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Sherrill Gets Solid Marks for Handling of Caldwell Investigation as Her Approval Rating Holds Steady

Nearly 7 in 10 New Jerseyans say the governor is handling the lieutenant governor's ethics case well, while more residents say the state is on the wrong track than headed in the right direction

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (Oct. 1, 2026) – Gov. Mikie Sherrill heads into the fall with her ratings holding somewhat steady among New Jersey adults and with broad approval for how she has handled the ethics investigation into the former Lt. Gov. Dale Caldwell, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

Forty-four percent of New Jerseyans approve of the way Sherrill is handling her job as governor – virtually unchanged since March 2026; 34% now disapprove (up 5 points), and 22% are unsure. Among those who have formed an opinion, 56% approve.

Thirty-nine percent have a favorable impression of Sherrill, while 31% have an unfavorable one. Just over a quarter (27%) have no opinion of the governor, and 3% say they don't know who she is. Sherrill's ratings are down slightly since March, when 44% of residents had a favorable impression of her and 29% had an unfavorable one, though these shifts are within the poll's margin of error.

"Nine months into her term, Gov. Sherrill's approval numbers look much like they did at 100 days, which in this political climate – and after a challenging summer – is itself an accomplishment," said [Ashley Koning](#), an assistant research professor and director of the [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling](#) at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. "She continues to draw more positive reactions than negative ones, and more New Jerseyans have formed an impression of her than had of Phil Murphy at this same point in his first term. But a quarter of residents still have no opinion of her almost a year in, and how those New Jerseyans eventually break will decide whether her net positive ratings hold."

Sherrill Ratings, Caldwell Resignation Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

Residents were asked how well Sherrill is handling the situation involving Caldwell. An independent review found he violated state ethics policies, and he resigned at the governor's request on Friday. Because the investigation concluded and Caldwell stepped down while the poll was being conducted, the question's wording was updated mid-fielding to reflect these events. There was no statistically significant difference in the way residents responded to the question before versus after Caldwell announced his resignation. Across all 976 residents who answered either version of the question, 36% say she is handling the situation very well, while another 32% say somewhat well. Nine percent say she is not handling it very well and 5% not well at all, while 19% are unsure.

Put another way, among residents who offered an opinion either way, more than 8 in 10 (83%) have a positive view of the governor's handling of the matter.

"New Jerseyans are largely giving Sherrill credit for how she has responded to a problem inside her own administration," Koning said. "She brought in an outside investigator and then called publicly for her own lieutenant governor to resign, and most residents read that as accountability rather than protecting her own or politics as usual. It's a continuation of Sherrill's themes of transparency and responsibility that began on the campaign trail and have been emphasized throughout her first year."

On the direction of the state, more New Jerseyans are negative than positive. Thirty-seven percent say New Jersey is going in the right direction, while 43% say it has gone off on the wrong track. Two in 10 (20%) are unsure.

As for President Donald Trump, 24% of residents say they have a favorable impression of him, while 66% are unfavorable and 10% have no opinion.

Results are from a statewide poll of 1,004 adults contacted through the probability-based Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel from September 24 to September 27. The full sample has a margin of error of +/- 4.1 percentage points.

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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 52nd 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. You can also visit our [Facebook](#) and [Bluesky](#).

ABOUT THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

**Sherrill Ratings, Caldwell Resignation
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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.

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 RUTGERS-EAGLETON/SSRS GARDEN STATE PANEL

The [Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel](#) is a probability-based panel of New Jersey adults age 18 or older. The panel is managed and maintained by [SSRS](#), a full-service research firm based in Glen Mills, PA. Panelists are recruited randomly based on statewide representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design. The ABS sample is drawn from the Delivery Sequence File (DSF) maintained by the U.S. Postal Service, which provide population coverage in the 98%-99% range. The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel is a multi-mode panel. Internet households participate via web while all non-internet households (including those who have internet but are unwilling to take surveys online) participate via phone. Panelists also have the option of taking surveys in their preferred language (English or Spanish).

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% due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey adults 18+ unless otherwise noted; all percentages are of weighted results. Interpret groups with samples sizes under 100 with extreme caution.

R1. We'd like to ask you about some people. Please indicate if your general impression of each one is favorable or unfavorable, or if you do not have an opinion or do not know the person.

Donald Trump

Favorable	24%
Unfavorable	66%
No opinion	10%
Don't know person	<1%
Unweighted N=	1004

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Favorable	3%	13%	75%	25%	22%	31%	7%	15%	17%	13%	19%	33%	29%
Unfavorable	91%	72%	15%	65%	67%	60%	78%	76%	72%	75%	71%	56%	63%
No opinion	6%	15%	10%	10%	11%	9%	15%	9%	11%	12%	10%	11%	8%
DK person	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	0%	<1%	<1%	0%
Unwt N=	437	376	190	417	580	577	124	180	121	228	272	263	241

**Sherrill Ratings, Caldwell Resignation
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
Favorable	19%	24%	30%	21%	9%	21%	28%	30%	32%	27%	24%	23%	19%
Unfavorable	64%	64%	65%	72%	80%	66%	61%	60%	63%	61%	64%	66%	75%
No opinion	16%	13%	5%	6%	11%	12%	10%	10%	5%	12%	12%	11%	6%
DK person	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	0%	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<1%
Unwt N=	246	311	182	261	125	319	163	240	156	241	206	255	302

**Sherrill Ratings, Caldwell Resignation
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

R1. We'd like to ask you about some people. Please indicate if your general impression of each one is favorable or unfavorable, or if you do not have an opinion or do not know the person.

Mikie Sherrill

Favorable	39%
Unfavorable	31%
No opinion	27%
Don't know person	3%
Unweighted N=	1004

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Favorable	62%	34%	10%	43%	35%	36%	49%	37%	42%	36%	37%	38%	45%
Unfavorable	8%	28%	76%	33%	30%	40%	13%	22%	20%	23%	30%	37%	34%
No opinion	27%	34%	13%	23%	30%	22%	33%	36%	32%	36%	29%	22%	20%
DK person	3%	4%	<1%	1%	5%	1%	4%	4%	6%	5%	4%	3%	<1%
Unwt N=	437	376	190	417	580	577	124	180	121	228	272	263	241

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Favorable	29%	37%	41%	49%	44%	39%	48%	31%	34%	27%	39%	43%	49%
Unfavorable	26%	37%	31%	29%	22%	27%	32%	36%	45%	38%	33%	27%	26%
No opinion	40%	23%	27%	20%	28%	32%	20%	29%	19%	32%	24%	27%	22%
DK person	6%	3%	2%	2%	6%	2%	<1%	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%
Unwt N=	246	311	182	261	125	319	163	240	156	241	206	255	302

**Sherrill Ratings, Caldwell Resignation
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

R2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Mikie Sherrill is handling her job as governor?

Approve	44%
Disapprove	34%
Don't know	22%
Unweighted N=	1004

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Approve	69%	38%	13%	46%	43%	40%	54%	48%	49%	42%	45%	41%	49%
Disapprove	10%	32%	79%	36%	32%	42%	16%	22%	30%	28%	34%	38%	37%
Don't know	21%	30%	8%	18%	25%	18%	30%	30%	22%	30%	21%	21%	15%
Unwt N=	437	376	190	417	580	577	124	180	121	228	272	263	241

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Approve	39%	47%	49%	47%	45%	56%	42%	33%	36%	41%	47%	53%	39%
Disapprove	41%	35%	31%	27%	31%	32%	37%	47%	40%	36%	32%	29%	41%
Don't know	20%	18%	20%	26%	24%	13%	21%	21%	25%	22%	21%	18%	20%
Unwt N=	311	182	261	125	319	163	240	156	241	206	255	302	311

Sherrill Ratings, Caldwell Resignation
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R4. In general, would you say the state of New Jersey [ROTATE ORDER: is currently going in the right direction], [has gone off on the wrong track]?

Right direction	37%
Wrong track	43%
Don't know	20%
Unweighted N=	1002

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Right dir.	53%	35%	14%	39%	36%	32%	48%	39%	45%	40%	32%	32%	43%
Wrong track	22%	42%	78%	44%	41%	51%	25%	38%	30%	33%	49%	47%	43%
Don't know	25%	23%	8%	17%	23%	17%	27%	24%	24%	27%	19%	21%	14%
Unwt N=	436	376	189	417	578	576	124	179	121	228	272	262	240

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Right dir.	31%	36%	40%	42%	34%	36%	48%	38%	32%	26%	35%	40%	48%
Wrong track	42%	48%	43%	37%	31%	40%	43%	50%	55%	57%	46%	32%	34%
Don't know	27%	16%	17%	21%	36%	24%	9%	13%	13%	17%	19%	27%	18%
Unwt N=	246	310	181	261	124	319	163	239	156	241	205	254	302

L1. Lieutenant Governor Dale Caldwell was the subject of an internal investigation by Governor Sherrill's office for alleged inappropriate behavior with women and possible ethics violations, including the alleged offer of state jobs. The Sherrill administration brought in a former New Jersey Attorney General to conduct the inquiry, which found that Caldwell violated state ethics policies. Caldwell has denied the allegations. Governor Sherrill has called on him to resign. How well do you think Governor Sherrill is handling this situation?

Note: This version of question L1 was asked on 9/25, before the Lt. Gov. Caldwell announced his resignation.

Very well	34%
Somewhat well	33%
Not very well	10%
Not well at all	5%
Don't know	18%
Unweighted N=	617

L1_f. Lieutenant Governor Dale Caldwell was the subject of an internal investigation by Governor Sherrill's office for alleged inappropriate behavior with women and possible ethics violations, including the alleged offer of state jobs. The Sherrill administration brought in a former New Jersey Attorney General to conduct the inquiry, which found that Caldwell violated state ethics policies. Caldwell has denied the allegations. Governor Sherrill has called on him to resign, which he did on September 25th, 2026. How well do you think Governor Sherrill is handling this situation?

Note: This version of question L1 was asked beginning on 9/25, after the Lt. Gov. Caldwell announced his resignation, and continued to be asked this way through the end of fielding.

Very well	38%
Somewhat well	30%
Not very well	8%
Not well at all	3%
Don't know	20%
Unweighted N=	359

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L1 COMBINED: The frequencies and crosstabs below reflect the combination of L1 and L1_f (L1 “final”). There was no statistically significant difference between the results of L1 and L1_f.

Very well	36%
Somewhat well	32%
Not very well	9%
Not well at all	5%
Don’t know	19%
Unweighted N=	976

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Very well	48%	30%	24%	35%	36%	35%	37%	42%	29%	28%	36%	36%	42%
Smwht well	29%	34%	33%	35%	28%	30%	29%	31%	41%	33%	29%	32%	33%
Not very well	7%	8%	15%	10%	9%	10%	12%	5%	9%	11%	10%	8%	9%
Not well at all	1%	4%	12%	6%	4%	5%	<1%	5%	5%	3%	5%	7%	3%
Don’t know	16%	23%	16%	14%	23%	19%	21%	18%	16%	24%	20%	18%	13%
Unwt N=	429	364	182	402	567	557	123	175	119	224	263	254	235

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Very well	33%	32%	39%	40%	33%	31%	44%	33%	44%	30%	35%	34%	43%
Smwht well	27%	39%	29%	30%	34%	34%	33%	35%	20%	33%	32%	32%	30%
Not very well	12%	8%	9%	8%	14%	9%	4%	7%	12%	10%	13%	9%	6%
Not well at all	5%	5%	2%	5%	2%	5%	4%	4%	7%	4%	5%	6%	3%
Don’t know	23%	16%	21%	17%	17%	21%	16%	21%	16%	24%	15%	18%	17%
Unwt N=	241	302	176	253	122	313	159	232	149	234	200	248	294

Methodology

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted using the [Rutgers-Eagleton/Garden State Panel](#) Omnibus platform. The Garden State Panel Omnibus is a quarterly, New Jersey statewide, probability-based survey. Data collection was conducted from September 24 to 27, 2026, with a scientifically selected random sample of 1,004 New Jersey adults, 18 or older. The survey was conducted via web and administered in English and Spanish.

The Garden State Panel Omnibus is conducted on the Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel. The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel is a joint research venture between the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) at Rutgers University-New Brunswick and SSRS. It is a probability-based panel of New Jersey adults ages 18 or older. Members are recruited randomly based on statewide representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design. ABS sample is drawn from the Delivery Sequence File (DSF) maintained by the U.S. Postal Service. Population coverage of the DSF is in the 98%-99% range. During the recruitment process, full demographic information on panelists is collected.

The Rutgers/SSRS Garden State Panel is a multi-mode panel. For this poll, only Internet households were invited to participate via web; non-internet households were not included. Sample was drawn using a probability proportional to size (PPS) methodology to ensure adequate representation of each demographic group while minimizing the variability of the final weights. The sample was additionally stratified by preferred survey language to meet the sample size targets for each group.

Data were weighted to represent the residential adult population of New Jersey. The data were weighted by first applying a base weight then balancing the demographic profile of the sample to target population parameters.

With the base weight applied, the data were weighted to balance the demographic profile of the sample to the target population parameters.

Data were weighted to distributions of age, race/ethnicity by nativity, gender/sex by age, gender/sex by education, age by education, NJ region, home tenure, number of household adults, civic engagement, frequency of Internet use, and 2024 presidential recalled vote.

The following table shows the data sources used for calibration totals.

Table 1. Calibration Variable Sources

Calibration Variables	Sources
• Gender • Age • Education • Race • Ethnicity • Hispanic nativity • Number of adults in household • Home tenure	2025 Current Population Survey ¹
• NJ Region	ACS 2024 1-Year Estimates ²
• Internet frequency	SSRS Opinion Panel
• Civic engagement	September 2023 CPS Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement ³
• 2024 Presidential recalled vote⁴	National Election Pool

Final calibrated weights are trimmed at the 5th and 95th percentiles to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on survey-derived estimates.

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. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.75.

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 1,004 New Jersey adults is +/-3.1 percentage points at a 95% confidence interval. The design effect is 1.75, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 4.1 percentage points. Thus, if 50% of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95% sure that the true figure is between 45.9 and 54.1% (50 +/- 4.1) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

¹ Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0>

² U.S. Census Bureau. "Age and Sex." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101, 2024

³ Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles, J. Robert Warren, Daniel Backman, Annie Chen, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, Megan Schouweiler, and Michael Westberry (2024). Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 12.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V12.0>

⁴ Recalled vote in the 2024 presidential election is defined as the chosen candidate of panelists who are currently registered to vote, specifically among the following listed candidates: Kamala Harris, Donald Trump, Jill Stein, Chase Oliver, and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Panelists who are not currently registered to vote or voted for a non-listed candidate are counted along with those who did not vote in the election.

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Sampling error is only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Sampling error does not consider other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as selection bias, non-response bias, question wording, context effects, or reporting accuracy, which may contribute additional error.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by SSRS through the Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP). Ashley Koning and Jessica Roman led analysis and preparation of this release. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, a non-partisan 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. For more information, please contact poll@eagleton.rutgers.edu.

**Sherrill Ratings, Caldwell Resignation
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

**Weighted Demographics
1,004 New Jersey Adults 18+
Overall Margin of Error = +/- 4.1 percentage points**

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

		deff	MOE
Democrat	38%	1.83	+/- 6.3%
Independent	39%	1.76	+/- 6.7%
Republican	23%	1.54	+/- 8.8%
 Man	46%	1.68	+/- 6.2%
Woman	54%	1.79	+/- 5.5%
 White	58%	1.56	+/- 5.1%
Black	13%	1.89	+/- 12.1%
Hispanic	15%	2.42	+/- 11.4%
Other	14%	1.73	+/- 11.7%
 18-34	24%	1.93	+/- 9.0%
35-49	25%	1.87	+/- 8.1%
50-64	25%	1.70	+/- 7.9%
65+	27%	1.50	+/- 7.7%
 <50K	23%	2.05	+/- 8.9%
50K-<100K	30%	1.86	+/- 7.6%
100K-<150K	20%	1.60	+/- 9.2%
150K+	26%	1.49	+/- 7.4%
 Urban	16%	1.54	+/- 10.9%
Suburb	35%	1.64	+/- 7.0%
Exurban	14%	1.67	+/- 9.9%
Phil/South	17%	2.17	+/- 9.3%
Shore	17%	1.61	+/- 10.0%
 HS or less	30%	1.79	+/- 8.4%
Some college	20%	1.76	+/- 9.0%
4-yr college grad	24%	1.73	+/- 8.1%
Grad work	26%	1.55	+/- 7.0%