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

## **NJ CD05: CHALLENGER IN STRIKING DISTANCE**

### *Voters mixed on incumbent's post-Sandy actions*

In what was supposed to be an easy re-election bid, GOP incumbent Scott Garrett holds a narrow 5 point lead over Democrat Roy Cho in the race for New Jersey's 5<sup>th</sup> district House seat. The ***Monmouth University Poll*** finds that voters are divided on whether Garrett's actions after Superstorm Sandy helped New Jersey recover, although they are more likely to feel he did a good job for residents in his own district.

Among voters likely to cast their ballot in next month's congressional race, 48% say they will support Scott Garrett and 43% will vote for first-time candidate Roy Cho. Another 3% say they will vote for the third party candidate and 6% are undecided. Garrett won re-election by a 12 point margin two years ago when the presidential election topped the ticket.

Cho holds a 51% to 39% edge in the populous Bergen County portion of the district while Garrett has a larger 68% to 26% advantage in the more rural western end of the district. Male voters support Garrett by a 53% to 38% margin while women prefer Cho by 49% to 43%. Both candidates have strong support among their partisan bases. Garrett claims 89% of the Republican vote and Cho holds 84% of the Democratic vote. Independents are split – 45% support Garrett and 42% support Cho.

“This race was not even a blip on most political prognosticators' radar screens. It should be now,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute.

The campaign seems to hinge on a debate around Rep. Garrett's actions after Superstorm Sandy hit New Jersey in 2012. The Cho camp claims that a recent Garrett campaign flyer misrepresents the Congressman's actions in response to the storm. District voters are divided on whether Garrett helped New Jerseyans recover – 38% say he did a good job for the state and 35% say he did a bad job, with 27% registering no opinion. They are more likely to feel he did a better job helping his own district, which was not as hard hit as other parts of the state – 47% of district voters say Garrett did a good job and 28%

say he did a bad job helping his own constituents recover from the storm, while 25% are not sure about his post-storm performance for his own district.

“While the fifth district was relatively spared from Sandy’s wrath, a significant number of voters there have doubts about whether Garrett’s actions were helpful for hard-hit residents in other parts of the state,” said Murray.

The *Monmouth University Poll* found that Garrett has a slight advantage on the overall perception of who is in touch with the district, but not necessarily an edge on every issue. When asked which candidate understands the concerns of district residents, 38% say only Garrett does, 26% say only Cho does, and 12% say both do. Another 17% of likely voters say that neither candidate understands the district.

Garrett has an advantage on keeping taxes and spending under control – 41% say the incumbent will do a better job on this issue, 23% say Cho will do a better job, and 12% say both will perform about equally. Cho has a slight edge on the issue of abortion – 33% say the challenger will do a better job representing their views, 25% say Garrett will do a better job, and 9% say both will perform about equally. Voters are divided on the issue of healthcare – 35% give the edge to Cho, 34% prefer Garrett, and 11% say both will perform about equally on this issue.

District voters who are familiar with the candidates tend to be more positive than negative about both of them. Fewer have a negative opinion of the challenger, but they are also less likely to be familiar with him than the incumbent. Specifically, voter opinion of Garrett is 40% favorable to 29% unfavorable with 31% registering no opinion, while voter opinion of Cho is 30% favorable to 7% unfavorable with 63% having no opinion.

The *Monmouth University Poll* also found that 5<sup>th</sup> district voters have a negative opinion of both Pres. Barack Obama and the U.S. House of Representatives. Obama receives an upside down 39% approve to 55% disapprove job rating while the House receives an even worse 16% approve to 75% disapprove rating for its performance. Voters in the 5<sup>th</sup> district are divided on whether they would like to see the Republicans (38%) or the Democrats (36%) control Congress. Another 24% say party control would make no difference to them.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from October 10 to 14, 2014 with 432 New Jersey voters likely to vote in New Jersey’s 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District November general election. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.7$  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. If the election for U.S. Congress in your district was today, would you vote for Scott Garrett, the Republican, Roy Cho, the Democrat or some other candidate? [NAMES WERE ROTATED] [IF UNDECIDED: If you had to vote for one of the following at this moment, do you lean more toward Scott Garrett or more toward Roy Cho?]

(with leaners)	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other
Scott Garrett	<b>48%</b>	8%	45%	89%	53%	43%	39%	68%
Roy Cho	<b>43%</b>	84%	42%	6%	38%	49%	51%	26%
Other candidate	<b>3%</b>	2%	2%	4%	3%	2%	3%	1%
Undecided	<b>6%</b>	5%	11%	1%	6%	6%	7%	5%

[QUESTIONS 2 AND 3 WERE ROTATED]

2. Is your general opinion of Scott Garrett favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of him?

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Favorable	<b>40%</b>	5%	40%	72%	48%	33%	34%	54%	85%	1%	25%
Unfavorable	<b>29%</b>	53%	31%	5%	27%	30%	32%	21%	1%	62%	17%
No opinion	<b>31%</b>	42%	29%	23%	25%	37%	34%	25%	13%	37%	58%

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

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Favorable	<b>30%</b>	57%	27%	8%	28%	32%	36%	16%	5%	65%	17%
Unfavorable	<b>7%</b>	2%	7%	13%	10%	5%	7%	9%	15%	0%	5%
No opinion	<b>63%</b>	40%	66%	79%	62%	63%	57%	75%	80%	35%	78%

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

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Approve	<b>39%</b>	80%	34%	5%	37%	40%	45%	24%	6%	77%	36%
Disapprove	<b>55%</b>	15%	57%	91%	58%	51%	48%	70%	91%	16%	56%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>7%</b>	5%	9%	4%	5%	9%	7%	7%	3%	7%	8%

5. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the U.S. House of Representatives is doing?

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Approve	<b>16%</b>	11%	13%	21%	15%	16%	17%	12%	24%	9%	19%
Disapprove	<b>75%</b>	82%	79%	65%	78%	71%	72%	80%	65%	84%	67%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>10%</b>	7%	8%	14%	6%	13%	11%	8%	11%	6%	14%

6. Which candidate understands the concerns of people who live in your Congressional District – Scott Garrett, Roy Cho, both of them, or neither of them?

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Garrett	<b>38%</b>	8%	29%	75%	49%	27%	32%	51%	77%	2%	21%
Cho	<b>26%</b>	53%	23%	3%	22%	29%	32%	11%	0%	61%	11%
Both	<b>12%</b>	11%	18%	7%	12%	12%	13%	10%	8%	14%	22%
Neither	<b>17%</b>	16%	23%	12%	10%	24%	15%	22%	12%	13%	29%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>7%</b>	12%	7%	3%	7%	8%	8%	6%	3%	10%	17%

[Question 7 was asked of a random half-sample: n=217, moe=+/-6.7%]

7. Do you think Congressman Garrett did a good job or bad job helping people in New Jersey recover from Superstorm Sandy?

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Good job	<b>38%</b>	8%	40%	64%	48%	30%	35%	45%	68%	11%	39%
Bad job	<b>35%</b>	59%	38%	12%	29%	40%	36%	32%	9%	59%	31%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>27%</b>	33%	23%	24%	24%	30%	28%	24%	23%	30%	30%

[Question 8 was asked of a random half-sample: n=215, moe=+/-6.7%]

8. Do you think Congressman Garrett did a good job or bad job helping people in your Congressional District recover from Superstorm Sandy?

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Good job	<b>47%</b>	25%	46%	69%	48%	46%	46%	49%	73%	23%	45%
Bad job	<b>28%</b>	46%	29%	10%	26%	31%	30%	25%	6%	52%	26%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>25%</b>	29%	25%	21%	26%	24%	24%	26%	21%	25%	29%

9. Who would do a better job on the following issues – Scott Garrett or Roy Cho, or would they perform about equally? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]

Keeping taxes and spending under control

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Garrett better	<b>41%</b>	14%	39%	71%	50%	33%	37%	52%	77%	12%	25%
Cho better	<b>23%</b>	49%	21%	1%	22%	24%	28%	11%	1%	53%	12%
Both equally	<b>12%</b>	12%	12%	11%	9%	15%	13%	9%	6%	11%	17%
(VOL) Neither	<b>12%</b>	11%	16%	9%	11%	13%	11%	15%	11%	11%	17%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>12%</b>	14%	12%	8%	8%	15%	11%	14%	5%	13%	28%

Representing your views on abortion

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Garrett better	<b>25%</b>	6%	21%	48%	31%	20%	22%	32%	51%	2%	10%
Cho better	<b>33%</b>	61%	35%	6%	33%	33%	39%	20%	6%	73%	21%
Both equally	<b>9%</b>	8%	8%	10%	8%	9%	8%	11%	8%	6%	11%
(VOL) Neither	<b>10%</b>	8%	10%	12%	7%	13%	9%	14%	12%	6%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>23%</b>	18%	26%	22%	21%	24%	22%	24%	22%	13%	43%

Doing the right thing on healthcare

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Garrett better	34%	8%	28%	65%	42%	26%	30%	42%	69%	1%	19%
Cho better	35%	72%	32%	3%	35%	34%	42%	18%	1%	80%	21%
Both equally	11%	7%	13%	14%	8%	15%	11%	13%	12%	6%	17%
(VOL) Neither	8%	3%	12%	8%	6%	10%	6%	12%	10%	4%	12%
(VOL) Don't know	12%	10%	16%	9%	9%	15%	11%	15%	8%	8%	31%

10. Which party would you like to see control Congress – the Republicans or the Democrats, or would it make no difference?

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Republicans	38%	2%	30%	80%	42%	34%	34%	46%	77%	1%	24%
Democrats	36%	87%	24%	3%	33%	39%	43%	20%	2%	78%	29%
No difference	24%	11%	42%	16%	22%	25%	21%	30%	19%	20%	41%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	1%	4%	1%	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%	1%	6%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from October 10 to 14, 2014 with a statewide random sample of 432 likely voters in New Jersey's 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District drawn from a list of registered voters who voted in at least two of the last four general elections and indicate they are likely to vote in the upcoming election. This includes 368 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 64 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, gender, and party registration based on state registration list information on the pool of voters who have participated in two of the last four elections. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and L2 (voter list). 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 4.7 percentage points. 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.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS				
Likely Voter Sample (weighted)				
Self-Reported Party ID	Party of Registration	Gender	Age	County
31% Democrat	34% Democrat	48% Male	7% 18-34	71% Bergen
33% Republican	41% Republican	52% Female	20% 35-49	5% Passaic
36% Independent	25% Unaffiliated		38% 50-64	14% Sussex
			35% 65+	10% Warren

	LIKELY VOTERS	PARTY ID			GENDER		COUNTY		VOTE CHOICE		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Bergen	Other	Garrett	Cho	
Unweighted N	432	129	173	128	205	227	306	126	178	159	119
moe	4.7%	8.6%	7.5%	8.7%	6.9%	6.5%	5.6%	8.7%	7.4%	7.8%	9.0%

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