

Released:  
**Tuesday, July 16, 2013**

Contact:  
**PATRICK MURRAY**  
732-263-5858 (office)  
732-979-6769 (cell)  
[pdmurray@monmouth.edu](mailto:pdmurray@monmouth.edu)

## **BOOKER LEADS ON ALL FRONTS IN NJ DEMOCRATIC SENATE PRIMARY**

Newark Mayor Cory Booker maintains a daunting lead in the Democratic nomination contest to fill the late Frank Lautenberg's U.S. Senate seat. The *Monmouth University Poll* finds Booker doing well among all Democratic groups, including in his opponents' own backyards. The Monmouth University Poll is the first to specifically survey likely voters in the August 13<sup>th</sup> Democratic primary.

Booker currently claims support of nearly half (49%) of likely voters in the Democratic primary to be held four weeks from today. Significantly fewer say they intend to vote for Congressman Frank Pallone (12%), Congressman Rush Holt (8%), or General Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver (3%). Another 28% are undecided.

Booker garners support from about half of Democratic men (50%) and women (48%) alike. Among white voters, he has 47% support to 16% for Pallone, 11% for Holt and 2% for Oliver. Among African-American voters, Booker has 55% support to 7% for Oliver, 3% for Pallone, and 3% for Holt.

Regionally, Booker earns support from 53% of North Jersey Democrats and 50% of South Jersey Democrats. He also does well in the central part of the state which is home to the two congressmen competing for the nomination. Booker claims 39% of the intended primary vote in Central Jersey compared to 19% for Pallone and 16% for Holt.

"Cory Booker's lead appears to be impregnable. There is very little in the poll that shows a path for the other candidates to overtake him," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

One factor is turnout. There is no precedent for a special primary in August. Turnout could range anywhere from 200,000 to 400,000 Democrats. The likely voter model for this poll falls toward the upper end of that range. However, there would be little difference in the results if the model was restricted to voters with the highest likelihood of turning out. Voters with a consistent primary voting history and greater awareness of the upcoming primary still give widespread support to Booker (47%) over Pallone (15%), Holt (10%), and Oliver (8%), with 20% undecided.

Another potential issue in the race is whether the two congressmen are drawing on the other's support. That does not appear to be the case, according to the poll which asked voters who they would support if their preferred candidate was not running. If Holt was out of the race, Pallone's support would increase by 2 percentage points while Booker's would go up by 4 points. If Pallone was out of the race, Holt's support would increase by 3 percentage points while Booker's would go up by 5 points.

The poll does show that a large number of Democratic primary voters remain undecided. The race could turn into a close contest if a candidate other than Booker can sweep this undecided group. The poll, though, does not show much potential for this outcome.

Booker's opponents have been touting their legislative experience as a selling point. This is certainly important to voters. Among four qualities presented in the poll, having the experience to get things done in Washington is considered the most important factor by 34% of primary voters, ahead of being true to core Democratic values (22%), bringing fresh ideas to Washington (21%), and bringing greater attention to New Jersey (18%). Among voters who consider experience to be the most important factor, Booker actually has a sizable lead of 42%, compared to 15% for Pallone, 10% for Holt, and 4% for Oliver.

Booker has also been attacked by his opponents for not being true to core Democratic values. Those charges don't appear to stick; he leads among "core values" voters by 49% to 14% for Pallone, 11% for Holt, and 4% for Oliver. Part of the reason for this is that Democratic primary voters may not agree on which policies represent core party values. Booker's support for school vouchers has been one such flashpoint in the race, but is not all that important among voters. Just 24% say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supports vouchers, but 20% say they would be more likely to support such a candidate and nearly half (49%) say it wouldn't figure into their vote at all. In fact, likely Democratic primary voters are more likely to support (45%) rather than oppose (39%) school voucher programs in low-income areas.

Another ding on Booker is his close relationship with Governor Chris Christie. That line of attack is unlikely to gain much traction, since likely Democratic primary voters are divided on the governor, with 43% having a favorable opinion of him and 42% an unfavorable opinion. Moreover, voters who are still undecided in the Senate primary hold more positive (46%) than negative (29%) views of the Republican governor.

Other possible variables for shaking up the race don't seem to hold much potential either. For example, many unions have been holding back their support in this race, but the overall impact may be muted. Among union household voters, just 26% say they would be more likely to vote for either Pallone or Holt if the candidate was endorsed by their union. This goes up only to 30% for the powerful NJEA

and CWA public unions. Also, the Lautenberg family’s endorsement of Frank Pallone – of which just 1-in-4 (28%) voters are aware – only makes 16% of primary voters more likely to support the congressman.

Overall, 41% of Democratic voters say that the policy positions of the four Democratic candidates are basically similar. Only 25% say they are different. That probably explains why just 14% of voters would be very upset if their chosen candidate did not win the nomination. Another 41% would be somewhat upset, but an identical and sizable 41% would not be upset at all if another candidate won the nomination.

“At the end of the day, New Jersey Democrats would be satisfied with any of these candidates as their nominee for U.S. Senate. They are simply going for the one they feel they know best,” said Murray.

Nearly 2-in-3 (64%) likely Democratic primary voters have a favorable opinion of Cory Booker. Only 8% hold an unfavorable view and 27% offer no opinion of the two-term Newark mayor. One-third (33%) have a favorable opinion of Frank Pallone to just 3% with an unfavorable view, but 65% have no opinion of the 24-year congressional incumbent. One-quarter (24%) have a favorable opinion of Rush Holt to just 5% with an unfavorable view, but 70% have no opinion of the 14-year congressional incumbent. Seventeen percent have a favorable opinion of Sheila Oliver to 7% with an unfavorable view, but 76% have no opinion of the 9-year legislative incumbent.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from July 11 to 14, 2013 with 403 registered Democrats who are likely to vote in the August primary election for US Senate. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.9$  percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

### DATA TABLES

*The questions referred to in this release are as follows:*

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

1. There will be a special election on October 16<sup>th</sup> to fill the United States Senate seat left vacant by Frank Lautenberg’s death. Have you heard about this special election, or not? [If YES: Have you heard a lot or just a little?]

	Likely Voters
Yes, a lot	54%
Yes, a little	34%
No, not heard	12%

2. Did you hear that the primary election to select the Democratic Party nominee for this Senate seat will be held on August 13<sup>th</sup> or hadn’t you heard that yet?

	Likely Voters
Yes, heard	57%
No, not heard	43%

3. If the Democratic primary for Senate was today, would you vote for Frank Pallone, Sheila Oliver, Rush Holt, or Cory Booker? [If UNDECIDED: At this moment, do you lean towards Frank Pallone, Sheila Oliver, Rush Holt or Cory Booker?] [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

(with leaners)	Likely Voters	GENDER		REGION		
		Male	Female	North	Central	South
Frank Pallone	<b>12%</b>	15%	10%	9%	19%	13%
Sheila Oliver	<b>3%</b>	2%	4%	3%	3%	6%
Rush Holt	<b>8%</b>	8%	7%	6%	16%	3%
Cory Booker	<b>49%</b>	50%	48%	53%	39%	50%
(VOL) Undecided	<b>28%</b>	25%	30%	29%	24%	28%

4. If [NAMED CANDIDATE] was not in the race, would you vote for [REMAINING CANDIDATES]? [This question was asked of voters supporting a particular candidate. The table below combines those results with the voters who already support the other candidates to represent hypothetical three-way primary races.]

Without candidate:	Without Booker	Without Pallone	Without Holt	Without Oliver
Frank Pallone	26%	n/a	14%	13%
Sheila Oliver	9%	4%	4%	n/a
Rush Holt	16%	11%	n/a	8%
Cory Booker	n/a	54%	53%	50%
(VOL) Undecided	49%	31%	29%	29%

[QUESTIONS 5 THROUGH 8 WERE ROTATED]

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

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE		
		Booker	Other	Undecided
Favorable	<b>64%</b>	91%	47%	32%
Unfavorable	<b>8%</b>	0%	23%	10%
No opinion	<b>27%</b>	9%	30%	57%

6. Is your general opinion of Sheila Oliver favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion?

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE		
		Booker	Other	Undecided
Favorable	<b>17%</b>	12%	29%	15%
Unfavorable	<b>7%</b>	8%	12%	2%
No opinion	<b>76%</b>	80%	59%	83%

7. Is your general opinion of Rush Holt favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion?

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE		
		Booker	Other	Undecided
Favorable	<b>24%</b>	18%	46%	16%
Unfavorable	<b>5%</b>	7%	2%	5%
No opinion	<b>70%</b>	75%	52%	79%

8. Is your general opinion of Frank Pallone favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion?

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE		
		Booker	Other	Undecided
Favorable	<b>33%</b>	27%	66%	15%
Unfavorable	<b>3%</b>	4%	0%	2%
No opinion	<b>65%</b>	69%	34%	83%

9. Is your general opinion of Governor Chris Christie favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion? [*PROBE: Is that very or somewhat favorable/unfavorable?*]

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE		
		Booker	Other	Undecided
Very favorable	17%	15%	15%	21%
Somewhat favorable	26%	28%	21%	25%
Very unfavorable	17%	18%	18%	14%
Somewhat unfavorable	25%	25%	34%	15%
No opinion	16%	13%	12%	24%

[The following question was asked of those that mentioned a candidate in Q3, moe= ± 5.8%]

10. How upset would you be if your chosen candidate did not win the Democratic nomination – very upset, somewhat upset, or not really upset?

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE	
		Booker	Other
Very upset	14%	15%	12%
Somewhat upset	41%	42%	38%
Not really upset	41%	39%	45%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	3%	5%

11. Please tell me whether each of the following factors is very important, somewhat important, or not important in your vote for the Democratic Senate primary? [*EACH ITEM WAS RATED. ITEMS WERE ROTATED*]

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	(VOL) Don't know
Selecting someone who is true to core Democratic values?	57%	29%	11%	3%
Selecting someone who can bring fresh ideas to Washington?	71%	23%	4%	2%
Selecting someone who has the experience to get things done in Washington?	72%	21%	5%	2%
Selecting someone who can bring greater attention to New Jersey?	70%	23%	6%	1%

12. And which of these is the most important factor in your vote: someone who is true to core Democratic values, can bring fresh ideas to Washington, has the experience to get things done in Washington, or can bring greater attention to New Jersey? [*ITEMS WERE ROTATED*]

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE		
		Booker	Other	Undecided
True to core Democratic values	22%	22%	27%	17%
Bring fresh ideas to Washington	21%	28%	12%	17%
Has the experience to get things done in Washington	34%	29%	41%	37%
Can bring greater attention to New Jersey	18%	19%	17%	18%
(VOL) None of these	2%	2%	1%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	1%	2%	7%

13. Based on what you have heard, are the policy positions of the four Democratic candidates very similar, somewhat similar, somewhat different, or very different?

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE		
		Booker	Other	Undecided
Very similar	7%	6%	12%	4%
Somewhat similar	34%	37%	44%	22%
Somewhat different	19%	22%	22%	11%
Very different	6%	5%	4%	9%
(VOL) Depends on candidates	2%	2%	4%	1%
(VOL) Don't know	32%	27%	16%	52%

14. Turning to a policy issue, do you personally support or oppose using tax funds to pay for a voucher program so children living in low-income areas can go to a different school?

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE		
		Booker	Other	Undecided
Support	45%	49%	34%	46%
Oppose	39%	37%	52%	32%
(VOL) Depends	6%	5%	4%	8%
(VOL) Don't know	10%	8%	10%	14%

15. Would you be more likely or less likely to support a Senate candidate who favors a voucher program, or would this make no difference to your vote?

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE		
		Booker	Other	Undecided
More likely	20%	22%	14%	22%
Less likely	24%	19%	45%	17%
No difference	49%	54%	37%	50%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	4%	4%	11%

16. Have you heard whether the family of the late Senator Frank Lautenberg has endorsed a candidate to succeed him in this race, or not heard?

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE		
		Booker	Other	Undecided
Heard	28%	30%	39%	17%
Not heard	72%	70%	61%	83%

17. The Lautenberg family has endorsed Congressman Pallone. Does this make you more likely or less likely to vote for Pallone, or does it have no impact? [If MORE LIKELY: A lot or a little more likely?]

	Likely Voters	PRIMARY VOTE		
		Booker	Other	Undecided
Lot more likely	7%	3%	18%	4%
Little more likely	9%	7%	11%	11%
Less likely	4%	6%	1%	2%
No impact	76%	83%	67%	73%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	1%	4%	10%

[The following question was asked of union household members, moe= ± 9.0%]

18. If your union endorsed either Congressman Pallone or Holt, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate or wouldn't it make any difference to you? [PROBE: Is that a lot or a little more likely?]

Union households	Likely Voters	UNION	
		NJEA / CWA	Other
Lot more likely	13%	14%	13%
Little more likely	13%	16%	10%
No difference	66%	65%	66%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	5%	10%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from July 11 to 14, 2013 by live telephone interview with 403 likely primary voters, including 343 contacted on a landline telephone and 60 on a cell phone. The statewide random sample was drawn from a list of registered Democrats who have voted in at least one of the last four primary elections and was screened for likelihood of voting in the upcoming August special primary. 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 4.9 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>			
<i>LIKELY VOTERS</i>			
53% North	44% Male	7% 18-34	63% White
22% Central	56% Female	14% 35-49	26% Black
25% South		36% 50-64	7% Hispanic
		43% 65+	5% Asian/Other

	<i>Likely Voters</i>	<i>PRIMARY VOTE</i>			<i>GENDER</i>		<i>REGION</i>		
		<i>Booker</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>South</i>
<i>Unweighted N</i>	403	196	93	114	174	229	233	80	90
<i>moe</i>	4.9%	7.0	10.2	9.2	7.4	6.5	6.4	11.0	10.3

###