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GOV. CHRISTIE: HIGH RATINGS, FEW EXPECTATIONS

Obama job rating down; Menendez, Booker with positive marks

Governor Chris Christie's job approval rating remains high as he prepares to start his second term. At the same time, few New Jerseyans have a clear idea or specific expectations about what he will do with the next four years. The ***Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll*** also finds that views of President Barack Obama's performance have dropped in the Garden State, while the state's newest U.S. Senator, Cory Booker, checks in with an initial net positive job rating.

Currently, Governor Christie holds a 65% approve to 25% disapprove job rating among all Garden State residents. Among registered voters, his rating stands at 65% approve to 27% disapprove. These results are consistent with other polls taken after Superstorm Sandy.

Gov. Christie continues to earn positive reviews from large majorities of Republicans (85%) and independents (73%). Democrats are divided – 47% approve and 45% disapprove – marking the first time since Sandy hit that Christie has not receive a significant plurality of support from New Jersey Democrats. Christie earns a 60% approve to 32% disapprove rating among residents of those communities that were hardest hit by Sandy.

“Gov. Christie's ratings are holding strong fresh off his resounding re-election victory. However, few New Jerseyans have a clear idea about what a second term holds in store,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “Stellar approval ratings and no specific expectations from his constituents could give the governor a lot of leeway in carving out his political future.”

Just 23% of Garden State residents say they have a clear idea of the specific policies Chris Christie will pursue in his second term while another 36% have some idea. Four-in-ten say they do not have much of an idea (31%) or have no idea at all (9%) what the governor will do in his second term.

Interestingly, public awareness of Christie's agenda is not much different now than it was when he first took office. As he embarked on his first term in February 2010, 16% of New Jerseyans felt they had a clear idea what Christie would do as governor, 39% had some idea, 32% had not much of an idea and 10% had no idea at all.

The current poll asked New Jerseyans to identify in their own words what they see as the state's most pressing issues. Job creation tops the list at 35%. The state's property tax system comes in second at 25% and public education is third at 21%. Other taxes, when combined, account for another 21%, health care is mentioned by 11% and other issues related to the economy clock in at 10%. Superstorm Sandy recovery is mentioned by 8% of residents.

This marks the first time in recent Monmouth/APP polling that jobs and property taxes were not tied as the number one issue on residents' minds – property taxes was 31% one year ago and jobs was 30%. This poll also marks an increase in concern about education over the past year (up from 10% in December 2012) and a decrease in Sandy recovery (down from 23% in December 2012) as the state's most pressing issues.

New Jerseyans were asked to choose from among five specific issues what they would like Gov. Christie to focus on for the next few years. As in the top-of-mind question, creating jobs leads the field at 35%, followed by cutting property taxes at 26% and improving schools at 21%. Fewer than 1-in-10 residents say that either cutting income taxes (9%) or rebuilding from Sandy (8%) should be the governor's top priority.

Job creation is the top issue for 1-in-3 Republicans (36%), independents (36%), and Democrats (34%) alike. About 3-in-10 Republicans (30%) and independents (29%) say that cutting property taxes should be the governor's focus. They are joined by 21% of Democrats in this sentiment. More Democrats (30%), though, say that improving schools should be the top priority, compared to 15% of independents and 12% of Republicans who feel the same. Residents of towns that received the brunt of Sandy's impact put jobs (36%), property taxes (27%), and schools (19%) ahead of storm recovery (11%) and income taxes (6%) as the issue they most want Gov. Christie to work on.

Just 27% expect that Gov. Christie will make a lot of progress on their top issue in the next few years. Another 48% feel there will be a little progress and 22% expect no real progress. Fewer than 3-in-10 of those who name schools (29%), jobs (26%), property taxes (22%), or income taxes (19%) expect to see a lot of progress on that issue in the next few years. On the other hand, the few who name Sandy rebuilding as their top issue are more optimistic, with 50% expecting to see a lot of progress.

“Gov. Christie's re-election campaign was centered on past accomplishments, particularly around his handling of Superstorm Sandy. He was never really pushed, by voters or by his Democratic opponent,

to address future plans on these major issues. It shouldn't be too surprising then, that residents expect little more than incremental change in these areas," said Murray.

On the issue of Sandy, 2-in-3 New Jerseyans say they are either very (25%) or somewhat (41%) satisfied with the state's recovery efforts so far. This 66% who are satisfied is down slightly from 76% in September and 73% in April. In the state's hardest hit communities, 64% of residents are satisfied with the recovery efforts. Also, 79% of residents say their family has fully recovered from the storm, 16% have partially recovered and 5% have barely or not at all recovered. These numbers have been fairly stable over the past ten months.

Other Job Ratings

The poll also finds that President Barack Obama currently holds a 49% approve to 45% disapprove rating among New Jersey residents and a split 47% approve to 47% disapprove rating among registered voters in the state. This result is nominally the lowest New Jersey job rating for Obama since he took office in 2009 and it is statistically similar to the prior low rating of 47% approve to 46% disapprove among New Jersey voters recorded in October 2011.

The state's senior U.S. Senator, Bob Menendez, currently holds a 47% approve to 27% disapprove rating among registered voters. This is an improvement over the 44% approve to 38% disapprove rating he held among Garden State voters in April.

Cory Booker makes his first Monmouth/APP poll appearance as New Jersey's newly minted U.S. Senator with a 37% approve to 21% disapprove rating among registered voters. Another 43% of voters say they do not have an opinion of his performance after less than six weeks on the job.

The New Jersey state legislature has a net positive job rating – 43% approve to 36% disapprove among all residents and 44% approve to 38% disapprove among registered voters. This rating is up a few points from September.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by telephone with 802 New Jersey adults from December 4 to 8, 2013. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the Asbury Park Press and its sister publications (Courier-Post, Courier News, Daily Journal, Daily Record, and Home News Tribune).

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 Chris Christie is doing as governor?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	Other
Approve	65%	65%	66%	47%	73%	85%	70%	61%	60%	66%
Disapprove	25%	27%	17%	45%	17%	9%	20%	30%	32%	24%
(VOL) Don't know	10%	8%	17%	8%	10%	6%	10%	9%	8%	10%

TREND: All adults	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013	Dec. 2012	Sept. 2012	July 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	Feb. 2011	Sept. 2010	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010
Approve	65%	61%	63%	70%	67%	53%	52%	51%	52%	54%	48%	47%	47%	45%	44%	41%	33%
Disapprove	25%	24%	26%	17%	21%	35%	36%	35%	38%	38%	42%	49%	40%	38%	44%	44%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	10%	15%	11%	14%	12%	11%	12%	14%	10%	9%	9%	5%	12%	17%	12%	15%	52%
Unwtd N	802	783	806	803	816	805	803	804	803	817	802	807	801	801	801	804	803

TREND: Registered voters	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013	Dec. 2012	Sept. 2012	July 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	Feb. 2011	Sept. 2010	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010
Approve	65%	63%	65%	70%	69%	55%	53%	50%	55%	55%	50%	46%	49%	44%	45%	42%	31%
Disapprove	27%	24%	26%	16%	22%	36%	35%	38%	37%	37%	41%	49%	41%	40%	43%	44%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	13%	10%	13%	9%	10%	12%	12%	9%	8%	8%	5%	9%	16%	12%	13%	53%
Unwtd N	698	674	694	697	726	715	678	692	709	693	730	725	718	726	747	719	716

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

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	Other
Approve	43%	44%	39%	43%	37%	54%	43%	42%	44%	44%
Disapprove	36%	38%	28%	36%	41%	31%	36%	36%	39%	36%
(VOL) Don't know	21%	19%	33%	21%	22%	15%	21%	22%	17%	21%

TREND: Registered Voters	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013	Dec. 2012	Sept. 2012	July 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011
Approve	44%	38%	41%	40%	43%	32%	34%	37%	34%	33%	35%	32%
Disapprove	38%	36%	42%	35%	34%	43%	45%	41%	42%	45%	48%	48%
(VOL) Don't know	19%	27%	17%	25%	22%	25%	21%	23%	24%	22%	17%	20%
Unwtd N	698	674	694	697	726	715	678	692	709	693	730	725

TREND: Registered Voters Continued	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	29%	25%	19%	24%	31%	23%	29%	27%	28%	25%	32%	34%
Disapprove	45%	49%	57%	49%	48%	55%	50%	47%	55%	53%	43%	42%
(VOL) Don't know	26%	26%	24%	27%	22%	22%	21%	26%	17%	22%	25%	23%
Unwtd N	718	747	719	716	792	721	709	889	720	719	688	681

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

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	Other
Approve	49%	47%	60%	74%	42%	23%	48%	50%	50%	49%
Disapprove	45%	47%	32%	21%	51%	74%	46%	44%	47%	44%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	6%	8%	5%	7%	3%	6%	6%	4%	6%

TREND: Registered voters	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013	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	47%	50%	55%	60%	58%	54%	51%	47%	52%	60%	47%	51%	54%	53%	54%	59%
Disapprove	47%	41%	42%	33%	35%	41%	42%	46%	39%	36%	44%	42%	41%	38%	33%	29%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	8%	2%	7%	6%	5%	6%	7%	9%	4%	9%	6%	5%	9%	14%	12%
Unwtd N	698	674	694	697	726	692	709	693	730	725	726	747	719	716	785	792

[QUESTIONS 4 AND 5 WERE ROTATED]

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

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	Other
Approve	47%	47%	42%	61%	40%	37%	45%	48%	45%	48%
Disapprove	25%	27%	16%	11%	30%	40%	27%	22%	36%	23%
(VOL) Don't know	29%	26%	41%	27%	30%	23%	27%	30%	19%	29%

TREND: Registered voters only	December 2013	April 2013	February 2013	April 2012	February 2012	October 2011	August 2011	May 2011	July 2010	October 2008	April 2008	January 2008
Approve	47%	44%	41%	40%	41%	43%	38%	46%	38%	34%	41%	37%
Disapprove	27%	38%	31%	25%	26%	29%	33%	28%	33%	25%	31%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	26%	18%	28%	35%	33%	28%	29%	26%	29%	41%	28%	37%
Unwtd N	698	694	697	692	709	693	730	725	747	900	720	698

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

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	Other
Approve	37%	37%	38%	52%	29%	30%	37%	36%	36%	37%
Disapprove	19%	21%	13%	8%	24%	31%	19%	19%	24%	19%
(VOL) Don't know	44%	43%	49%	41%	48%	39%	43%	44%	40%	44%

6. Do you feel you have a clear idea, some idea, or not much of an idea about the specific policies Chris Christie will pursue in his second term as governor?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	Other
Clear idea	23%	24%	15%	23%	17%	31%	21%	24%	23%	23%
Some idea	36%	36%	36%	30%	37%	45%	32%	39%	30%	37%
Not much of an idea	31%	30%	36%	35%	34%	18%	35%	28%	33%	31%
(VOL) No idea at all	9%	9%	13%	11%	10%	6%	10%	9%	14%	8%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%

TREND:	December 2013	February 2010*
Clear idea	23%	16%
Some idea	36%	39%
Not much of an idea	31%	32%
(VOL) No idea at all	9%	10%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	3%
Unwtd N	802	803

* 2010 poll asked about first term.

7. In your opinion, what are the most important one or two issues facing the state of New Jersey right now? ? [LIST WAS NOT READ] [Note: Results add to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted.]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	Other
Property taxes	25%	27%	14%	19%	31%	24%	24%	25%	32%	25%
Income tax	7%	8%	3%	4%	8%	9%	7%	7%	9%	6%
Sales tax	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	1%	3%	2%	6%	1%
Other tax, general taxes	12%	14%	5%	11%	14%	12%	14%	10%	12%	12%
Jobs	35%	36%	32%	38%	32%	35%	35%	36%	27%	36%
The economy/downturn	10%	10%	9%	10%	9%	13%	8%	12%	8%	11%
State budget, govt. spending	4%	5%	2%	3%	4%	6%	6%	3%	3%	4%
Education/public schools	21%	22%	16%	28%	16%	18%	19%	22%	20%	21%
Higher education	3%	2%	5%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Same-sex marriage	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	1%
Transportation	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Environment	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	0%	1%	2%	0%	2%
Health insurance, care	11%	10%	12%	9%	10%	14%	8%	13%	8%	11%
Crime, guns, drugs	6%	5%	8%	5%	7%	6%	8%	4%	6%	5%
Public pensions/benefits	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%
Housing	3%	3%	5%	4%	3%	2%	2%	4%	4%	3%
Illegal immigration	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Auto insurance	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Superstorm Sandy recovery	8%	7%	11%	10%	5%	9%	6%	10%	10%	8%
Other	8%	8%	9%	9%	8%	7%	8%	8%	3%	9%
Nothing/no answer	4%	3%	10%	2%	5%	5%	4%	5%	2%	4%

TREND:	December 2013	December 2012	February 2012
Property taxes	25%	31%	42%
Income tax	7%	6%	8%
Sales tax	2%	3%	4%
Other tax, general taxes	12%	6%	3%
Jobs	35%	30%	42%
The economy/downturn	10%	19%	19%
State budget, govt. spending	4%	5%	8%
Education/public schools	21%	10%	20%
Higher education	3%	2%	3%
Same-sex marriage	1%	1%	2%
Transportation	2%	3%	2%
Environment	2%	2%	1%
Health insurance, care	11%	8%	5%
Crime, guns, drugs	6%	4%	5%
Public pensions/benefits	2%	2%	2%
Housing	3%	2%	1%
Illegal immigration	1%	1%	1%
Auto insurance	0%	1%	1%
Superstorm Sandy recovery	8%	23%	n/a
Other	8%	3%	6%
Nothing/no answer	4%	4%	4%

8. If you had to pick just one of the following issues for Governor Christie to focus on in the next few years, which would you choose – cutting property taxes, cutting income taxes, creating jobs, improving schools, or rebuilding from Sandy?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	Other
		Cutting property taxes	26%	28%	18%	21%	29%	30%	28%	24%
Cutting income taxes	9%	9%	9%	4%	11%	12%	10%	8%	6%	9%
Creating jobs	35%	35%	35%	34%	36%	36%	33%	36%	36%	34%
Improving schools	21%	19%	26%	30%	15%	12%	21%	20%	19%	21%
Rebuilding from Sandy	8%	8%	10%	8%	8%	8%	6%	11%	11%	8%
(VOL) None of these	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%

9. How much progress do you expect Governor Christie to make on this issue in the next few years – a lot, a little, or no real progress?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	Other
		A lot	27%	25%	36%	23%	23%	36%	23%	30%
A little	48%	48%	46%	46%	52%	45%	53%	43%	51%	47%
No real progress	22%	24%	14%	27%	21%	16%	21%	23%	26%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	0%	2%
No issue named in Q8	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%

10. Would you say your family has fully recovered from the storm, partially recovered, barely recovered, or not recovered at all?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	Other
		Fully recovered	79%	79%	79%	81%	78%	78%	83%	76%
Partially recovered	16%	16%	16%	15%	17%	17%	14%	17%	23%	14%
Barely recovered	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	5%	3%
Not at all recovered	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

TREND:	December 2013	September 2013	April 2013	February 2013	December 2012
Fully recovered	79%	76%	78%	77%	74%
Partially recovered	16%	16%	15%	14%	18%
Barely recovered	3%	4%	5%	4%	4%
Not at all recovered	2%	2%	2%	5%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Unwtd N	802	783	806	803	816

11. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with New Jersey's Sandy recovery effort so far? [Is that very or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	Other
		Very satisfied	25%	24%	27%	20%	27%	28%	30%	20%
Somewhat satisfied	41%	41%	43%	40%	40%	44%	42%	40%	41%	42%
Somewhat dissatisfied	15%	15%	16%	19%	14%	12%	13%	17%	16%	14%
Very dissatisfied	12%	12%	11%	14%	11%	9%	8%	15%	16%	11%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	8%	3%	7%	7%	7%	7%	8%	3%	7%

TREND:	December 2013	September 2013	April 2013	February 2013
Very satisfied	25%	38%	31%	26%
Somewhat satisfied	41%	38%	42%	45%
Somewhat dissatisfied	15%	10%	11%	12%
Very dissatisfied	12%	6%	9%	10%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	8%	6%	7%
Unwtd N	802	783	806	803

Methodological Note: The classification of “Hardest Hit Area” refers to those parts of the state most impacted by Superstorm Sandy and includes zip codes covering coastal communities – on both beach and bay – in the four Jersey Shore counties as well as flooded urban communities in the northern part of the state (e.g. Moonachie, Little Ferry, Hoboken, parts of Jersey City, Perth Amboy, etc.). These areas represent 13% of the survey sample.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from December 4 to 8, 2013 with a statewide random sample of 802 adult residents, including 602 contacted via live interview on a landline telephone and 200 via live interview on a cell phone. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. 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 3.5 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.

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>			
37% Dem	48% Male	28% 18-34	62% White
41% Ind	52% Female	39% 35-54	13% Black
22% Rep		33% 55+	16% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other
<i>Registered Voter Sample (weighted)</i>			
37% Dem	46% Male	22% 18-34	67% White
39% Ind	54% Female	42% 35-54	14% Black
24% Rep		36% 55+	13% Hispanic
			6% Asian/Other

	<i>MARGIN OF ERROR</i>									
	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>REGISTERED VOTER</i>		<i>PARTY ID</i>			<i>GENDER</i>		<i>HARDEST HIT AREA</i>	
			<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Dem</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Rep</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Unweighted N</i>	802	698	104	263	312	193	385	417	102	637
<i>moe</i>	3.5%	3.7%	9.6%	6.1%	5.6%	7.1%	5.0%	4.8%	9.7%	3.9%

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

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