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## **NEW JERSEY: OBAMA RATINGS UP, SENATORS DOWN**

*Gov. Christie seen as accomplishing little on public pensions*

West Long Branch, N.J. – After taking a slight dip in May, Pres. Obama’s job rating stands above 50% in New Jersey, while the state’s two U.S. Senators’ ratings have dipped. The *Monmouth University Poll* also found increased support for Obamacare and gay marriage after recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings. On the state level, few say that Gov. Christie can claim pension reform as a major accomplishment.

Sen. Bob Menendez garners a 37% approve to 36% disapprove rating among all New Jersey residents and a 38% approve to 38% disapprove rating among registered voters. This marks a slight decline from his May voter rating of 42% approve to 38% disapprove. This is the first time Menendez does not have a net positive rating among Garden State voters. The senator’s ratings have been dropping since he was indicted on federal corruption charges this spring. In a February poll taken before the indictment was unsealed, Menendez held a solid 49% approve to 27% disapprove rating among New Jersey voters.

“The corruption indictment appears to be taking a toll on the senator’s popularity,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, N.J.

Sen. Cory Booker earns a 44% approve to 22% disapprove rating among all Garden State residents and a 45% approve to 24% disapprove rating among registered voters. This is down from the 51% to 21% voter rating he held earlier this year, but still marks a largely net positive rating.

A majority (51%) of New Jersey adults approve of the job Barack Obama is doing and 45% disapprove. Among registered voters, 52% approve and 46% disapprove. This is a slight uptick from

May, when Garden State voter opinion of the president stood at 48% approve to 46% disapprove, but the current results are slightly lower than February when Obama's rating was 54% to 42%.

"The past couple of weeks have been good for the president, and that is reflected both in his job approval rating and an uptick in support for his signature healthcare policy," said Murray.

Currently, 49% of New Jerseyans have a favorable opinion of the Affordable Care Act and 43% hold an unfavorable view. This comes after the U.S. Supreme Court dismissed a challenge to the law. It also marks the highest positive rating for Obamacare in Monmouth's New Jersey polling going back to 2013. One year ago, Garden State opinion stood at a net negative 42% favorable and 52% unfavorable.

Another U.S. Supreme Court ruling declared same sex marriage to be legal throughout the country. New Jersey's courts made this determination nearly two years ago. Today, fully 7-in-10 (70%) New Jersey residents favor allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally, including nearly half who strongly favor same sex marriage. Just 21% are opposed. Support has grown since the federal and state court decisions. In April 2013, 59% of New Jerseyans favored same sex marriage.

Another court decision with significant implications is the recent New Jersey Supreme Court ruling that struck down the payment schedule in the 2011 pension reform law. Just 12% of state residents approve of Gov. Christie's decision to forego the full pension payment this year, while 42% disapprove and 46% have no opinion. Just 11% of New Jerseyans say that Christie can claim major accomplishments in fixing the state's pension system, 31% say he has had only minor accomplishments, and nearly half – 47% – say he has no real pension accomplishments to crow about.

"The governor can't expect the public to see pension reform as one of his major accomplishments after he asked the court to overturn a key provision in his own law," said Murray.

While the pension costs balloon, most New Jerseyans feel the state is obligated to pay those benefits for current workers. Specifically, 31% say that state workers deserve the pension benefits they have earned no matter the cost and 46% say state worker pension benefits may be too high but we should give them what they were promised. Only 19% say that pension benefits for current workers are way too high and should be cut.

The poll also asked about the job the state legislature is doing. Currently, 32% of New Jersey voters approve and 51% disapprove. This is down from the 33% approve to 48% disapprove rating the legislature received in May.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone with 503 New Jersey adults, including 453 registered voters, from June 30 to July 1, 2015. The total sample has a margin of error of  $\pm$  4.4 percent and the registered voter sample has a margin of error of  $\pm$  4.6 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

## DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

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

### 1. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the state legislature is doing?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	<b>32%</b>	32%	34%	28%	33%	37%
Disapprove	<b>48%</b>	51%	31%	51%	46%	48%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>20%</b>	17%	35%	20%	21%	15%

TREND: Registered Voters	July 2015	May 2015	Feb. 2015	Sept. 2014	June 2014	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Jan. 2014	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013	Dec. 2012	Sept. 2012	July 2012	April 2012
Approve	32%	33%	37%	35%	36%	38%	38%	47%	44%	38%	41%	40%	43%	32%	34%	37%
Disapprove	51%	48%	46%	46%	48%	46%	47%	35%	38%	36%	42%	35%	34%	43%	45%	41%
(VOL) Don't know	17%	19%	17%	19%	17%	15%	14%	18%	19%	27%	17%	25%	22%	25%	21%	23%
Unwtd N	453	441	712	680	717	690	690	470	698	674	694	697	726	715	678	692

TREND: Registered Voters Continued	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	Feb. 2011	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010	July 2009	Feb. 2009	Sept. 2008	July 2008	April 2008	March 2008	Oct. 2007	Feb. 2007
Approve	34%	33%	35%	32%	29%	25%	19%	24%	31%	23%	29%	27%	28%	25%	32%	34%
Disapprove	42%	45%	48%	48%	45%	49%	57%	49%	48%	55%	50%	47%	55%	53%	43%	42%
(VOL) Don't know	24%	22%	17%	20%	26%	26%	24%	27%	22%	22%	21%	26%	17%	22%	25%	23%
Unwtd N	709	693	730	725	718	747	719	716	792	721	709	889	720	719	688	681

### 2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Barack Obama is doing as president?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	<b>51%</b>	52%	50%	80%	43%	20%
Disapprove	<b>45%</b>	46%	43%	17%	53%	78%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>3%</b>	3%	7%	2%	4%	2%

TREND: Registered Voters - Second Term	July 2015	May 2015	Feb. 2015	Sept. 2014	June 2014	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Jan. 2014	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013
Approve	52%	48%	54%	41%	45%	49%	49%	44%	47%	50%	55%	60%
Disapprove	46%	46%	42%	54%	51%	47%	47%	50%	47%	41%	42%	33%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	6%	4%	5%	4%	3%	5%	6%	6%	8%	2%	7%
Unwtd N	453	441	712	680	717	690	690	470	698	674	694	697

TREND: Registered voters - First Term	Dec. 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	Sept. 2010	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010	Oct. 2009	July 2009
Approve	58%	54%	51%	47%	52%	60%	47%	51%	54%	53%	54%	59%
Disapprove	35%	41%	42%	46%	39%	36%	44%	42%	41%	38%	33%	29%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	5%	6%	7%	9%	4%	9%	6%	5%	9%	14%	12%
Unwtd N	726	692	709	693	730	725	726	747	719	716	785	792

[QUESTIONS 3 AND 4 WERE ROTATED]

### 3. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Bob Menendez is doing as United States Senator?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	<b>37%</b>	38%	31%	47%	34%	27%
Disapprove	<b>36%</b>	38%	21%	21%	39%	55%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>27%</b>	23%	48%	32%	27%	18%

TREND: Registered voters only	July 2015	May 2015	Feb. 2015	Sept. 2014	June 2014	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Dec. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	July 2010	Oct. 2008	April 2008	Jan. 2008
Approve	38%	42%	49%	45%	47%	51%	49%	47%	44%	41%	40%	41%	43%	38%	46%	38%	34%	41%	37%
Disapprove	38%	38%	27%	30%	34%	31%	30%	27%	38%	31%	25%	26%	29%	33%	28%	33%	25%	31%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	23%	20%	24%	26%	19%	18%	21%	26%	18%	28%	35%	33%	28%	29%	26%	29%	41%	28%	37%
Unwtd N	453	441	712	680	717	690	690	698	694	697	692	709	693	730	725	747	900	720	698

4. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Cory Booker is doing as United States Senator?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	<b>44%</b>	45%	36%	60%	36%	33%
Disapprove	<b>22%</b>	24%	11%	14%	27%	27%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>34%</b>	31%	52%	27%	37%	40%

TREND: <i>Registered voters only</i>	July 2015	May 2015	Feb. 2015	Sept. 2014	June 2014	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Dec. 2013
Approve	45%	51%	51%	42%	48%	47%	47%	37%
Disapprove	24%	21%	21%	23%	25%	23%	20%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	31%	27%	27%	35%	27%	30%	32%	43%
<i>Unwt'd N</i>	453	441	712	680	717	690	690	698

5. Do you think Governor Christie has had major accomplishments, only minor accomplishments, or no real accomplishments in fixing the state's pension system?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Major accomplishments	<b>11%</b>	11%	12%	3%	11%	25%
Only minor accomplishments	<b>31%</b>	31%	29%	23%	35%	36%
No real accomplishments	<b>47%</b>	48%	43%	67%	44%	24%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>11%</b>	10%	16%	7%	11%	15%

6. Thinking about current state workers, which of the following comes closest to your view... state workers deserve the pension benefits they have earned no matter the cost, state worker pension benefits are way too high and should be cut, or state worker pension benefits may be too high but we should give them what they were promised? [CHOICES WERE ROTATED]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
State workers deserve the pension benefits they have earned no matter the cost	<b>31%</b>	30%	35%	42%	28%	17%
State worker pension benefits are way too high and should be cut	<b>19%</b>	20%	15%	5%	24%	36%
State worker pension benefits may be too high but we should give them what they were promised	<b>46%</b>	46%	48%	52%	43%	44%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>4%</b>	4%	2%	2%	5%	4%

7. Do you approve or disapprove of Governor Christie's decision to put off making scheduled payments to the state's pension system, or do you have no opinion on this?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	<b>12%</b>	13%	7%	3%	13%	26%
Disapprove	<b>42%</b>	46%	17%	54%	37%	30%
No opinion	<b>46%</b>	40%	76%	42%	50%	44%

TREND:	July 2015	June 2014
Approve	12%	13%
Disapprove	42%	38%
No opinion	46%	49%
<i>Unwt'd N</i>	503	800

8. Now, a question on the health insurance reforms known as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare. Given what you know or have heard, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of this program? [Is that a very or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable) opinion?]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Very favorable	<b>23%</b>	23%	28%	43%	16%	5%
Somewhat favorable	<b>26%</b>	26%	29%	34%	25%	18%
Somewhat unfavorable	<b>16%</b>	15%	19%	8%	21%	12%
Very unfavorable	<b>27%</b>	28%	21%	5%	31%	58%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>8%</b>	9%	3%	9%	7%	6%

TREND:	July 2015	Sept. 2014	June 2014	April 2014	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013
Very favorable	23%	17%	18%	19%	16%	22%
Somewhat favorable	26%	28%	24%	26%	24%	23%
Somewhat unfavorable	16%	15%	16%	17%	20%	13%
Very unfavorable	27%	31%	36%	32%	30%	27%
No opinion	8%	8%	6%	5%	10%	16%
Unwtd N	503	802	800	803	802	783

Question wording of polls prior to Sept. 2014 "A question on the health reform bill that was signed into law in 2010, known as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare."

9. On another issue, do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally? [Do you (favor/oppose) it strongly or somewhat?]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Favor, strongly	<b>48%</b>	46%	55%	61%	44%	34%
Favor, somewhat	<b>22%</b>	23%	17%	17%	24%	31%
Oppose, somewhat	<b>4%</b>	4%	3%	4%	3%	6%
Oppose, strongly	<b>17%</b>	17%	19%	14%	18%	20%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>9%</b>	10%	6%	5%	11%	9%

TREND:	July 2015	April 2013	February 2012	February 2009	October 2007*	June 2006*	September 2003*
Favor	70%	59%	52%	48%	48%	50%	43%
Oppose	21%	31%	34%	43%	45%	44%	50%
(VOL) Don't know	9%	9%	15%	10%	8%	6%	7%
Unwtd N	503	806	803	402	1002	803	802

\* Source: Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from June 30 to July 1, 2015 with a statewide random sample of 503 adult residents, including 377 contacted via live interview on a landline telephone and 126 via live interview on a cell phone, in English. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). 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.

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>			
35% Dem	48% Male	28% 18-34	63% White
45% Ind	52% Female	38% 35-54	13% Black
20% Rep		34% 55+	15% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other
<i>Registered Voter Sample (weighted)</i>			
36% Dem	48% Male	21% 18-34	65% White
43% Ind	52% Female	42% 35-54	13% Black
21% Rep		36% 55+	14% Hispanic
			8% Asian/Other

	<i>MARGIN OF ERROR</i>					
	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>REGISTERED VOTER</i>		<i>PARTY ID</i>		
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Dem</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Rep</i>
<i>Unweighted N</i>	503	453	50	156	218	119
<i>moe</i>	4.4%	4.6%	13.9%	7.9%	6.6%	9.0%

*It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute’s policy to conduct surveys of all adult residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect them. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.*

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