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**Over Half of New Jerseyans Label Jan. 6 an Insurrection, Feel 2020 Election Was Legitimate; Most Worried About the Future of American Democracy**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (September 28, 2022) – More than half (56 percent) of New Jersey residents believe that the attack on the United States Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021 was an insurrection and a threat to democracy, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton poll.

The poll – the latest snapshot of public sentiment as the House Select Committee resumes its investigation on the Jan. 6 attack this month – found, on the other hand, that 16 percent view it as “an unfortunate event,” that was “in the past, so no need to worry about it anymore.” Another 16 percent believe it was a political protest protected under the First Amendment, while 7 percent don’t share any of those views and 5 percent are unsure.

While 60 percent of residents view Jan. 6 as a “protest aimed at overturning the results of a legitimate presidential election,” 25 percent feel just the opposite, saying it was a “protest aimed at preventing a fraudulent election.” Fourteen percent are undecided.

Regardless of which side they fall on regarding Jan. 6, most New Jerseyans are worried about the future of America’s democracy – 58 percent “very,” 28 percent “somewhat.”

More than half of New Jerseyans say they are “closely” following the committee hearings to some extent (27 percent “very,” 29 percent “somewhat”). Sixteen percent are not following so closely, and another 27 percent aren’t following them closely at all.

“Election integrity and the events that took place on Jan. 6 are becoming defining issues for the upcoming midterm elections, and for American politics and the two major political parties more broadly,” said Ashley Koning, an assistant research professor and director of the [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling \(ECPiP\)](#) at [Rutgers University–New Brunswick](#). “We see a stark partisan divide when it comes to interpreting the 2020 election and the incidents on Jan. 6, indicating that – even in New Jersey – Republicans mainly side with Trump and the Republican Party’s narrative.”

“The Eagleton Poll survey data confirm the reality and challenge, even in New Jersey, of a divided America,” said John J. Farmer, Jr., Director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics. “The continuing divergent interpretations of the purpose and meaning of the events of January 6, 2021, raise the disturbing possibility that the events of January 6 were not a culmination, but a prelude.”

There are sharp partisan divides on the incident. Democrats overwhelmingly call Jan. 6 an “insurrection and a threat to democracy” (88 percent), and likewise call the events a “protest aimed at overturning the results of a legitimate election” (91 percent).

Republicans are more mixed— 58 percent say the events were to protest an illegitimate election versus 22 percent who say the election was a legitimate one and 20 percent are undecided about the intentions.

Similarly, 38 percent of Republicans feel the protest was permissible under the First Amendment and 37 percent label the events as unfortunate but in the past; 15 percent of this group agree it was an insurrection.

Half (51 percent) of independents call Jan. 6 an “insurrection” and slightly more than half (54 percent) say it was a “protest aimed at overturning the results of a legitimate election.” The remainder of independents are split.

Yet partisans unite in their worry over the future of American Democracy. Majorities of Democrats (69 percent “very,” 24 percent “somewhat”), independents (53 percent “very,” 30 percent “somewhat”), and Republicans (51 percent “very,” 27 percent “somewhat”) say they are worried to some degree.

Three-quarters (74 percent) of Democrats say they are following the hearings “somewhat” to “very” closely, compared with half (49 percent) of independents and slightly less than half (45 percent) of Republicans.

“Important voting blocs like women and Black residents are more likely than their counterparts to label Jan. 6 an ‘insurrection’ and a ‘protest aimed at overturning the results of a legitimate election,’” noted Jessica Roman, research associate at the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling. “Women are also more worried than men when it comes to the future of American democracy.”

The results are from a statewide poll of 1,018 adults contacted by live interviewers on landline telephones and cell phones from July 18 to July 27. The full sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.8 percentage points.

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**Broadcast interviews:** Rutgers University–New Brunswick has broadcast-quality television and radio studios available for remote live or taped interviews with Rutgers experts. For more information, contact John Cramer at [john.cramer@rutgers.edu](mailto:john.cramer@rutgers.edu).

**ABOUT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY–NEW BRUNSWICK**

*Rutgers University–New Brunswick is where Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, began more than 250 years ago. Ranked among the world’s top 60 universities, Rutgers’s flagship university is a leading public research institution and a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. It is home to internationally acclaimed faculty and has 12 degree-granting schools and a Division I Athletics program. It is the Big Ten Conference’s most diverse university. Through its community of teachers, scholars, artists, scientists and healers, Rutgers is equipped as never before to transform lives.*

**ABOUT THE EAGLETON CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEREST POLLING**

*Home of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) was established in 1971 and is the oldest and one of the most respected university-based statewide polling operations in the United States. Now in its 50th year and with the publication of over 200 polls, ECPIP’s mission is to provide scientifically sound, nonpartisan information about public opinion. To read more about ECPIP and view all of our press releases, published research and data archive, please visit our website: [eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu](http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu). You can also visit [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

**ABOUT THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS**

*The Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling is a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. The Eagleton Institute studies how American politics and government work and change, analyzes how the democracy might improve and promotes political participation and civic engagement. The Institute explores state and national politics through research, education, and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice. To learn more about Eagleton programs and expertise, visit [eagleton.rutgers.edu](http://eagleton.rutgers.edu).*

**QUESTIONS AND TABLES START ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE**

**Questions and Tables**

*The questions covered in this release are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding. Respondents are New Jersey adults; all percentages are of weighted results. Interpret groups with samples sizes under 100 with extreme caution.*

**J1. As you may know, a special congressional committee is investigating the events of the United States Capitol that occurred on January 6, 2021, when a crowd entered the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., and disrupted the election certification process. How closely are you following news about the January 6 Committee hearings; very closely, somewhat closely, not so closely, or not closely at all?**

<b>Very closely</b>	27%
<b>Somewhat closely</b>	29%
<b>Not so closely</b>	16%
<b>Not closely at all</b>	27%
<b>Don't know</b>	1%
<b>Unweighted N=</b>	1011

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
<b>Very</b>	44%	20%	15%	29%	26%	30%	35%	17%	21%	13%	18%	35%	44%
<b>Somewhat</b>	30%	29%	30%	30%	28%	29%	31%	28%	29%	32%	29%	33%	21%
<b>Not so closely</b>	15%	18%	11%	13%	19%	15%	11%	20%	18%	19%	24%	9%	10%
<b>Not at all</b>	10%	32%	44%	27%	25%	25%	21%	33%	32%	34%	28%	22%	24%
<b>DK</b>	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%	3%	0%	2%	1%	2%	1%
<b>Unwt N=</b>	375	439	184	473	525	631	140	121	102	208	284	318	196

**January 6<sup>th</sup> 2022**  
**Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
<b>Very</b>	28%	24%	28%	29%	33%	27%	28%	28%	22%	27%	26%	26%	31%
<b>Somewhat</b>	26%	28%	27%	40%	29%	30%	25%	29%	32%	22%	32%	37%	27%
<b>Not so closely</b>	15%	16%	19%	14%	9%	16%	18%	19%	15%	16%	13%	14%	20%
<b>Not at all</b>	27%	32%	25%	16%	25%	27%	28%	23%	30%	32%	28%	23%	22%
<b>DK</b>	4%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	1%	1%	4%	1%	0%	0%
<b>Unwt N=</b>	154	306	198	242	144	326	167	186	188	122	268	336	282

J2. Do you think January 6th was intended to be [ROTATE: a protest aimed at overturning the results of a legitimate presidential election] OR was it [a protest aimed at preventing a fraudulent election]?

Note: The order of J2 and J3 rotated in live interviewing.

Overturn legit election	60%
Prevent fraudulent election	25%
Undecided	14%
Unweighted N=	1003

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
<b>Overturn legit</b>	91%	54%	22%	53%	68%	56%	81%	65%	52%	70%	58%	55%	59%
<b>Prevent fraud</b>	4%	27%	58%	31%	20%	31%	8%	14%	33%	17%	25%	31%	28%
<b>Undecided</b>	5%	19%	20%	16%	12%	13%	11%	20%	14%	13%	17%	15%	13%
<b>Unwt N=</b>	376	435	179	468	523	625	139	122	103	208	284	316	190

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
<b>Overturn legit</b>	63%	60%	58%	65%	74%	63%	53%	58%	48%	56%	57%	64%	66%
<b>Prevent fraud</b>	22%	25%	31%	24%	10%	20%	29%	34%	38%	23%	29%	26%	23%
<b>Undecided</b>	15%	16%	11%	11%	15%	16%	18%	8%	14%	21%	14%	10%	11%
<b>Unwt N=</b>	150	303	197	242	144	328	166	181	184	122	265	332	281

**J3. When it comes to the events that occurred on January 6th, 2021, which of the following comes closest to your view?**

*Note: The order of J2 and J3 rotated in live interviewing.*

<b>It was an insurrection and a threat to democracy</b>	56%
<b>It was a political protest protected under the First Amendment</b>	16%
<b>It was an unfortunate event, but in the past, so no need to worry about it anymore</b>	16%
<b>None of these</b>	7%
<b>Don't know</b>	5%
<b>Unweighted N=</b>	1015

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
<b>Insurrection</b>	88%	51%	15%	48%	64%	52%	79%	60%	52%	64%	57%	53%	51%
<b>Political protest</b>	3%	15%	38%	20%	12%	18%	5%	10%	23%	14%	14%	18%	15%
<b>In the past</b>	4%	16%	37%	19%	13%	21%	9%	14%	5%	8%	13%	18%	28%
<b>None of these</b>	2%	10%	8%	9%	5%	5%	4%	9%	14%	8%	10%	7%	3%
<b>Don't know</b>	3%	8%	3%	3%	7%	4%	3%	9%	6%	7%	7%	3%	3%
<b>Unwt N=</b>	377	441	184	472	530	633	140	124	102	208	286	320	196

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
<b>Insurrection</b>	60%	54%	58%	59%	62%	62%	48%	57%	45%	49%	52%	64%	66%
<b>Political protest</b>	6%	21%	19%	14%	8%	13%	16%	18%	25%	13%	18%	16%	15%
<b>In the past</b>	20%	15%	13%	17%	17%	12%	22%	16%	20%	26%	14%	10%	12%
<b>None of these</b>	4%	7%	9%	8%	7%	7%	9%	4%	7%	4%	10%	9%	6%
<b>Don't know</b>	10%	3%	1%	2%	6%	6%	4%	5%	2%	8%	7%	2%	2%
<b>Unwt N=</b>	155	306	198	242	144	328	168	187	188	125	271	335	281

**J4. How worried are you about the future of America's democracy? Would you say very worried, somewhat worried, not very worried, or not at all worried?**

<b>Very worried</b>	58%
<b>Somewhat worried</b>	28%
<b>Not very worried</b>	6%
<b>Not at all worried</b>	7%
<b>Don't know</b>	1%
<b>Unweighted N=</b>	1018

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
<b>Very</b>	69%	53%	51%	51%	65%	56%	67%	64%	54%	67%	58%	58%	49%
<b>Somewhat</b>	24%	30%	27%	30%	26%	31%	19%	24%	28%	21%	25%	31%	35%
<b>Not very</b>	3%	7%	8%	9%	3%	6%	6%	3%	8%	4%	8%	5%	6%
<b>Not at all</b>	3%	7%	14%	10%	4%	7%	7%	6%	9%	5%	7%	6%	10%
<b>DK</b>	2%	2%	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%	0%
<b>Unwt N=</b>	378	443	184	474	531	633	140	124	104	210	287	320	196

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
<b>Very</b>	58%	60%	65%	52%	63%	56%	61%	60%	56%	53%	66%	58%	55%
<b>Somewhat</b>	26%	27%	24%	33%	26%	30%	27%	27%	25%	27%	25%	31%	30%
<b>Not very</b>	5%	7%	5%	5%	4%	6%	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	7%
<b>Not at all</b>	8%	6%	4%	9%	4%	7%	6%	6%	12%	12%	2%	6%	7%
<b>DK</b>	3%	0%	1%	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%	0%	2%	2%	0%	1%
<b>Unwt N=</b>	156	307	199	242	145	330	168	187	188	125	272	336	282



## Methodology

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone using live interviewers July 18 to July 27, 2022, with a scientifically selected random sample of 1,018 New Jersey adults ages 18 or older. Persons without a telephone could not be included in the random selection process. Respondents within a household are selected by asking randomly for the youngest adult male or female currently available. If the named gender is not available, the youngest adult of the other gender is interviewed. This poll included 240 adults reached on a landline phone and 778 adults reached on a cell phone, all acquired through random digit dialing; 505 of the cell phone completes were acquired through one-to-one SMS text messaging by live interviewers that led respondents to an online version of the survey. Distribution of phone use in this sample is:

<b>Cell</b>	27%
<b>Text to Web</b>	50%
<b>Landline</b>	24%

The data were weighted to be representative of the residential adult population of New Jersey. The weighting balances sample demographics to target population parameters. The sample is balanced, by form and overall, to match parameters for sex, age, education, race/ethnicity, region and phone use. The sex, age, education, race/ethnicity and region parameters were derived from 2019 American Community Survey PUMS data. The phone use parameter was derived from estimates provided by the National Health Interview Survey Early Release Program.<sup>1</sup>

Weighting was done in two stages. The first stage of weighting corrects for different probabilities of selection across the telephone samples associated with the number of adults in each household and each respondent's telephone usage patterns. This adjustment also accounts for the overlapping landline and cell sample frames and the relative sizes of each frame and each sample.<sup>2</sup>

The final stage of weighting balances sample demographics, overall and by form, to match target population benchmarks. This weighting was accomplished using SPSSINC RAKE, an SPSS extension module that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using the GENLOG procedure. Weights were trimmed to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on survey estimates. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the target population.

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. We calculate the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data.

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. Sampling error should be adjusted to recognize the effect of weighting the data to better match the population. In this poll, the simple sampling error for 1,018 New Jersey adults is +/-3.1 percentage points at a 95

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<sup>1</sup> NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2017–2019; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017–2019.

<sup>2</sup> Buskirk, T. D., & Best, J. (2012). Venn Diagrams, Probability 101 and Sampling Weights Computed for Dual Frame Telephone RDD Designs. *Journal of Statistics and Mathematics*, 15, 3696-3710.

percent confidence interval. The design effect<sup>3</sup> is 1.57, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 3.8 percentage points. Thus, if 50 percent of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 46.2 and 53.8 percent (50 +/- 3.8) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

Sampling error does not consider other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as nonresponse, question wording, or context effects.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by Braun Research Inc. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP). Jessica Roman assisted with analysis and preparation of this report. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, a nonpartisan academic center for the study of politics and the political process. Full questionnaires are available on request and can also be accessed through our archives at [eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu](http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu). For more information, please contact [poll@eagleton.rutgers.edu](mailto:poll@eagleton.rutgers.edu).

**Weighted Demographics**  
**1,018 New Jersey adults 18+**  
**Overall Margin of Error = +/- 3.8 percentage points**

*Please note: Totals may equal slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding.*

		<b>deff</b>	<b>MOE</b>			<b>deff</b>	<b>MOE</b>
<b>Man</b>	48%	1.56	+/- 5.6%	<b>White</b>	56%	1.59	+/- 4.9%
<b>Woman</b>	52%	1.59	+/- 5.4%	<b>Black</b>	12%	1.67	+/- 10.7%
				<b>Hispanic</b>	19%	1.35	+/- 10.2%
<b>18-34</b>	26%	1.40	+/- 8.0%	<b>Other</b>	12%	1.37	+/- 11.3%
<b>35-49</b>	24%	1.59	+/- 7.3%				
<b>50-64</b>	28%	1.61	+/- 6.9%	<b>&lt;50K</b>	22%	1.50	+/- 9.6%
<b>65+</b>	21%	1.58	+/- 8.8%	<b>50K-&lt;100K</b>	38%	1.51	+/- 6.9%
				<b>100K-&lt;150K</b>	19%	1.55	+/- 8.6%
<b>Democrat</b>	35%	1.67	+/- 4.7%	<b>150K+</b>	21%	1.52	+/- 7.8%
<b>Independent</b>	45%	1.62	+/- 4.2%				
<b>Republican</b>	20%	1.56	+/- 6.6%	<b>Urban</b>	16%	1.53	+/- 10.1%
				<b>Suburb</b>	35%	1.55	+/- 6.7%
<b>HS or Less</b>	29%	1.15	+/- 9.4%	<b>Exurban</b>	14%	1.59	+/- 9.5%
<b>Some College</b>	31%	1.30	+/- 6.8%	<b>Phil/South</b>	18%	1.52	+/- 8.8%
<b>College Grad</b>	22%	1.22	+/- 5.9%	<b>Shore</b>	17%	1.57	+/- 9.0%
<b>Grad Work</b>	18%	1.22	+/- 6.5%				

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<sup>3</sup> Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. We calculate the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response.