



The Eagleton Institute of Politics  
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FOR  
RELEASE: AUGUST 19, 1984  
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RELEASE: SL/EP4-2  
(EP53-2)

R E L E A S E I N F O R M A T I O N

A story based on the data described in this release will appear in the Sunday Star-Ledger. Other newspapers are welcome to use this copyrighted information in Sunday editions as well; electronic media may release after 6:00 P.M. Saturday (8/18/84).

PRESIDENTIAL POTPOURRI: ISSUES, INVOLVEMENT AND PRESIDENTIAL TRAITS

It is the pocketbook issues of inflation, unemployment and the federal deficit that New Jersey voters are most concerned about as they look past this week's Republican convention to November's election. And it is on these same pocketbook issues that Ronald Reagan has his biggest advantage over Walter Mondale, according to the Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll.

The survey, conducted during the first week of August, asked over 600 New Jersey registered voters what they thought were critical issues in the election and about the qualities they look for in Presidential candidates. Reagan ran strongest among those concerned with economic problems and among those looking for directness and strong leadership from their President. Mondale supporters were more likely to mention arms control and relational qualities such as "compassion" and "fairness."

Interest in the Presidential election and involvement--how much people care about who wins--are up over the Carter-Reagan contest of four years ago. But Poll officials cautioned that turnout may not be higher than normal because of a "widely held belief that Reagan cannot be beaten."

When asked to name the "most important problem facing the country" half of New Jersey's registered voters voiced some concern over the nation's economy, with 14 percent specifically mentioning the federal budget deficit. About one-quarter mentioned a problem of foreign policy, with 16 percent specifically mentioning arms control or the threat of nuclear war. Reagan supporters were more likely to be concerned with the federal deficit and Mondale supporters were more concerned with world peace.

Most of the remaining quarter mentioned some other domestic problem, such as aid for the elderly or poor, education or crime. The survey found very few--less than 3 percent--mentioning environmental concerns, "women's" issues such as the ERA and abortion, or moral issues such as school prayer as the most important problem the candidates should be talking about.

More New Jerseyans think Ronald Reagan would do a better job of handling what they saw as the most important problem than Walter Mondale would by a margin of 47 to 30 percent, with the remainder expressing no opinion. Among those voicing an economic concern Reagan was preferred by better than 2 to 1--56 to 27 percent. However, among those most concerned with foreign policy and world peace, neither candidate could claim an advantage. Forty percent each thought that Mondale and Reagan would do a better job in this area, with the remainder undecided.

The survey also shows that Mondale must combat a widely held perception that Reagan's reelection is inevitable. Two-in-three New Jerseyans said they believe Reagan will win the November election, compared to only 11 percent who feel Mondale will win. Even among Democrats and those planning to vote for the Mondale-Ferraro ticket, more believe Reagan will win than Mondale.

A large number of New Jerseyans--37 percent--identified a trait having to do with trust or candor as the quality they most look for in Presidential candidates. "Honesty," or "doing what he says he'll do" was named by 28 percent, with an additional 9 percent mentioning "sincerity" or "integrity." About one-quarter felt "leadership" was the most important trait, followed by experience and ability (18 percent), personal qualities, such as "compassion" and "fairness" (12 percent), and "decision-making ability" (9 percent). Reagan supporters were more likely to focus on trust and leadership qualities than Mondale supporters, while Mondale backers were more likely to emphasize personal qualities.

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BACKGROUND MEMO--RELEASE SL/EP4-2 (EP53-2) AUGUST 19, 1984

The latest Star Ledger/Eagleton Poll was conducted between July 30 and August 6 when a random sample of 804 New Jerseyans (18 and older) was interviewed by telephone. Figures in this release are based on the 637 respondents who reported being registered to vote and saying they would "definitely" or "probably" vote in November's election, and are subject to a sampling error of 14 percent. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sample taken from that population. Sampling error does not take into account other possible sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The questions and figures referred to in this release are as follows:

"Regardless of which candidate you plan to vote for, who do you think will win the Presidential election?" IF CHOICE MADE: "Do you think (Reagan/Mondale) will win by a landslide, by a moderate amount, or will it be close?"

	TOTAL	PARTY			VOTE INTENTION	
		Democrat	Independent	Republican	Mondale	Reagan
<u>Mondale By</u>	(11)	(24)	(8)	(0)	(36)	(0)
--landslide	0	1	0	0	1	0
--moderate	2	3	3	0	7	0
--close	8	19	5	0	26	0
--don't know	1	1	0	0	2	0
<u>Reagan By</u>	(69)	(52)	(75)	(90)	(39)	(92)
--landslide	11	8	12	18	4	18
--moderate	30	18	31	45	11	45
--close	25	24	29	24	23	26
--don't know	3	2	3	3	1	3
<u>No Opinion on Outcome</u>	(19)	(25)	(17)	(10)	(24)	(9)
Total	99%	101%	100%	100%	99%	101%
(n)	(633)	(192)	(228)	(162)	(185)	(352)

"How much interest do you have in the Presidential election between Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale--a lot, some, a little or none at all?"

	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Little/none</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August, 1984	59	25	14	2	100%	(638)
September, 1980	55	28	18	0	101%	(971)
<u>Vote Intention</u>						
--Mondale	58	26	16	0	100%	(187)
--Reagan	63	25	11	2	101%	(354)

"In your opinion, how much of a difference will the outcome of this election make in the way the government is run for the next few years--a great deal of difference, some difference, or not very much difference?"

	<u>Great Deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not very much</u>	<u>No opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August, 1984	34	32	22	12	100%	(318)
September, 1980	34	30	30	6	100%	(971)
September, 1976	24	39	32	5	100%	(675)

"How much do you care which candidate wins the election--a lot, some, just a little, or doesn't it really make any difference to you who wins?"

	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Little</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>No opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
August, 1984	70	17	2	9	2	100%	(319)
October, 1980	59	18	6	14	2	99%	(853)

"What do you think is the most important problem facing the country that you would like to see the candidates talking about?"

	<u>Total</u>	<u>VOTE INTENTION</u>	
		<u>Mondale</u>	<u>Reagan</u>
--The economy--general	28	31	28
--Balanced budget, deficit	14	9	18
--Taxes, spending priorities	8	6	6
--Foreign affairs, USSR--general	9	8	11
--Nuclear war, arms control, peace	16	24	10
--The elderly, social security	6	5	5
--Aid to the poor/welfare	7	6	7
--The environment	2	2	2
--Other domestic	9	7	11
--Other	2	2	2
Total	101%	100%	100%
(n)	(525)	(165)	(279)

(ASKED ONLY OF THOSE MENTIONING A PROBLEM)

"Regardless of the candidate you favor, who do you think would do a better job of handling this problem--Mondale or Reagan?"

	<u>Mondale</u>	<u>Reagan</u>	<u>No difference/ don't know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Total	30	47	24	101%	(596)
<u>By Vote Intention</u>					
--Mondale	77	4	18	99%	(179)
--Reagan	7	78	15	100%	(329)
<u>By Problem Type</u>					
--Economy/taxes	27	56	16	99%	(252)
--Foreign Affairs	40	40	20	100%	(126)
--Domestic Affairs	34	42	24	100%	(122)

"People feel differently about what qualities or characteristics are important for a good President to have. What are the one or two traits you most look for when judging candidates for the Presidency?"

	<u>Total</u>	<u>VOTE INTENTION</u>	
		<u>Mondale</u>	<u>Reagan</u>
<u>Candor/Trust</u>	(37)	33	38
--honesty	28		
--integrity	4		
--sincerity	5		
<u>Leadership/Strength</u>	(24)	22	28
--strong leader	12		
--self confident	7		
--consistency/accomplish goals	5		
<u>Ability/Qualifications</u>	(18)	17	20
--experienced	11		
--knows government/good manager	5		
--intelligent/other	2		
<u>Personal Qualities</u>	(12)	20	6
--compassionate	3		
--fairness	3		
--charisma/character	3		
--identifies with common man	2		
--other	1		
<u>Policy/Decision-Making Ability</u>	(9)	8	8
--decision-making ability/judgment	3		
--crisis handling/cool	2		
--handles policy/issues well	4		
Total	100%	100%	100%
(n)	(513)	(157)	(282)