

The Star-Ledger/EAGLETON POLL

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RELEASE INFORMATION

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in Monday's *Star-Ledger*. Other newspapers may also use this information in their Monday editions. Electronic media may release after 5:00 p.m. Sunday, October 30. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to the "*Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*."

RACE FOR THE SENATE: LAUTENBERG STILLS LEADS, BUT DAWKINS WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE

The race for the U.S. Senate in New Jersey has narrowed substantially between September and October, to the point where Republican challenger Pete Dawkins may now be within striking distance of incumbent Democratic Senator Frank Lautenberg.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll reveals that Lautenberg's lead of 20 points in September has been nearly cut in half, and as of late October stands at just over 10 points. Among registered voters, and including those who only now lean to either candidate, Lautenberg leads Dawkins by a 50 to 38 percent margin, with 12 percent undecided. In September, Lautenberg held a 53 to 32 percent advantage among a comparable group.

The survey of 800 voters was conducted in two consecutive waves of 400 each between October 17 and 22, and October 22 and 25. In the first wave of interviews Lautenberg led Dawkins 51 to 38 percent, and by 48 to 39 percent in the second wave.

The survey also reveals that Dawkins' gains are coming from voters who have recently made up their minds. Among all voters who say they decided who they would vote for within the last two weeks, 50 percent favor the Republican while an equal number support Lautenberg. Analysis of the electorate shows that this group of late deciders is primarily comprised of

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Republicans and Independents. Among Republicans who have made up their minds, 47 percent say they decided who they would vote for in the last week or two, as have 44 percent of Independents, compared to only 25 percent of decided Democrats.

Bob Carter, associate director of the Poll, commented, "What we are seeing at this point in the campaign is a rather natural movement of the electorate. Lautenberg's support among Democrats has been very strong throughout the campaign, which is to be expected given that he's an incumbent; and, he continues to do well among Independents. It has taken Dawkins longer, as a political newcomer, to line up his partisan support, but those Republicans who had not yet made up their minds are starting to do so. And, he is now starting to attract more Independent voters."

Opinions of both candidates have changed very little from September to October, and mostly for the negative, while extremely large numbers of voters continue to say they have no opinion of the candidates. Favorable impressions of Lautenberg outnumber unfavorable ones by a 38 to 17 percent margin, with 44 percent offering no opinion. One month ago he stood at 39 to 11 percent with 50 percent no opinion. For Dawkins, favorable impressions now stand at 29 percent compared to 22 percent unfavorable, with 50 percent having no opinion, compared with 24 to 13 percent favorable over unfavorable in September, with 64 percent offering no opinion.

Carter added, "It is somewhat astounding, after the millions of dollars both of these candidates have poured into political ads, that so many voters do not offer opinions about either one of them. While knowledge about both candidates is up sharply since September because of the ads, there has been very little impact on how voters view them. The heavily negative tone of both campaigns seems to have turned many people off and had the effect of slowing or stopping the normal process of opinion formation."

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The vast majority of the electorate has now seen ads for the two candidates. Eighty-one percent have seen ads for Lautenberg, and 75 percent have seen Dawkins' commercials, up from less than 6-in-10 voters who had seen their ads in September. Knowledge about both candidates is also up sharply since September. Fifty-four percent of voters say they know "a lot" or "some" about Lautenberg, while 40 percent say the same about Dawkins. One month ago the comparable figures were 35 percent for Lautenberg and 21 percent for Dawkins.

The candidate's support among partisans, with leaners included, shows 83 percent of Democrats currently favor Lautenberg, while Dawkins earns the support of 72 percent of Republicans. Among the crucial block of Independent voters, Lautenberg holds a 49 to 33 percent advantage over Dawkins. In comparison with the presidential candidates in New Jersey, Lautenberg does as well as Dukakis in attracting Democrats--83 compared to 85 percent. Dawkins, however, fares much less well among Republicans than does his party's presidential candidate--72 percent compared to 97 percent for George Bush.

Carter concluded by saying the current survey shows that, "There remains great potential for change in the race. Opinions of both candidates remain very soft, and there is still a significant number of undecided voters, especially among the all-important Independents. This situation is reminiscent of the 1982 contest between Lautenberg and Fenwick when, at the same point in the campaign, similarly large numbers of voters had no opinion of either candidate in a race in which Lautenberg eventually came from behind to win."

The second debate between Dawkins and Lautenberg, on September 19, had little impact on the race. Only one-in-four voters saw any part of the debate, while about an equal number saw only news stories about it. Among those who either saw or heard about it, one-half say neither candidate got the best of the debate.

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BACKGROUND MEMO--RELEASE SL/EP 21-2 (EP 71-2), FOR RELEASE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1988

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll was conducted in two waves, with two independent random samples of 400 New Jerseyans in each wave who were 18 years of age and older who reported being registered to vote and saying they would definitely or probably vote in November's election. Wave 1 was conducted between October 17 and 22, and Wave 2 was conducted between October 22 and 25, 1988. Figures based on the sample of 800 respondents are subject to a sampling error of ± 3.5 percent. Figures based on the 400 respondents in each wave are subject to a sampling error of ± 5 percent. Unless otherwise indicated all figures refer to this group of voters.

Figures are also reported for those considered most likely to actually vote in the November 8 election. This subset, identified as **LIKELY VOTERS** in this background memo, contains 638 respondents. The sampling error for this subset is ± 4 percent.

Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the 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:

"There is also an election for the U.S. Senate in New Jersey next month. How much interest do you have in this election--a lot, some, a little, or none at all?"

	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
OCTOBER, 1988	31%	35%	22%	9%	3%	100%	(800)
<u>Party</u>							
--Democratic	36	32	20	9	3	100	(242)
--Independent	30	33	25	10	2	100	(290)
--Republican	27	39	23	9	2	100	(237)

"How much do you think you know about (Lautenberg/Dawkins)--a lot, some, or just a little?"

	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>LAUTENBERG</u>							
OCTOBER, 1988	17%	37%	37%	6%	2%	99%	(800)
<u>Party</u>							
--Democratic	23	34	34	8	1	100	(242)
--Independent	14	37	41	6	2	100	(290)
--Republican	16	41	35	4	4	100	(237)
September, 1988	7	28	47	15	2	99	(367)
February, 1988	4	19	51	24	2	100	(587)
<u>DAWKINS</u>							
OCTOBER, 1988	9	31	48	9	2	99	(800)
<u>Party</u>							
--Democratic	9	26	50	14	1	100	(242)
--Independent	11	25	53	9	3	101	(290)
--Republican	9	46	40	4	3	102	(237)
September, 1988	5	16	52	27	1	101	(367)
February, 1988	2	4	18	77	0	101	(586)

"Is your general impression of (Lautenberg/Dawkins) favorable or unfavorable, or don't you have an opinion about him? (IF FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE, PROBE: Is that very (favorable/unfavorable) or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable)?"

	<u>FAVORABLE</u>		<u>UNFAVORABLE</u>		<u>No</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	<u>Very</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Opinion</u>		
<u>LAUTENBERG</u>							
<u>OCTOBER 1988</u>							
--Total Registered	14%	24%	12%	5%	44%	99%	(798)
--Likely Voters	17	26	14	5	39	101	(638)
<u>Party</u>							
--Democrat	27	31	4	2	36	100	(242)
--Independent	12	24	12	5	47	100	(289)
--Republican	4	19	22	9	46	100	(236)
<u>Survey Wave</u>							
--October 17-22	14	25	12	5	45	101	(399)
--October 22-25	15	24	13	5	44	101	(399)
September 1988	19	20	6	5	50	100	(789)
May 1988	16	18	5	4	56	99	(611)
February 1988	13	22	3	2	60	100	(587)
<u>DAWKINS</u>							
<u>OCTOBER 1988</u>							
--Total Registered	10	19	14	8	50	101	(799)
--Likely Voters	10	20	15	9	45	99	(638)
<u>Party</u>							
--Democrat	4	11	20	14	52	101	(242)
--Independent	7	18	17	9	49	100	(289)
--Republican	19	28	6	2	46	101	(237)
<u>Survey Wave</u>							
--October 17-22	10	18	14	8	50	100	(399)
--October 22-25	10	19	14	8	49	100	(400)
September 1988	8	16	6	7	64	101	(789)
May 1988	10	13	2	2	74	101	(611)
February 1988	2	4	1	1	92	100	(586)

"Have you seen any of (Lautenberg's/Dawkins') television or radio advertisements?"

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>SAW LAUTENBERG ADS</u>				
OCTOBER 1988	81%	19%	100%	(800)
September 1988	57	43	100	(788)
<u>SAW DAWKINS ADS</u>				
OCTOBER 1988	75	25	100	(799)
September 1988	58	42	100	(789)

"If the election was today, would you vote for Pete Dawkins, the Republican; or Frank Lautenberg, the Democrat?"

UNDECIDED VOTERS WERE THEN ASKED: Do you lean more towards Dawkins, or more towards Lautenberg?"

	<u>INITIALLY UNDECIDED</u>					<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	<u>Chooses Lautenberg</u>	<u>Leans to Lautenberg</u>	<u>Pure Undecided</u>	<u>Leans to Dawkins</u>	<u>Chooses Dawkins</u>		
<u>OCTOBER 1988</u>							
--Total Registered	46	4	12	4	34	100	(774)
--Likely Voters	47	3	11	4	35	100	(627)
<u>Party</u>							
--Democrat	81	2	8	1	9	101	(234)
--Independent	45	4	17	4	29	99	(279)
--Republican	17	4	6	7	65	99	(231)
<u>Survey Wave</u>							
--October 17-22	48	3	11	5	33	100	(385)
--October 22-25	44	4	13	4	35	100	(389)
<u>Time of Decision</u>							
--last week or two	50	--	--	--	50	100	(234)
--last month or two	58	--	--	--	42	100	(137)
--knew all along	68	--	--	--	32	100	(211)
SEPTEMBER 1988	48	5	15	4	28	100	(765)
MAY 1988	45	6	16	5	28	100	(556)
FEBRUARY 1988	45		39		16	100	(575)

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<u>INITIALLY UNDECIDED</u>						
	<u>Chooses Lautenberg</u>	<u>Leans to Lautenberg</u>	<u>Pure Undecided</u>	<u>Leans to Dawkins</u>	<u>Chooses Dawkins</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(n)</u>
<u>OCTOBER 1988</u>						
<u>Ideology</u>						
--Liberal	71%	4%	7%	3%	15%	100% (112)
--Moderate	46	5	12	5	32	100 (411)
--Conservative	35	2	11	3	51	102 (202)
<u>Age</u>						
--18-29	43	5	15	4	34	101 (136)
--30-49	46	4	15	6	29	100 (330)
--50-64	45	3	7	2	42	99 (175)
--65+	54	2	9	2	31	98 (120)
<u>Race</u>						
--white	44	4	11	4	36	99 (657)
--non-white	55	4	18	3	20	100 (105)
<u>Income</u>						
--under \$20,000	54	4	14	1	28	101 (127)
--\$20,000-\$30,000	48	2	12	7	31	100 (132)
--\$30,000-\$50,000	48	4	12	4	32	100 (196)
--over \$50,000	44	6	9	3	38	100 (235)
<u>Education</u>						
--less than high school	51	3	20	0	25	99 (51)
--high school graduate	44	6	13	4	33	100 (237)
--more than high school	47	3	11	5	36	102 (486)
<u>Type of Community</u>						
--central city	50	1	24	5	21	101 (84)
--cities and old suburb	54	2	8	3	34	101 (166)
--new suburb	43	4	10	5	37	99 (426)
--rural	43	6	17	2	32	100 (98)
<u>Occupation</u>						
--blue collar	43	5	16	7	29	100 (178)
--white collar-self employed	47	3	10	3	37	100 (370)
<u>Union Member in Household</u>						
--yes	48	6	18	5	24	101 (224)
--no	46	3	10	4	39	102 (548)

"Are you very sure about your choice, or might you change your mind before election day?"

	<u>Sure</u>	<u>Might Change</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
OCTOBER TOTAL	54%	47%	101%	(774)
<u>Vote Choice</u>				
--Lautenberg	69	31	100	(362)
--Dawkins	64	36	100	(262)
<u>Survey Wave</u>				
--October 17-22	53	47	100	(385)
--October 22-25	54	46	100	(389)
September 1988	48	52	100	(765)
<u>Vote Choice</u>				
--Lautenberg	66	34	100	(360)
--Dawkins	60	40	100	(229)

Those choosing either Dawkins or Lautenberg were asked if they were "very sure about voting for him, or might you change your mind before election day?" Of the Dawkins voters, 64 percent said they were sure and 36 percent said they might change. Sixty-nine percent of Lautenberg voters were firm while 31 percent said they might switch. In September, 40 percent of Dawkins and 34 percent of Lautenberg voters said they might switch.

Undecided voters were asked "at this moment do you lean more towards Dawkins, or more towards Lautenberg?" Twenty-one percent leaned to Dawkins, 21 percent to Lautenberg, and the remainder did not state a preference.

With the leaners allocated, and with firmness of preference taken into account, registered and likely voters displayed the following pattern:

	<u>DAWKINS</u>			<u>Undecided</u>	<u>LAUTENBERG</u>			<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	<u>Firm</u>	<u>Soft</u>	<u>Lean</u>		<u>Lean</u>	<u>Soft</u>	<u>Firm</u>		
<u>OCTOBER</u>									
--Total Reg.	22%	12%	4%	12%	4%	14%	32%	100%	(774)
--Likely Voters	23	12	4	11	3	12	35	100	(627)
<u>Survey Wave</u>									
--October 17-22	22	11	5	11	3	16	33	101	(385)
--October 22-25	22	13	4	13	4	12	32	100	(389)
<u>SEPTEMBER</u>									
--Total Reg.	17	11	4	15	5	16	32	100	(765)

"When did you decide who you would vote for--in the last few days, in the last couple of weeks, in the last month or two, or did you know all along?"

	<u>Last Few Days</u>	<u>Last Week or Two</u>	<u>Last Month or Two</u>	<u>Knew All Along</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Undecided on Vote</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
OCTOBER 1988								
--Total Registered	17%	22%	22%	33%	7%	--	101%	(623)
--Likely Voters	16	20	22	35	6	--	99	(519)
Vote Choice								
--Lautenberg	15	18	22	39	6	--	100	(361)
--Dawkins	19	27	22	25	8	--	101	(262)
Party								
--Democrat	12	13	20	49	6	--	100	(210)
--Independent	18	26	25	25	5	--	99	(211)
--Republican	21	26	21	25	8	--	101	(189)
Survey Wave								
--October 17-22	17	23	22	33	6	--	101	(314)
--October 22-25	17	21	22	33	7	--	100	(309)

"Did you watch any of Wednesday's debate between Dawkins and Lautenberg on TV or listen to it on the radio?"

RESPONDENTS WHO DID NOT SEE OR HEAR THE DEBATE WERE ASKED:

"Have you seen any news stories about their debate?"

	<u>Saw or Heard Debate</u>	<u>Only Saw News About Debate</u>	<u>Saw Neither</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
OCTOBER 1988					
--Total Registered	26%	23%	51%	100%	(392)
--Likely Voters	29	24	47	100	(313)
Party					
--Democrat	24	24	52	100	(118)
--Independent	29	25	46	100	(139)
--Republican	22	21	57	100	(119)

"Who do you think actually got the best of the debate--Lautenberg or Dawkins? By a lot or just a little?" *

	<u>Lautenberg-- A Lot</u>	<u>Lautenberg-- A Little</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>Dawkins-- A Little</u>	<u>Dawkins-- A Lot</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
OCTOBER 1988							
--Total Registered	12%	21%	49%	14%	4%	100%	(194)
--Likely Voters	11	20	51	13	5	100	(166)
Debate Exposure							
--saw or heard debate	13	20	42	17	7	99	(104)
--saw news stories only	11	22	55	11	1	100	(89)

* Question was asked only of those having seen or heard the debate, or having seen news stories about the debate.

1982 SENATE ELECTION COMPARISONS *

Those able to recognize the names Fenwick and Lautenberg were asked: "How much do you think you know about (Fenwick/Lautenberg)--a lot, some, or just a little?"

	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>FENWICK</u>							
<u>Reg Total</u>							
--October 1982	10%	32%	47%	10%	1%	100%	(1083)
--September 1982	11	32	43	14	1	101	(756)
<u>LAUTENBERG</u>							
<u>Reg Total</u>							
--October 1982	4	19	59	17	1	100	(1081)
--September 1982	2	11	53	34	1	101	(756)

"Is your general impression of (Fenwick/Lautenberg) favorable or unfavorable, or don't you have an opinion about (her/him)?"

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>FENWICK</u>					
<u>Reg Total</u>					
--October 1982	38%	16%	46%	100%	(1083)
--September 1982	45	7	47	99	(756)
<u>LAUTENBERG</u>					
<u>Reg Total</u>					
--October 1982	27	7	66	100	(1082)
--September 1982	17	6	78	101	(756)

Those choosing either Fenwick or Lautenberg were asked if they were "very sure about voting for (her/him), or might you change your mind before election day?" Of the Fenwick voters, 59 percent said they were sure and 41 percent said they might change. Fifty-eight percent of Lautenberg voters were firm while 42 percent said they might switch. In September 50 percent of Fenwick and 53 percent of Lautenberg voters said they might switch.

Undecided voters were asked "at this moment do you lean more towards Fenwick, or more towards Lautenberg?" Four percent leaned to Fenwick, 3 percent to Lautenberg, and the remainder did not state a preference.

With the leaners allocated, and with firmness of preference taken into account, registered and likely voters displayed the following pattern:

	<u>FENWICK</u>			<u>Undecided</u>	<u>LAUTENBERG</u>			<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
	<u>Firm</u>	<u>Soft</u>	<u>Lean</u>		<u>Lean</u>	<u>Soft</u>	<u>Firm</u>		
<u>OCTOBER</u>									
--Total Reg.	25%	17%	4%	11%	3%	16%	23%	99%	(1082)
--Likely Voters	31	13	4	9	3	13	27	100	(683)
<u>SEPTEMBER</u>									
--Total Reg.	25	25	5	11	2	17	15	100	(756)
--Likely Voters	29	22	4	10	3	15	17	100	(457)

* October interviewing dates October 18-26; September interviewing dates: September 14-25.