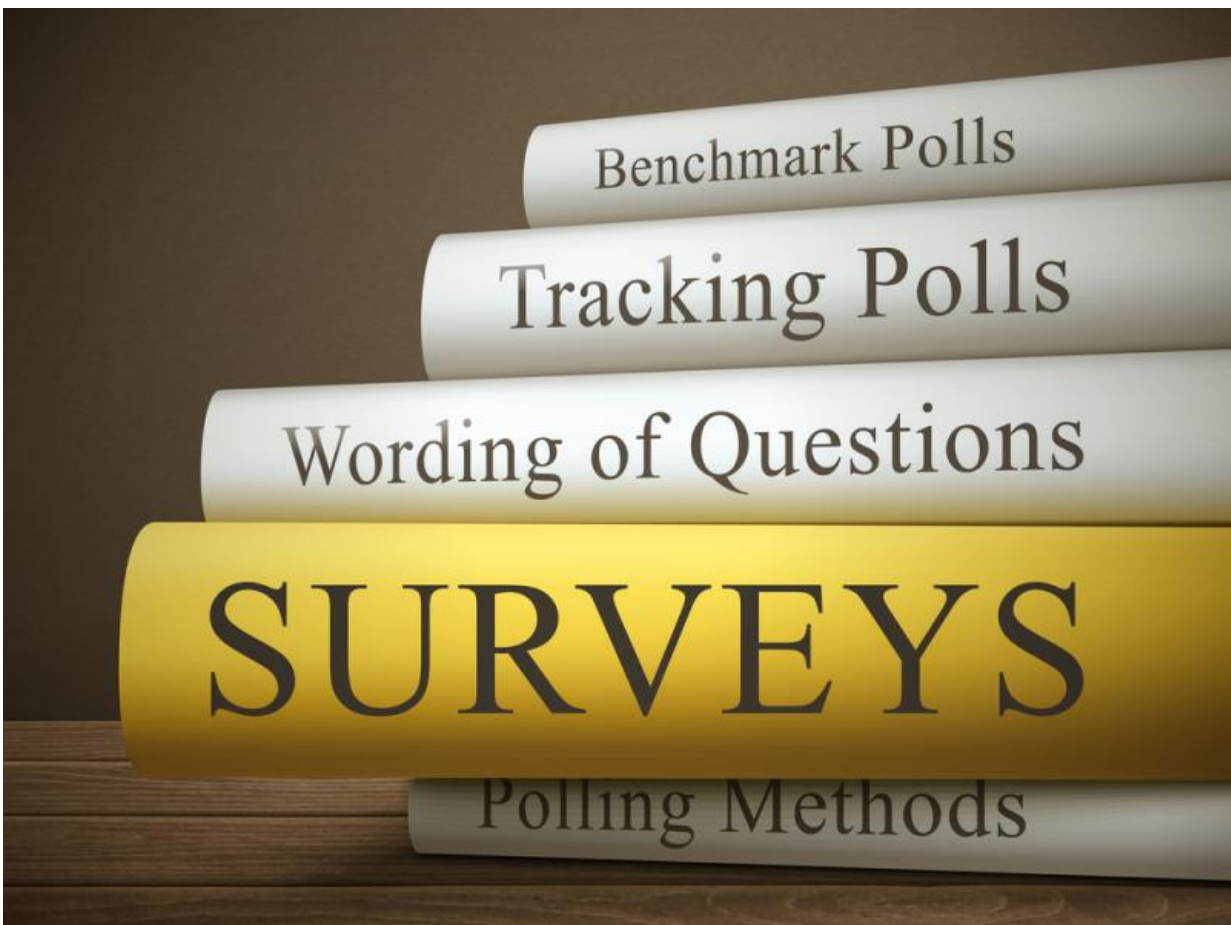


# More than half of New Jerseyans trust polls, but most question their accuracy

December 21 2015, by Ashley Koning

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While discussion and controversy surround polling's role in the race to

the White House in 2016, New Jerseyans still have some faith in the public opinion polling process, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. Fifty percent trust polls a fair amount and another 4 percent, a great deal. On the other hand, 36 percent do not trust polls very much, and 9 percent do not trust them at all.

But whether polls are consistently accurate is up for debate with New Jerseyans. Almost no one thinks they are always accurate, and only 21 percent say polls are mostly accurate. Still, 69 percent believes polls are accurate at least some of the time; only 5 percent discount them all the time.

Despite some reservations, New Jerseyans believe polling plays an important role in the democratic process, with 55 percent thinking it influences government decisions and policymaking. Reflecting that polls give citizens a chance to have their say, 77 percent feel political leaders should use [poll results](#) to help them understand public opinion on issues. Many respondents moreover cite polling's connection to democracy when asked why they chose to participate in this Rutgers-Eagleton Poll: one in five mention something about wanting their voice to be heard, the importance of polling in society, or doing their civic duty. But above all, New Jerseyans cite having the time to talk as their number one reason for participating.

"For our 200th poll, we thought we'd turn our sights inward a bit, and ask about some of the big questions currently facing polling, such as public perceptions of accuracy, trust and the whole point of it all," said Ashley Koning, assistant director of the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling at Rutgers University. "It's refreshing to learn that, even with today's deluge of polls, Garden State residents still see the importance of this scientific method of understanding public opinion and the vital role it plays in the democratic process."

A third of New Jerseyans claim to follow the results of polls regularly. Just under half say they had been interviewed in the past for at least one [public opinion](#) poll or survey prior to talking with the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

Results are from a statewide poll of 843 adults contacted by live callers on both landlines and cell phones from Nov. 30 to Dec. 6, 2015. The sample has a margin of error of +/-3.8 percentage points. Interviews were done in English and, when requested, Spanish. For complete results, [click here](#).

Provided by Rutgers University

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