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## **NJ SENATE: BOOKER IN POST-PRIMARY LEAD**

*But voters not likely to see him as “new kind” of politician*

New Jersey’s post-primary sprint to the Senate election kicks off with Democratic nominee Cory Booker holding a 16 point lead over GOP standard-bearer Steve Lonegan. The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* finds that Booker leads in name recognition and personal ratings, although voters aren’t persuaded by his “new kind of politician” message. Lonegan, on the other hand, could have limited success with his strategy to make this race a referendum on Pres. Obama.

Booker currently holds a 54% to 38% advantage over Lonegan among New Jerseyans likely to vote in the October 16 special election. This is nearly identical to a pre-primary June poll, which gave Booker a 53% to 37% lead over Lonegan in what was then a potential match up.

Booker has solid support among Democratic voters (92%), while Lonegan musters support from 79% of his partisan base. Independent voters split, 43% for Booker to 41% for Lonegan. This represents a drop in independent support for Booker, which stood at 48% to 35% for Lonegan in June.

“Cory Booker appears to be in the driver’s seat after his big primary win, but his personal ratings declined over the course of the campaign. Steve Lonegan, on the other hand, remains basically unknown to half the electorate after coasting to the GOP nomination,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Cory Booker’s personal ratings stand at 57% favorable to 23% unfavorable among likely voters, with 20% having no opinion. This is slightly more negative than the 61% favorable to 15% unfavorable rating he held in June. Steve Lonegan is not as well-known as his opponent, with personal ratings at 31% favorable to 20% unfavorable, and 49% offering no opinion of the GOP nominee. These numbers are basically unchanged from the 34% favorable to 20% unfavorable rating he held in June.

Booker gets more positive ratings from Republicans (27%) than Lonegan gets from Democrats (5%). They receive about the same “net” score from independents: +22 for Booker (49% favorable to 27% unfavorable) and +23 for Lonegan (37% favorable to 14% unfavorable).

While Booker’s personal ratings are positive, efforts to cast himself as someone who embraces a different kind of politics currently fall flat with most voters. Just 37% of likely voters see Booker as a new kind of politician, while 49% see him as more of a typical politician. Only Democrats (52%) are likely to agree with the Booker campaign message that he is a new kind of politician. Most Republicans (60%) and independents (55%) say he is more of a typical politician.

Lonegan hopes that he can shift the race’s dynamic by making it a referendum on Barack Obama, and specifically the president’s signature health care policy. Obama’s job performance ratings are not as strong among likely voters as they are among the entire New Jersey public, although the numbers are still more positive – 49% approve – than negative – 43% disapprove. On the issue of Obamacare, 44% of likely voters would like to see their next U.S. Senator vote to overturn the law, as Steve Lonegan has vowed to do. This compares to 47% who say they would not want their Senator to do this.

Among voters who are either undecided or have indicated they may change their mind about their vote, Obama stands at a negative 41% approve to 46% disapprove. This subset of voters is also slightly more likely to want their Senator to vote to overturn Obamacare (42%) than not (37%). This group of potential switchers makes up less than one-fourth (22%) of the likely electorate in October.

“There is still an outside chance that the dynamics of this race could turn in Lonegan’s favor. But it would take a sea change in partisan turnout to do it,” said Murray.

Turnout is certainly a question in this unprecedented situation: a mid-October Wednesday election coming just three weeks before the regularly scheduled November election for governor, state legislature, and a variety of local offices. If given the choice of voting in only one of those two elections, 67% say they would opt for the November election while just 26% say they would turn out for the special Senate election. There are no significant partisan differences in these results.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by telephone from August 15 to 18, 2013 with 696 New Jersey voters likely to vote in the October special election. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.7$  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. If you could only vote in one election this fall, which one would it be, the special election for U.S. Senate or the regular election for governor and legislature?

|                  | Likely Voters | PARTY ID |     |     | GENDER |        | REGION |         |       | VOTE INTENT |         | Undecided/ May change mind |
|------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|----------------------------|
|                  |               | Dem      | Ind | Rep | Male   | Female | North  | Central | South | Booker      | Lonegan |                            |
| Special election | <b>26%</b>    | 26%      | 28% | 23% | 30%    | 22%    | 27%    | 27%     | 22%   | 28%         | 28%     | 11%                        |
| Regular election | <b>67%</b>    | 68%      | 63% | 72% | 64%    | 70%    | 66%    | 68%     | 69%   | 66%         | 66%     | 82%                        |
| Not sure         | <b>7%</b>     | 6%       | 9%  | 6%  | 6%     | 8%     | 7%     | 5%      | 9%    | 6%          | 6%      | 7%                         |

| TREND:           | August 2013 | June 2013 |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Special election | 26%         | 23%       |
| Regular election | 67%         | 71%       |
| Not sure         | 7%          | 6%        |
| Unwtd N          | 696         | 560       |

2. If the election for U.S. Senate was today, would you vote for Steve Lonegan, the Republican, Cory Booker, the Democrat or some other candidate? [NAMES WERE ROTATED] [IF UNDECIDED: At this moment, do you lean toward Steve Lonegan or do you lean toward Cory Booker?]

| (with leaners)  | Likely Voters | PARTY ID |     |     | GENDER |        | REGION |         |       |
|-----------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|
|                 |               | Dem      | Ind | Rep | Male   | Female | North  | Central | South |
| Steve Lonegan   | <b>38%</b>    | 5%       | 41% | 79% | 44%    | 34%    | 36%    | 39%     | 41%   |
| Cory Booker     | <b>54%</b>    | 92%      | 43% | 16% | 50%    | 57%    | 57%    | 53%     | 50%   |
| Other candidate | <b>2%</b>     | 1%       | 5%  | 1%  | 2%     | 2%     | 2%     | 2%      | 3%    |
| Undecided       | <b>5%</b>     | 1%       | 12% | 4%  | 4%     | 7%     | 5%     | 6%      | 6%    |

| TREND:        | August 2013 | June 2013 |
|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| Steve Lonegan | 38%         | 37%       |
| Cory Booker   | 54%         | 53%       |
| Other         | 2%          | --        |
| Undecided     | 5%          | 10%       |
| Unwtd N       | 696         | 560       |

[QUESTIONS 3 AND 4 WERE ROTATED]

3. Is your general opinion of Cory Booker favorable, unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of him?

|             | Likely Voters | PARTY ID |     |     | GENDER |        | REGION |         |       | VOTE INTENT |         | Undecided/ May change mind |
|-------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|----------------------------|
|             |               | Dem      | Ind | Rep | Male   | Female | North  | Central | South | Booker      | Lonegan |                            |
| Favorable   | <b>57%</b>    | 86%      | 49% | 27% | 56%    | 58%    | 61%    | 59%     | 49%   | 90%         | 18%     | 50%                        |
| Unfavorable | <b>23%</b>    | 7%       | 27% | 39% | 30%    | 17%    | 21%    | 21%     | 27%   | 4%          | 53%     | 10%                        |
| No opinion  | <b>20%</b>    | 7%       | 23% | 34% | 14%    | 25%    | 17%    | 20%     | 25%   | 6%          | 30%     | 40%                        |

| TREND:      | August 2013 | June 2013 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Favorable   | 57%         | 61%       |
| Unfavorable | 23%         | 15%       |
| No opinion  | 20%         | 24%       |
| Unwtd N     | 696         | 560       |

4. Is your general opinion of Steve Lonegan favorable, unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of him?

|             | Likely Voters | PARTY ID |     |     | GENDER |        | REGION |         |       | VOTE INTENT |         | Undecided/ May change mind |
|-------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|----------------------------|
|             |               | Dem      | Ind | Rep | Male   | Female | North  | Central | South | Booker      | Lonegan |                            |
| Favorable   | <b>31%</b>    | 5%       | 37% | 57% | 36%    | 26%    | 32%    | 28%     | 32%   | 3%          | 73%     | 21%                        |
| Unfavorable | <b>20%</b>    | 31%      | 14% | 13% | 22%    | 19%    | 21%    | 24%     | 16%   | 34%         | 4%      | 7%                         |
| No opinion  | <b>49%</b>    | 64%      | 48% | 31% | 42%    | 55%    | 47%    | 48%     | 52%   | 63%         | 24%     | 72%                        |

| TREND:      | August 2013 | June 2013 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Favorable   | 31%         | 34%       |
| Unfavorable | 20%         | 20%       |
| No opinion  | 49%         | 45%       |
| Unwtd N     | 696         | 560       |

5. Overall, do you think Cory Booker is more a new kind of politician or more a typical politician?

|                        | Likely Voters | PARTY ID |     |     | GENDER |        | REGION |         |       | VOTE INTENT |         | Undecided/ May change mind |
|------------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|----------------------------|
|                        |               | Dem      | Ind | Rep | Male   | Female | North  | Central | South | Booker      | Lonegan |                            |
| New kind of politician | 37%           | 52%      | 32% | 23% | 30%    | 43%    | 44%    | 34%     | 30%   | 55%         | 15%     | 37%                        |
| Typical politician     | 49%           | 37%      | 55% | 60% | 59%    | 42%    | 48%    | 49%     | 53%   | 37%         | 70%     | 43%                        |
| No opinion             | 13%           | 11%      | 13% | 17% | 11%    | 15%    | 8%     | 18%     | 17%   | 8%          | 15%     | 20%                        |

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

|            | Likely Voters | PARTY ID |     |     | GENDER |        | REGION |         |       | VOTE INTENT |         | Undecided/ May change mind |
|------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|----------------------------|
|            |               | Dem      | Ind | Rep | Male   | Female | North  | Central | South | Booker      | Lonegan |                            |
| Approve    | 49%           | 87%      | 38% | 11% | 49%    | 49%    | 50%    | 52%     | 43%   | 82%         | 7%      | 41%                        |
| Disapprove | 43%           | 8%       | 52% | 78% | 44%    | 42%    | 39%    | 42%     | 50%   | 11%         | 86%     | 46%                        |
| No opinion | 8%            | 5%       | 10% | 11% | 7%     | 9%     | 10%    | 6%      | 7%    | 7%          | 7%      | 13%                        |

7. Would you want the next Senator from New Jersey to vote to overturn the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, or not?

|                     | Likely Voters | PARTY ID |     |     | GENDER |        | REGION |         |       | VOTE INTENT |         | Undecided/ May change mind |
|---------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|----------------------------|
|                     |               | Dem      | Ind | Rep | Male   | Female | North  | Central | South | Booker      | Lonegan |                            |
| Yes, overturn       | 44%           | 11%      | 48% | 83% | 47%    | 42%    | 46%    | 42%     | 44%   | 13%         | 88%     | 42%                        |
| No, do not overturn | 47%           | 77%      | 39% | 14% | 47%    | 46%    | 46%    | 45%     | 49%   | 78%         | 8%      | 37%                        |
| Not sure            | 9%            | 12%      | 12% | 2%  | 6%     | 12%    | 8%     | 12%     | 8%    | 9%          | 4%      | 21%                        |

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from August 15 to 18, 2013 with a statewide random sample of 696 likely voters drawn from a list of registered voters who voted in at least two of the last four general elections, including 520 contacted by interactive voice response (IVR) on a landline telephone and 176 contacted by a live interviewer 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 3.7 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.

| POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)<br>LIKELY VOTERS |            |           |                |
|---|------------|-----------|----------------|
| 39% Dem                                       | 46% Male   | 11% 18-34 | 74% White      |
| 31% Ind                                       | 54% Female | 17% 35-49 | 15% Black      |
| 30% Rep                                       |            | 39% 50-64 | 7% Hispanic    |
|   |            | 33% 65+   | 3% Asian/Other |

|              | Likely Voters | PARTY ID |      |      | GENDER |        | REGION |         |       | VOTE INTENT |         | Undecided/ May change mind |
|--------------|---------------|----------|------|------|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|-------------|---------|----------------------------|
|              |               | Dem      | Ind  | Rep  | Male   | Female | North  | Central | South | Booker      | Lonegan |                            |
| Unweighted N | 696           | 194      | 321  | 181  | 282    | 414    | 278    | 211     | 207   | 312         | 270     | 198                        |
| moe          | 3.7%          | 7.0%     | 5.4% | 7.3% | 5.8%   | 4.8%   | 5.9%   | 6.7%    | 6.8%  | 5.5%        | 6.0%    | 7.0%                       |

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