the name of the Governor of New Jersey?"

	<u>May</u> <u>1976</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1975</u>	<u>May</u> <u>1974</u>	<u>September</u> <u>1971</u>
Brendan Byrne	82%	86%	80%	90%*
Other	4	2	--	--
Don't Know	14	13	--	--

*Governor William Cahill

"As far as you know, is the Governor of New Jersey a Democrat or a Republican?"

	<u>May</u> <u>1976</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1975</u>
Democrat	70%	75%
Republican	14	14
Don't Know	16	11

"Which party controls the New Jersey State Legislature--the Democrats or the Republicans?"

	<u>May</u> <u>1976</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1975</u>	<u>May</u> <u>1974</u>	<u>September</u> <u>1971</u>
Democrat	52%	62%	53%	--
Republican	16	15	--	43%*
Don't Know	31	24	--	--

*Republicans controlled the State Legislature at that time.

"Can you name any member of the New Jersey State Senate in Trenton?"

	<u>May</u> <u>1976</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1975</u>	<u>September</u> <u>1971</u>
Correct	20%	20%	11%
Incorrect	80	80	89

"How much confidence do you have in your federal government--a lot of confidence, some confidence, or not very much confidence?" "What about your state government--do you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, or not very much confidence in it?" "And what about your local government--do you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, or not very much confidence in it?"

		<u>May 1976</u>	<u>March 1975</u>	<u>March 1974</u>	<u>March 1973</u>
Federal					
A lot	21	19%	25%	13%	23%
Some	59	47	44	48	49
Not very much	17	33	29	32	21
Don't Know		1	2	7	8
State					
A lot	18	9	14	19	18
Some	61	45	52	57	55
Not very much	14	42	32	16	19
Don't Know	2	4	2	9	9
Local					
A lot	22	24	25	25	23
Some	52	42	42	47	46
Not very much	24	30	27	22	23
Don't Know	2	4	6	7	8

"Would you say your state government is pretty much run for a few big interests looking out for themselves, or is it run for the benefit of all the people in the state?"

A few big interests	61	54
Partly both	10	8
All the people	28	28
Don't Know	11	11

"How much attention do you feel your state government pays to what the people think when it decides what to do--a lot of attention, some attention, not much attention, or no attention?"

A lot	9	10
Some	46	48
Not much	32	31
None	10	8
Don't Know	2	3

"Some people are very interested in what's going on in government; others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?"

	<u>May 1976</u>	<u>March 1975</u>	<u>May 1974</u>
Most	42%	52%	48%
Some	36	29	30
Only now and then	17	12	16
Hardly at all	6	7	6
Don't Know	0	1	0

"Which one do you follow most closely--international affairs, national affairs, state affairs or local affairs?"

International	15	11	17
National	32	40	43
State	19	17	14
Local	27	23	22
Don't Know	8	8	4