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New Jersey Voters Back Muslim Surveillance, Poll Shows

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By The Wall Street Journal

The majority of New Jersey voters support the New York Police Department's (NYPD) practice of monitoring Muslims living in the region, according to a new poll.

A Rutgers-Eagleton poll released Friday found 47 percent of voters agreed that the monitoring was necessary to protect the country. Another 12 percent thought the police tactic violated civil liberties but supported the practice anyway.

In total, about a third of the 601 adults surveyed in March thought the NYPD violated civil liberties through its surveillance program.

"Research over the years has shown that Americans support civil liberties in the abstract but are willing to violate such rights in specific cases," poll director David Redlawsk said in a statement.

A poll of New York City voters conducted by the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute earlier this month also found majority support for the surveillance effort. In that survey, 58 percent of voters believed the NYPD had dealt with Muslims appropriately, while 29 percent thought police unfairly targeted Muslim groups.

In New Jersey, the poll results varied by geography and party affiliation. Residents in Essex and Hudson counties, where much of the monitoring took place, were less likely to agree with the surveillance than those who live down the shore.

Seventy percent of Republicans said the monitoring was necessary, compared to 32 percent of Democrats.

The Rutgers-Eagleton poll has a margin of error of four percentage points.

Read more: <http://blogs.wsj.com/metropolis/2012/03/30/poll-new-jersey-backs-muslim-surveillance/>

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