

Stockton Poll Finds Strong Distrust of News Media among New Jersey Adults

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Galloway, N.J. - New Jersey residents for the most part believe news media across the spectrum is biased, and a large majority of them are concerned about fake news, according to a Stockton Poll released today.

Most New Jersey adults (87 percent) say they pay some or a great deal of attention to the news, and majorities say print newspapers, cable news, broadcast news, online news sites and radio do a good or excellent job of keeping them informed.

The biggest majority of news consumers (79 percent) get their news from cable TV networks, and 72 percent watch broadcast network news. Sixty-five percent read online newspapers and news websites, and 57 percent get news from the radio often or sometimes. But only 46 percent rely on print newspapers. Forty-two percent use social media to get news.

Only respondents who said they used a particular type of news media were asked if they thought that media were mostly unbiased or mostly biased in some way. Majorities say they find bias in newspapers (53 percent), cable TV news (67 percent), online news (62 percent) and social media (82 percent). Fifty percent say broadcast TV news and radio are biased.

Eighty-five percent are very or somewhat concerned that a news story may be fake news. Two-thirds say they believe they are able to spot fake news at least some of the time, but one-third say they don't know or are unsure when a news story is false.

The poll of 786 adult New Jersey residents was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy Feb. 15-21, 2017. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.5 percentage points and higher for data subsets.

"It's striking how deep the distrust is among New Jersey adults for the news media, regardless of its format," said Sharon Schulman, executive director of the Hughes Center. "These views cause concern given the role a free press plays in disseminating information in our democracy."

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-continued from page 1-

Asked to name their one main source of news, 34 percent cite cable TV news, with 22 percent