



FOR RELEASE: THURSDAY  
AUGUST 11, 1977

CONTACT: MARK SCHULMAN

RELEASE: 27-1

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

THE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION, PART I:

BATEMAN HOLDS EARLY LEAD OVER BYRNE

Republican gubernatorial challenger Raymond Bateman holds an early lead over incumbent Brendan Byrne among New Jersey's registered voters, according to the latest Eagleton Poll. Bateman's edge is slimmer with Independent Anthony Imperiale in the race.

The statewide survey, conducted in late July, finds Bateman leading Byrne by a 47 percent to 37 percent margin among self-reported registered voters. Fifteen percent are undecided. Among those undecided, 28 percent lean to Bateman, 18 percent lean to Byrne.

In a three-man race with Bateman, Byrne, and Imperiale, the Republican's lead diminishes. Bateman receives 41 percent, Byrne gets 35 percent, and Imperiale receives 11 percent. Eleven percent remain undecided.

Imperiale siphons off more than twice as many supporters from Bateman than from Byrne. Fifty-five percent of the Newark State Senator's supporters otherwise prefer Bateman, while only 24 percent come from Byrne's ranks. The remaining 21 percent of Imperiale supporters favor neither major party candidate.

While Bateman leads, he remains largely unknown to most New Jersey voters. Only 38 percent could name Bateman as the Republican gubernatorial candidate. In

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comparison, 62 percent can name Byrne as the Democrat.

Bateman's major advantage over Byrne is with New Jersey's pivotal Independent vote. Bateman leads Byrne among Independents by a 55 percent to 27 percent margin, with 17 percent undecided. In the 1973 election, by contrast, an October survey found Byrne with almost twice as many Independent voters as his Republican challenger Charles Sandman. Independents, comprising about 45 percent of the electorate, outnumber either Democrats or Republicans.

Much support for Bateman and Byrne follows traditional partisan lines. Bateman emerged from the June primary with a largely united Republican party. Seventy-six percent of Republicans favor Bateman against the incumbent, and only 13 percent favor Byrne. Only 18 percent of New Jersey's registered voters consider themselves Republicans.

The Republican also receives majority support from conservatives, whites, females, Protestants, persons with incomes over \$20,000, and those who are self-employed.

After a divisive June primary, Democrats have begun to close ranks behind Byrne. Sixty-two percent of Democrats now indicate they support Byrne in a two-man race with Bateman, while 23 percent favor Bateman. A May, 1977 Eagleton Poll found only 46 percent of registered Democrats voicing support for Byrne against an unnamed Republican. Byrne's party support is not far off his 1973 pace, when he won a landslide victory against Charles Sandman. An October, 1973 Eagleton Poll found Byrne with 69 percent of his party's vote. Byrne is also receiving majority support among liberals and Blacks.

Eagleton analyst Mark Schulman noted that the small number of undecided voters --15 percent-- at this early stage is unusual. By contrast, the 1973 Eagleton survey,

conducted just one month before the election, found more than one voter in four -- 26 percent -- undecided.

Assessing overall voter attitudes, Schulman commented, "These early responses indicate that many New Jerseyans may be voting against Brendan Byrne rather than for Ray Bateman. Voters are relatively unacquainted with Bateman, his personal qualities, his issue positions, and even his name. At the same time, Governor Byrne continues to receive low marks for his job performance.

Only 29 percent of registered voters give Byrne positive marks of "excellent" or "good," while 69 percent evaluate him negatively as "only fair" or "poor." Three percent offer no opinion. Although his job rating remains low, it has crept up from May, when 25 percent evaluated him positively and 71 percent rated him negatively, with 5 percent undecided.

Schulman noted that Byrne's job performance rating was a sensitive barometer of voter support in the primary and continues to correlate well with vote intentions. Ninety percent of Bateman supporters rate the Governor negatively, while only 10 percent evaluate him positively. Byrne supporters, on the other hand, are more positive than negative. Fifty-six percent of those favoring the Governor give him positive marks, while 39 percent rate him negatively.

While Byrne is not viewed positively, most voters have little knowledge of Bateman. For example, only 42 percent of Bateman supporters are able to volunteer his name as the Republican candidate.

Voters are less than clear on the Republican's tax position as well. Only one in three -- 31 percent -- can correctly identify Bateman's position against the present

income tax and in favor of budget cuts. A majority -- 51 percent -- are unable to offer any opinion on Bateman's tax position.

This report is the first in a series of Eagleton Institute analyses of the 1977 Gubernatorial campaign. Other reports will focus on voter perceptions of the candidates' qualifications and personal qualities, the income tax controversy and other campaign issues.

The Eagleton Poll is conducted regularly throughout the year by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University. The latest Poll was conducted between July 18 and 29, when a scientifically selected random sample of 1004 adults, 18 years and older were interviewed by telephone.

BACKGROUND MEMO--RELEASE #27-1, THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 1977

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

"Do you know who the Democratic candidate for Governor is?" \*

Byrne	62%
Bateman	2
Other/Don't Know	36

"And how about the Republican candidate for Governor?" \*

Bateman	38%
Byrne	4
Other/Don't Know	58

"Suppose the election for Governor were being held today and you had to choose right now--would you vote for Raymond Bateman, the Republican, or Brendan Byrne, the Democrat?" \*

	<u>Bateman</u>	<u>Byrne</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
TOTAL REGISTERED VOTERS	47%	37%	1%	15%
MOST LIKELY VOTERS (55 percent of registered voters)	53	36	0	10
<u>Party</u>				
Democrat	23	62	1	14
Independent	55	27	1	17
Republican	76	13	0	11
<u>Ideology</u>				
Liberal	30	55	0	15
Conservative	57	30	2	11
<u>Sex</u>				
Male	43	42	1	14
Female	51	33	0	16

\*All figures for total self-reported registered voters

	<u>Bateman</u>	<u>Byrne</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>Race</u>				
White	51%	34%	1%	15%
Black	12	77	3	8
Other				
<u>Income</u>				
Under \$5,000	49	37	2	12
\$5,000 - \$10,000	31	50	2	16
\$10,000 - \$15,000	59	28	0	13
\$15,000 - \$20,000	47	38	1	15
Over \$20,000	50	38	1	12
<u>Education</u>				
8th grade or less	39	49	0	12
High school incomplete	49	36	3	12
High school	51	33	1	16
Some college	47	34	0	19
College graduate	48	40	1	11
<u>Religion</u>				
Protestant	56	33	1	10
Catholic	48	38	0	13
<u>Union Member</u>				
Yes	44	43	1	13
No	49	34	1	16
<u>Type of Residence</u>				
Own	48	37	1	14
Rent	45	37	1	17
<u>Employment</u>				
Blue Collar	49	33	1	17
White Collar	48	37	1	14
Self-Employed	51	37	0	12

"At this moment, do you think you are leaning more towards Bateman or more towards Byrne?" \*

Bateman	28%
Byrne	18
Other	6
Don't Know	49

"Now what if the election were being held today and there were three candidates in the race. Would you vote for Raymond Bateman, the Republican, Brendan Byrne, the Democrat, or Anthony Imperiale, an Independent?" \*

	<u>Bateman</u>	<u>Byrne</u>	<u>Imperiale</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Other</u>
TOTAL REGISTERED VOTERS	41%	35%	11%	11%	1%

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

<u>Total Registered Voters</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
July, 1977	4%	25%	38%	31%	3%
May, 1977	1	24	42	29	5

"Which one of these three (tax plans) do you think is closest to Brendan Byrne's position?" \*

Keep Present Tax	51%
More Graduated Tax	15
Replace Income Tax	5
None/Other	1
Don't Know	27

"Which one (tax plan) do you think is closest to Raymond Bateman's position?" \*

Keep Present Tax	4%
More Garduated Tax	10
Replace Income Tax	31
None/Other	4
Don't Know	51

\*All figures for total self-reported registered voters