

Rutgers - Eagleton Poll

April 13, 2006
(Release 158-3)

CONTACTS:

MURRAY EDELMAN, Ph.D., (917) 968-1299 (cell)

TIM VERCELLOTTI, Ph.D., (732) 932-9384, EXT. 285; (919) 812-3452 (cell)

PARITY OF PIETY REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS DIFFER LITTLE ON RELIGIOUS ISSUES

Neither major political party appears to hold a monopoly on religion in the Garden State, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

A telephone survey of 800 adults, conducted March 26 through 30, found that the proportions of Republicans and Democrats were virtually the same on a range of religious questions. These questions include:

	REP	DEM
Belief that the biblical account of the resurrection of Jesus is literally true	60%	59%
Belief that the biblical account of Moses parting the Red Sea is literally true	40%	39%
Describing "yourself as a born again or evangelical Christian"	20%	18%
Seldom or never attending church, synagogue, or other worship services	38%	38%
Having had an experience of feeling "close to a powerful spiritual force that seemed to lift you out of yourself"	20%	22%

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll • Eagleton Institute of Politics

185 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Distinguished Visiting Scholar and Consultant: Murray Edelman, ext. 240 or (917) 968-1299 (cell)

Assistant Director: Tim Vercellotti, ext. 285 or (919) 812-3452 (cell)

Phone: 732-932-9384 - Website: <http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu> - Fax: 732-932-1551

“With such small differences between the parties in their experience of religion, it is no accident that religious issues are much more muted in New Jersey than in other parts of the country,” said Murray Edelman, Distinguished Visiting Scholar and Consultant of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

Most of the comparisons were well within the poll’s margin of sampling error. However, there were some notable differences. Thirty-eight percent of Republicans and 32 percent of Democrats said they go to worship services at least once a week. Republicans also were more likely than Democrats to say religion is extremely or very important in their lives, 60 percent to 53 percent. And 50 percent of Republicans consider themselves Catholic compared to 41 percent of Democrats.

In each case adults who identified themselves as independent politically were less likely than the partisans to attend worship services at least once a week (27 percent), and to view religion as extremely or very important in their lives (48 percent). They were also less likely to believe that the biblical account of the resurrection was literally true (51 percent).

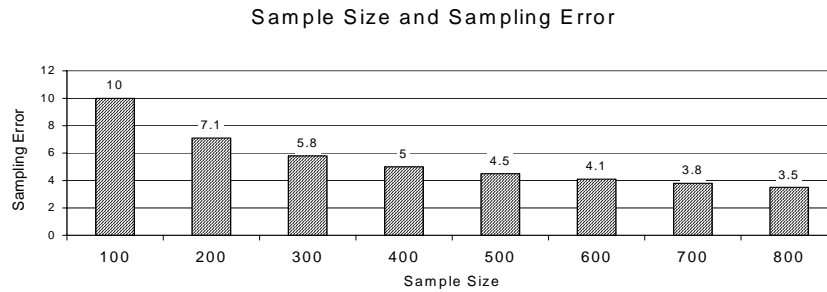
“The conventional wisdom is that Republicans trump Democrats when it comes to involvement in religion,” Edelman observed. “But, at least in New Jersey, the greater difference may be between political partisans and those who do not identify with either party.”

Evangelical Christians also appear to have a different effect on politics in New Jersey than nationally. Besides being balanced between the two parties, they prefer U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez, a Democrat, over state Sen. Tom Kean, Jr., a Republican, in the race for the U.S. Senate by a margin of 48 percent to 29 percent. Menendez’ overall lead among registered voters is 5 percent. Edelman noted that Menendez’ advantage among evangelical Christians may be due to the fact that half of the evangelicals are non-white.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP 158-3) April 13, 2006

The latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted from March 26 to 30 with a scientifically selected random sample of 800 New Jersey adult (18+) residents. This sample yielded 676 adult residents registered to vote in New Jersey. Most of the figures in this release are based on the statewide sample of all adults.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error for 800 New Jersey adult residents is +/- 3.5 %, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey residents were found to have a favorable opinion of an issue, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.5% and 53.5% had all New Jersey residents been interviewed, rather than just a sample. The sampling error for 676 registered voters is ± 3.8 percent. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. The following chart shows the relationship between sample size and sampling error. Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects.



R3. I'm going to ask about a couple stories in the Bible...The [first/second] is about Moses parting the Red Sea so the Jews could escape from Egypt.... Do you think that's literally true, meaning it happened that way word for word, or do you think it's meant as a lesson, not to be taken literally?
[Rotated with R3a]

	Literally true	Not literally true	DK/RF	(n)
<u>RUTGERS-EAGLETON SURVEY</u>				
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll / March 2006 (New Jersey Sample)	38%	49%	13%	800
<u>Party ID</u>				
--Democrat	39%	51%	10%	275
--Republican	40%	48%	12%	186
--Independent	38%	48%	14%	253
<u>NATIONAL SURVEY</u>				
ABC News Poll / February 2004 (National Sample)	64%	28%	8% ¹	1,011

R3a. The [second/first] is the resurrection where Jesus physically rose from the dead... Do you think that's literally true, meaning it actually happened that way word for word, or do you think it's meant as a lesson, not to be taken literally?

	Literally true	Not literally true	DK/RF	(n)
<u>RUTGERS-EAGLETON SURVEY</u>				
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll / March 2006 (New Jersey Sample)	56%	31%	13%	800
<u>Party ID</u>				
--Democrat	59%	30%	11%	275
--Republican	60%	30%	10%	186
--Independent	51%	34%	15%	253

¹ Categorized as "No opinion"

R1. Have you ever had an experience where you felt as though you were close to a powerful spiritual force that seemed to lift you out of yourself, or not?

	Yes	No	DK/RF	(n)
<u>RUTGERS-EAGLETON SURVEY</u>				
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll / March 2006 (New Jersey Sample)	23%	72%	5%	800
<u>Party ID</u>				
--Democrat	22%	73%	5%	275
--Republican	20%	76%	4%	186
--Independent	25%	72%	4%	253
<u>PAST EAGLETON SURVEY</u>				
Eagleton Poll May 1975 (New Jersey Sample)	19 %	78 %	2 %	998

R4. How often do you attend church, synagogue, or other worship services--at least once a week, almost every week, about once a month, seldom, or never?

	At least once a week	Almost every week	About once a month	Seldom	Never	DK/ RF	(n)
<u>RUTGERS-EAGLETON SURVEY</u>							
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll / March 2006 (New Jersey Sample)	30%	10%	14%	28%	15%	3%	800
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	32%	12%	18%	26%	12%	1%	275
--Republican	38%	9%	13%	24%	14%	2%	186
--Independent	27%	9%	11%	31%	18%	4%	253
<u>PAST EAGLETON SURVEY</u>							
Eagleton Poll February 1995 ² (New Jersey Sample)	29 %	8 %	17 %	32 %	14 %	1 %	801
<u>NATIONAL SURVEY</u>							
Gallup/CNN/USA Today, February 2006 ³ (National Sample)	32 %	10 %	12 %	27 %	18 %	2%	1,000

² Question asked was: "How often do you attend church or synagogue, at least once a week, almost every week, about once a month, seldom, or never?"

³ Question asked was: "How often do you attend church or synagogue, at least once a week, almost every week, about once a month, seldom, or never?"

R5. Would you describe yourself as a born again or evangelical Christian, or not?

	Yes	No	DK/RF	(n)
<u>RUTGERS-EAGLETON SURVEY</u>				
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll / March 2006 (New Jersey Sample)	19%	76%	5%	800
<u>Party ID</u>				
--Democrat	18%	78%	4%	275
--Republican	20%	77%	4%	186
--Independent	19%	76%	6%	253
<u>NATIONAL SURVEY</u>				
Associated Press /Ipsos-Public Affairs Poll, March 2006 (National Sample)	39%	60%	1%	1,003

R6. Do you consider yourself to be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, some other religion, atheist or agnostic?

	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish	Muslim	Some other religion	Atheist	Agnostic	DK/RF	(n)
<u>RUTGERS- EAGLETON SURVEY</u>									
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll / March 2006 (New Jersey Sample)	42%	26%	4%	1%	13%	2%	4%	7%	800
<u>Party ID</u>									
--Democrat	41%	26%	6%	1%	14%	2%	4%	6%	275
--Republican	50%	28%	3%	0.5%	6%	2%	2%	6%	186
--Independent	41%	24%	4%	0.4%	15%	2%	4%	8%	253

R7. How important is religion in your daily life?...Extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not too important, not important at all?

	Extremely / Very important	Somewhat important	Not too / Not important at all	DK/RF	(n)
<u>RUTGERS- EAGLETON SURVEY</u>					
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll / March 2006 (New Jersey Sample)	53%	27%	19%	2%	800
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	53%	28%	19%	0.4%	275
--Republican	60%	23%	15%	2%	186
--Independent	48%	29%	21%	2%	253
<u>NATIONAL SURVEY</u>					
RT Strategies / Cook Political Report Poll, November 2005 (National Sample)	63%	22 %	14 %	1 %	1,000

R8. Which is the most important part of religion for you, personally?...Following the traditions and teachings of your religion as closely as you can, or, having something you consider a spiritual experience, no matter how you find it? *[Only asked of those who responded to R7: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not sure/refused]*

	Following traditions	Spiritual experience	Both	DK/RF	(n)
<u>RUTGERS-EAGLETON SURVEY</u>					
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll / March 2006 (New Jersey Sample)	47%	40%	5%	9%	639
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	49%	38%	7%	6%	218
--Republican	52%	38%	4%	5%	157
--Independent	42%	41%	3%	14%	197
<u>NATIONAL SURVEY</u>					
CBS News Poll, May 2005 (National Sample)	50 %	42 %	4 %	3 %	1,150

R9. How important will the Senatorial candidates' religious beliefs be in deciding whom you vote for in November?...Extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all important?

	Extremely / Very important	Somewhat important	Not very / Not at all important	DK/RF	(n)
<u>RUTGERS- EAGLETON SURVEY</u>					
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll / March 2006 (New Jersey Sample)	18%	19%	58%	5%	800
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	19%	15%	62%	4%	275
--Republican	15%	28%	54%	3%	186
--Independent	21%	18%	58%	2%	253

G1. If the election for the U.S. Senate were held today, for whom would you vote (ROTATE) Robert Menendez, the Democrat, Tom Kean Jr., the Republican, or some other candidate for Senate? [Includes "Leaners"]

	Menendez	Kean Jr.	Other Candidate	Wouldn't Vote	DK/RF	(n)
<u>RUTGERS- EAGLETON SURVEY</u>						
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll / March 2006 (NJ Registered Voters)	40%	35%	2%	3%	20%	676
<u>Born again/Evangelical</u>						
--Yes	48%	29%	3%	3%	16%	107
--No	39%	37%	1%	4%	19%	530
<u>Importance of religion in daily life</u>						
Extremely / Very important	38%	36%	2%	3%	21%	353
Somewhat important	41%	37%	1%	4%	18%	171
Not too / Not important at all	44%	32%	1%	5%	17%	134
<u>Church attendance</u>						
At least once a week	42%	40%	2%	2%	13%	205
Almost every week	36%	33%	--	--	31%	79
About once a month	41%	40%	1%	3%	14%	90
Seldom	38%	30%	3%	6%	24%	186
Never	40%	35%	--	5%	20%	93

B1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President?

	Approve	Disapprove	DK/RF	(n)
<u>RUTGERS- EAGLETON SURVEY</u>				
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll / March 2006 (New Jersey Sample)	30%	63%	7%	800
<u>Born Again/Evangelical</u>				
--Yes	34%	58%	7%	128
--No	28%	65%	7%	625
<u>Importance of religion in daily life</u>				
Extremely / Very important	30%	61%	9%	413
Somewhat important	33%	62%	5%	204
Not too / Not important at all	27%	70%	3%	161
<u>Church attendance</u>				
At least once a week	32%	59%	9%	240
Almost every week	33%	57%	11%	88
About once a month	33%	62%	5%	106
Seldom	30%	66%	4%	218
Never	22%	73%	6%	121