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## **RUTGERS-EAGLETON POLL CELEBRATES ITS 200TH N.J. SURVEY**

### **Polling Politics and Policy in New Jersey since 1971**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll celebrates its 200th poll this month. The poll stands as the centerpiece of survey research at Eagleton's Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP). After more than four decades of asking Garden State residents about politics and policy, results from the 200th poll will be released over the next several weeks. The poll will include the latest on Gov. Chris Christie, 2016, terrorism, trust in polling, and a special tribute to New Jersey's past, present, and future, as well as some holiday fun.

Established in 1971 with funding from the Wallace-Eljabar Fund, the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was the nation's first university-based state survey. Over the past 44 years, the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll has had several names and directors, including some of the most renowned survey researchers in the business. The constant? Its dedication to reporting objective, scientifically sound information about public opinion and contributing to the public dialogue in New Jersey and beyond.

"In its 60-year history, the Eagleton Institute of Politics has repeatedly pioneered new areas of inquiry. The same entrepreneurial spirit that launched the first-ever university-based state poll at Eagleton also spurred the Institute to lead the way in studying state legislatures, the political participation of women, and young elected leaders," said Ruth B. Mandel, director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics and Board of Governors Professor of Politics. "While Eagleton's focus is national in scope, we're part of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, and we take special pride in the poll for its unique, rich trove of data about the attitudes and values of Garden State residents."

ECPIP has built a long education legacy. In addition to its student-staffed call center operation, ECPIP has established an extensive [internship program](#) for Rutgers students. Under faculty supervision, student staff is directly involved in all phases of the survey process, including questionnaire design, conducting interviews, and analyzing data for public release.

The ECPIP website at [eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu](http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu) provides public access to an incomparable [data archive](#) spanning the history of the poll, as well as a [questionnaire archive](#) and [press release page](#). In addition to the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, ECPIP conducts [projects for clients](#) including faculty researchers, government agencies, and New Jersey communities and non-profit organizations.

## **A history of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

The survey's first major finding in October 1971, released under the name the "New Jersey Poll," was that, with elections for the state Senate and General Assembly only two weeks off, 85 percent of New Jerseyans were unaware of those upcoming elections. This ignorance about state politics remains evident 44 years later, as the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll found this past [October](#).

After some years as the Eagleton Poll, Rutgers University announced the creation of the *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll in September 1983, reflecting an agreement to conduct four polls per year for the *Star-Ledger*. In 1999, "Rutgers" was added to the name of the survey. The partnership with the *Star-Ledger* ended in 2005, and the survey became known as the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

The poll has had seven directors over the past 44 years: Stephen Salmore (1971-1972, 1973-1975, 1976-1980), John C. Blydenburgh (1972-1973, 1975), Cliff Zukin (1980-1988, 1998-2001, 2002-2004), Janice Ballou (1989-1997), Jeffrey Levine (2005), Tim Vercellotti (2006-2008) and David Redlawsk (2009-present).

"I've been honored to lead ECPIP and the poll over the past six and a half years," said David Redlawsk, current director of the center and professor of political science at Rutgers. "It's certainly been an exciting time to be polling in New Jersey."

## **What have we covered in four decades?**

The poll has issued almost 900 press releases since its inception. The largest number of releases appeared in the poll's formative years, when it asked about [President Nixon](#), Govs. [Cahill](#) and [Byrne](#), [legalizing casino gambling](#) and the possibility of a [state income tax](#). Only 2014 – with attention focused on the [George Washington Bridge scandal](#) – came close in number.

Topics have reflected important events and issues in American history: [Watergate](#) and [Vietnam](#) in the 1970s; [Iran-Contra](#), [AIDS](#), and the [introduction of home computers](#) in the 1980s; [the Gulf War](#), the [expansion of the Internet](#), and President Clinton's [sex scandal](#) in the 1990s; and [September 11th](#), the [Iraq War](#) and [Barack Obama's presidency](#) in the new millennium.

Of all poll press releases since 1971, Chris Christie has been the most analyzed governor. Brendan Byrne takes second place, but is mentioned only about half as often during his time as Christie was in recent years.

About one in every 10 releases has discussed an election of some sort, whether local, state or national. Just about one in 20 releases has focused primarily on the issue that has concerned New Jerseyans for decades: taxes. Releases have covered other classic Garden State topics as well: [corruption](#), [Atlantic City](#), [casino gambling](#), [the lottery](#), [toxic and chemical waste](#), [Jersey drivers](#), [E-Z Pass](#), [the Jersey shore](#), [Hurricane Sandy](#) and even [HBO's The Sopranos](#).