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SLINGS AND ARROWS

Gubernatorial campaign too negative say voters

The race for governor has turned ugly. And New Jersey voters have taken notice. More voters say the two candidates are doing a bad job talking about the issues than the number who felt that way just three weeks ago. Most voters see the campaign ads to date as predominately negative and report learning little or nothing of substance from them.

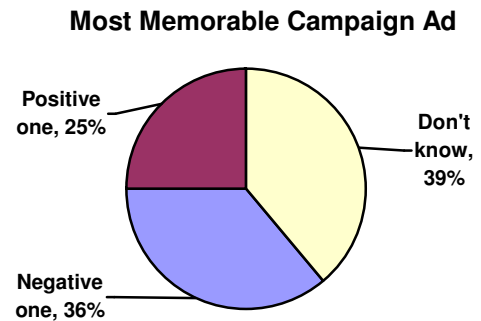
In late September, right before the onslaught of campaign advertising kicked into high gear, more Garden State voters thought the candidates were doing a good job (45%) as opposed to a bad job (30%) addressing the issues important to them. Today the voters are split, with 40 percent giving the campaigns positive marks for talking about voter concerns to 37 percent who say the campaigns have done a poor job of this.

The biggest change in this sentiment has come from independent voters. Last month, this group was more likely to feel the candidates were doing a good (43%) rather than bad job (33%) talking about the issues. Now, more than half of independent voters say the candidates are doing a bad job (53%) compared to only 3-in-10 who say they are doing a good job (30%) addressing the issues that concern voters.

The media portion of campaign has taken center stage over the past few weeks. More than 8-in-10 voters have seen or heard an ad from either of the candidates. Three-in-four (76%) have seen an ad on TV. More than one-third (36%) have also heard a radio commercial for either of the gubernatorial candidates.

Despite the flood of advertising, voters feel they have not learned much from these spots. Only 10 percent say they have learned a lot about what each candidate would do as governor from their commercials. Another 44 percent have learned just a little and an almost equal number – 42 percent – say they have learned absolutely nothing about these two candidates' plans for the state from their media advertising.

What voters take away from these ads is largely negative. When asked to recall the most memorable campaign ad or image from an ad, more voters remember a negative (36%) rather than positive (25%) message. And interestingly, for 39 percent of these voters, the ads tend to blend together and they can't recall a single image. Some of the positive ads, seen as key message builders early in the campaign, have not had a lasting impact. For example, only 6 percent of voters report that the widely acclaimed commercial featuring Andrea Forrester, the Republican candidate's wife, is the ad that stands out most in their mind.

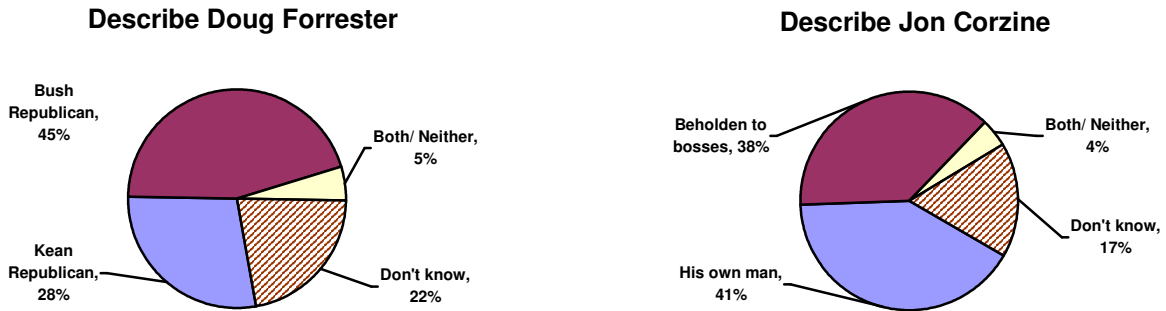


“The mega-million ad buys are driving the race for governor. The candidates have been blanketing the airwaves and voters give both sides poor marks on the tone of this campaign,” remarked Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

On the whole, voters say that both candidates' commercials have been more negative than positive by about a 2 to 1 margin. For Forrester's ads, 53 percent say these have tended to focus on negative aspects of his opponent compared to only 23 percent who say they have focused more on positive things the Republican will do as governor. For Corzine's ads, 52 percent say these have tended to focus on negative aspects of his opponent compared to only 28 percent who say they have focused more on positive things the Democrat will do as governor.

While voters may not like the content of these ads, the negative messages appear to be sticking. More voters recall the Corzine campaign ad linking Doug Forrester to the views of President George Bush than recall the ad featuring former Governor Tom Kean speaking on the G.O.P. candidate's behalf. When voters are asked to describe the kind of Republican Doug Forrester is, more tend to see him as a George Bush Republican (45%) than as a Tom Kean Republican (28%).

The Forrester campaign’s attempts to link Jon Corzine to Democratic cronyism have also met with some success. While 41 percent of voters tend to see Jon Corzine as “his own man” a similar 38 percent say he is beholden to the bosses in his own party.



Murray commented, “There are still a large number of undecided voters as well as many who are flirting with an independent candidate in this race. The negative tone of these campaign ads is a large part of the reason for that.”

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 602 New Jersey registered voters from October 14 to 19, 2005. This sample has a margin of error of ± 4 percent. Results in this release are also based on a subgroup of 371 likely voters, with a ± 5 percent margin of error.

TABLES – MUP02-2 / October 23, 2005

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some rows may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

- Q8. Have the candidates so far done a good job or bad job of addressing the issues that are important to you?

	<u>Good Job</u>	<u>Bad Job</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 2005 Registered Voters	40%	37%	22%	(602)
<i>Likely Voters</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>(371)</i>
<u>Party ID</u>				
--Democrat	46	31	23	(209)
--Independent	30	53	17	(188)
--Republican	49	31	20	(154)
<u>Vote Intention</u>				
--Forrester	48	36	16	(189)
--Corzine	49	31	20	(232)
--Undecided	26	39	35	(143)
TREND				
<u>Registered Voters</u>				
<i>October 2005</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>37%</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>(602)</i>
<i>September 2005</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>(649)</i>

- Q12. Would you describe Doug Forrester more as a Tom Kean Republican or more as a George Bush Republican?

	<u>Kean Republican</u>	<u>Bush Republican</u>	<u>(VOL) Both</u>	<u>(VOL) Neither</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 2005 Registered Voters	28%	45%	2%	3%	22%	(602)
<i>Likely Voters</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>(371)</i>
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	21	56	1	3	19	(209)
--Independent	31	43	3	4	20	(188)
--Republican	39	37	3	4	18	(154)
<u>Vote Intention</u>						
--Forrester	46	31	4	6	13	(189)
--Corzine	19	63	2	2	15	(232)
--Undecided	24	31	--	3	42	(143)

Q13. Would you describe Jon Corzine more as his own man or more as someone beholden to the Democratic bosses?

	<u>His own man</u>	<u>Beholden to bosses</u>	<u>(VOL) Both</u>	<u>(VOL) Neither</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 2005 Registered Voters	41%	38%	2%	2%	17%	(602)
Likely Voters	43%	39%	2%	2%	15%	(371)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	55	26	3	3	13	(209)
--Independent	45	38	4	--	13	(188)
--Republican	22	54	1	3	20	(154)
<u>Vote Intention</u>						
--Forrester	21	63	3	1	11	(189)
--Corzine	69	20	2	1	7	(232)
--Undecided	20	35	--	5	40	(143)

Q14. Have you seen or heard any television or radio ads from the two candidates? [IF "YES" ASK: Was this on TV, radio or both?]

	<u>Yes, TV</u>	<u>Yes, radio</u>	<u>Yes, both</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 2005 Registered Voters	45%	5%	31%	18%	(602)
Likely Voters	45%	5%	37%	12%	(371)
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	54	4	28	14	(209)
--Independent	44	3	35	17	(188)
--Republican	36	4	34	26	(154)
<u>Vote Intention</u>					
--Forrester	39	4	39	17	(189)
--Corzine	53	5	27	15	(232)
--Undecided	45	6	27	23	(143)

Q15. Just off the top of your head, what one campaign ad for governor sticks out in your mind the most? [SINGLE RESPONSE – DO NOT READ LIST – PROBE FOR IMAGE OR MESSAGE]

	<u>Registered Voters</u>	<u>Likely Voters</u>	<u>Vote Intention</u>		
			<u>Forrester</u>	<u>Corzine</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
October 2005 Ad watchers only					
George W. Bush ad	4%	5	4	4	3
Tom Kean ad	1%	1	2	1	2
Forrester raised taxes	3%	3	1	5	4
Corzine raised taxes	5%	4	5	5	5
Forrester 30-in-3 property tax plan	4%	5	10	2	3
Corzine property tax rebate plan	3%	4	2	5	2
Andrea Forrester	6%	8	5	7	6
Democrats for Forrester	1%	1	2	1	--
Other positive things about Corzine	6%	5	2	12	2
Other positive things about Forrester	3%	4	8	1	1
Other negative things about Corzine	3%	3	5	1	3
Other negative things about Forrester	10%	10	10	10	9
Other negative things about both	12%	10	11	9	16
DK	39%	38	34	38	44
(n)	(503)	(328)	(160)	(199)	(113)

Q16. How much have you learned from these ads about what each candidate would do as governor—have you learned a lot, a little or nothing at all about what they would do as governor?

<i>Ad watchers only:</i>	<u>Learned a lot</u>	<u>Learned a little</u>	<u>Learned nothing</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 2005 Registered Voters	10%	44%	42%	4%	(503)
<i>Likely Voters</i>	10%	46%	40%	4%	(328)
<u>Vote Intention</u>					
--Forrester	9	48	40	3	(160)
--Corzine	11	46	37	5	(199)
--Undecided	5	41	48	6	(113)

Q17. Would you say that Doug Forrester’s ads focus more on the positive things he will do as governor or more on negative things about his opponent?

<i>Ad watchers only:</i>	<u>More on positive</u>	<u>More on negative</u>	<u>(VOL) Both</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 2005 Registered Voters	23%	53%	9%	15%	(503)
<i>Likely Voters</i>	24%	59%	8%	9%	(328)
<u>Vote Intention</u>					
--Forrester	46	41	8	5	(160)
--Corzine	15	64	9	12	(199)
--Undecided	8	46	11	35	(113)

Q18. Would you say that Jon Corzine’s ads focus more on the positive things he will do as governor or more on negative things about his opponent?

<i>Ad watchers only:</i>	<u>More on positive</u>	<u>More on negative</u>	<u>(VOL) Both</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>(n)</u>
October 2005 Registered Voters	28%	52%	7%	13%	(503)
<i>Likely voters</i>	24%	59%	9%	9%	(328)
<u>Vote Intention</u>					
--Forrester	14	77	2	7	(160)
--Corzine	48	34	9	9	(199)
--Undecided	11	48	10	31	(113)

Results for this *Monmouth University/Gannett NJ Poll* are based on telephone interviews conducted October 14-19, 2005 with a statewide random sample of 602 registered voters. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 4.0 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

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