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*This poll was conducted by the  
 Monmouth University Polling Institute*

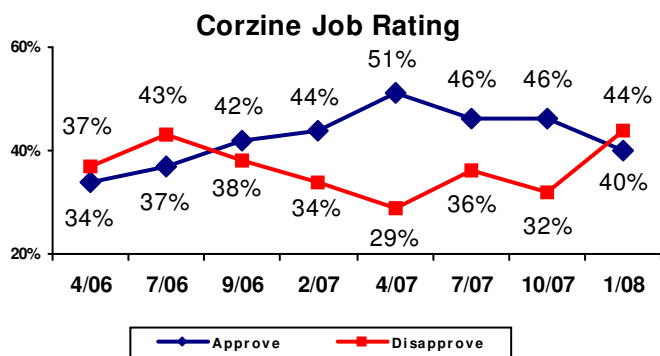
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**EMBARGOED to:**  
**Wednesday, January 16, 2008, 5:00 am**

## NEGATIVE VIEWS AT GOVERNOR'S MID-TERM

### *Public skeptical of new school funding formula*

Governor Jon Corzine's mid-term grades are in, and he's not getting any gold stars from the New Jersey public. The latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* finds that the governor ends the first half of his term with a negative job approval rating, poor grades for making the state a more affordable place to live, and skepticism of the school funding formula he signed into law this week.



Currently, only 40% of New Jerseyans approve of how their governor is handling his job compared to 44% who disapprove. Another 16% have no opinion. This is a marked change from the 46% approve to 32% disapprove rating he held in October. Since that time, Corzine's job percentage has declined 13 points among Republicans

to 25%, 6 points among Democrats to 53%, and 3 points among independents to 36%. At the same time, his disapprovals have increased 12 points among Republicans to 61%, 8 points among Democrats to 31%, and 15 points among independents to 49%.

When asked to grade the Corzine administration on a number of key issues that formed the basis of his 2005 campaign for the state house, the public are only able to muster C's and D's. His overall average is now a "C-", which is down from the "C" grade he received in the last

Monmouth/Gannett report card issued in July 2007. Broken down by partisanship, he averages a “C” among Democrats, a “D+” among Republicans, and a “C-” among independents.

“Jon Corzine has deposited little in the bank of public good will so far,” commented Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “Considering what he now wants to accomplish with his debt reduction plan, it is not an auspicious start to the second half of his term.” *[Editor’s note: The Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll will release a report on public reaction to the governor’s toll road plan tomorrow.]*

<b>Jon Corzine, Governor Mid-term Report Card</b>				
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Jan 2008</b>	<i>Prior Grades</i>		
		<i>July 2007</i>	<i>Sept 2006</i>	<i>April 2006</i>
Cost-Cutting	<b>C-</b>	C-	C-	C-
Property Taxes	<b>C-</b>	C-	D+	D+
Government Ethics	<b>C</b>	C	C	C
Cost of Living	<b>D</b>	D+	D+	D+
Schools	<b>C</b>	C	C	C
Level of Effort	<b>C+</b>	B-	B-	C+
<b>Overall grade</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>

Governor Corzine continues to receive particularly poor grades for making New Jersey a more affordable place to live, which was a key theme in his 2005 campaign. In this area, only 15% of residents feel he has earned an A or B and 20% give him a C. On the other hand, more than 6-in-10 (62%) say he rates a D or F in this subject. These individual grades earn the governor an overall “D” average for making the state more affordable – his lowest grade in any Monmouth/Gannett report card to date.

His grade for the level of effort he puts into working on behalf of the state has also dropped. He now earns a “C+”, including 48% who grade him an A or B for effort, 27% who grade him a C, and 21% who give poor marks of D or F.

The governor continues to average a “C-” on property taxes and government spending. On providing property tax relief, Corzine receives an A or B from 24%, a C from 28%, and a D or F from 42%. On controlling costs and cutting waste, he receives an A or B from 25%, a C from 29%, and a D or F from 39%.

Corzine's best subjects, relatively speaking, continue to be in the areas of ethics and education, where he maintains his "C" average from past report cards. On bringing ethics and honesty to government, he receives an A or B from 35%, a C from 28%, and a D or F from 31%. On improving schools, he receives an A or B from 31%, a C from 28%, and a D or F from 32%.

"Some view the state's new school funding formula as the governor's biggest accomplishment so far," Murray remarked. "However, the way this legislation flew under the radar does not seem to have engendered much public confidence in how state government goes about its business."

Just under half of the New Jersey public say they are aware of recent legislative changes to the state's school funding formula. This includes 12% who have heard a lot and 35% who have heard a little. Another 51% say they have not heard anything about the plan.

The new funding system will add about \$500 million to the state's education budget to boost aid to suburban schools while holding urban aid fairly steady. More New Jerseyans say that this sounds like a bad (45%) rather than good idea (37%). Another 6% hold a mixed view and 12% offer no opinion.

Although the new formula is designed to help older towns and suburbs with growing numbers of students in need, the poll found no difference of opinion across different community types. Specifically, residents of the state's older, stable towns and suburbs are more likely to view the plan as bad (47%) rather than good (34%). These views are similar to those of residents in newer, growing suburbs (45% bad to 36% good) and urban areas (42% bad to 39% good).

Some critics of the plan say that the legislature and affected parties were not given enough time to fully review the bill – the legislative language was published less than a month before the bill was passed, in the waning hours of the last legislative session. This quick timetable is cause for concern for most New Jerseyans. Only 1-in-4 (27%) residents feel the legislature took enough time to consider the plan, compared to 56% who say they did not. There are no partisan differences in this view.

On the other hand, some cynical observers say it may have been a good thing that lawmakers did not have a lot of time to review and amend the bill, particularly in light of the legislature's poor ratings in recent polls. However, the public disagrees – nearly all (83%) poll respondents who say the legislation moved too quickly view this swift passage as a bad thing. Only 9% say the quick action was a good thing.

One of the key taxpayer benefits of the new formula is that any excess funding received by a district over the amount needed to provide an “adequate” education as determined by the new formula is supposed to be returned to residents in the form of property tax relief. However, fully 3-in-4 (76%) New Jerseyans believe that such relief is unlikely to come their way. Only 16% think they will see any form of property tax relief under this plan.

“Most observers expect that there will be legal challenges to the new aid formula,” added Murray. “The governor must hope it does better in the state’s judicial system than it does in the court of public opinion.”

One potential positive for the governor is that residents who are more aware of the new formula are slightly more likely to view it favorably, although the support is mixed. Poll respondents who have heard a lot about the plan are split – 45% saying it is a good idea to 44% who feel it is a bad idea. Those who know just a little tilt in the opposite direction – 40% good idea to 43% bad idea. However, poll respondents who were not aware of the plan until read a description of it are decidedly negative – only 33% say it sounds like a good idea to 48% who feel it is a bad one.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 804 New Jersey adults from January 9 to 13, 2008. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.5$  percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the Gannett New Jersey newspaper group (Asbury Park Press, 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 Jon Corzine is doing as governor?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb
Approve	<b>40%</b>	42%	29%	53%	36%	25%	39%	47%	33%
Disapprove	<b>44%</b>	46%	33%	31%	49%	61%	46%	37%	50%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>16%</b>	12%	38%	17%	16%	14%	16%	16%	17%
Unwtd N	<b>804</b>	698	106	243	328	187	137	295	344

TREND:	January 2008	October 2007	July 2007	April 2007	February 2007	September 2006	July 2006	April 2006
Approve	40%	46%	46%	51%	44%	42%	37%	34%
Disapprove	44%	32%	36%	29%	34%	38%	43%	37%
(VOL) Don't know	16%	22%	18%	20%	22%	20%	20%	29%
Unwtd N	804	801	800	804	801	800	802	803

2. I'd like you to grade the Corzine administration on how it has handled specific issues over the past two years. For each one I read, please give a letter grade of A, B, C, D or F for failing. What grade would you give the Corzine administration for ... ?

A. Controlling costs and cutting waste

<b>TREND:</b>	<b>January 2008</b>	July 2007	September 2006	April 2006
A - Highest grade	<b>6%</b>	7%	7%	5%
B	<b>19%</b>	21%	19%	20%
C	<b>29%</b>	31%	31%	29%
D	<b>15%</b>	15%	13%	14%
F - Failing grade	<b>24%</b>	20%	21%	20%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>7%</b>	6%	9%	13%
Unwt'd N	<b>804</b>	800	800	803

B. Providing property tax relief

<b>TREND:</b>	<b>January 2008</b>	July 2007	September 2006	April 2006
A - Highest grade	<b>6%</b>	8%	5%	5%
B	<b>18%</b>	20%	15%	12%
C	<b>28%</b>	24%	25%	21%
D	<b>14%</b>	16%	14%	15%
F - Failing grade	<b>28%</b>	26%	31%	35%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>5%</b>	6%	9%	13%
Unwt'd N	<b>804</b>	800	800	803

C. Bringing ethics and honesty back to state government

<b>TREND:</b>	<b>January 2008</b>	July 2007	September 2006	April 2006
A - Highest grade	<b>10%</b>	8%	11%	8%
B	<b>25%</b>	26%	25%	27%
C	<b>28%</b>	28%	28%	24%
D	<b>11%</b>	15%	13%	12%
F - Failing grade	<b>20%</b>	18%	15%	17%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>6%</b>	5%	7%	11%
Unwt'd N	<b>804</b>	800	800	803

D. Making New Jersey a more affordable place to live

<b>TREND:</b>	<b>January 2008</b>	July 2007	September 2006	April 2006
A - Highest grade	<b>5%</b>	7%	7%	5%
B	<b>10%</b>	16%	10%	10%
C	<b>20%</b>	20%	24%	23%
D	<b>18%</b>	21%	17%	14%
F - Failing grade	<b>44%</b>	33%	38%	40%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>2%</b>	3%	3%	9%
Unwt'd N	<b>804</b>	800	800	803

E. Improving our schools

<b>TREND:</b>	<b>January 2008</b>	July 2007	September 2006	April 2006
A - Highest grade	<b>6%</b>	7%	10%	8%
B	<b>25%</b>	26%	21%	19%
C	<b>28%</b>	31%	30%	28%
D	<b>14%</b>	12%	15%	14%
F - Failing grade	<b>18%</b>	14%	12%	16%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>9%</b>	10%	13%	15%
Unwt'd N	<b>804</b>	800	800	803

3. What grade would you give the governor for the level of effort he puts into working for New Jersey?

TREND:	January 2008	July 2007	September 2006	April 2006
A - Highest grade	<b>18%</b>	18%	22%	16%
B	<b>30%</b>	33%	28%	26%
C	<b>27%</b>	27%	27%	29%
D	<b>9%</b>	9%	9%	11%
F - Failing grade	<b>12%</b>	9%	8%	11%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>4%</b>	4%	5%	8%
Unwtd N	<b>804</b>	800	800	803

4. How much have you heard about the bill passed this week that changes New Jersey's school funding formula, that is the way the state provides aid to local school districts – have you heard a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb
A lot	<b>12%</b>	14%	3%	13%	12%	14%	11%	12%	11%
A little	<b>35%</b>	37%	24%	36%	35%	31%	36%	36%	33%
Nothing at all	<b>51%</b>	47%	72%	48%	53%	51%	53%	48%	54%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>2%</b>	3%	0%	3%	1%	4%	0%	4%	2%
Unwtd N	<b>804</b>	698	106	243	328	187	137	295	344

5. The new school funding formula will increase the state education budget by about \$500 million. It will also increase the amount of state aid given to a number of suburban districts while many urban districts will receive small or no increases over the next few years. In general, does this sound like a good or bad idea to you?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb
Good idea	<b>37%</b>	36%	41%	39%	37%	34%	39%	34%	36%
Bad idea	<b>45%</b>	45%	46%	38%	48%	52%	42%	47%	45%
(VOL) Mixed	<b>6%</b>	7%	5%	9%	4%	5%	5%	7%	7%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>12%</b>	13%	8%	14%	11%	9%	14%	12%	11%
Unwtd N	<b>804</b>	698	106	243	328	187	137	295	344

6. The new formula establishes adequate funding levels for each district. Any funding a district receives over that level is supposed to be returned to residents in the form of property tax relief. Do you think you are likely or unlikely to see a reduction in your local property taxes from this new school funding plan?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb
Likely	<b>16%</b>	15%	19%	21%	12%	13%	20%	15%	12%
Unlikely	<b>76%</b>	76%	71%	71%	81%	78%	71%	77%	80%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>8%</b>	8%	10%	8%	7%	9%	9%	9%	8%
Unwtd N	<b>804</b>	698	106	243	328	187	137	295	344

7. The Corzine administration proposed the new formula last month and the legislature voted on it in the final weeks of its session. Do you think that the legislature had enough time to consider this plan, or not?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb
Yes	<b>27%</b>	27%	26%	26%	27%	25%	24%	27%	29%
No	<b>56%</b>	56%	56%	61%	54%	58%	56%	57%	55%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>17%</b>	17%	18%	12%	18%	17%	20%	17%	16%
Unwtd N	<b>804</b>	698	106	243	328	187	137	295	344

8. [ASKED OF THOSE WHO SAID "NOT ENOUGH TIME":] And overall, is that a good thing or bad thing?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COMMUNITY TYPE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Urban	Stable town	Expanding suburb
Good thing	<b>9%</b>	7%	18%	12%	8%	3%	7%	8%	7%
Bad thing	<b>83%</b>	84%	78%	78%	83%	92%	87%	82%	84%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>8%</b>	9%	4%	10%	9%	5%	7%	10%	9%
Unwtd N	<b>447</b>	389	58	145	174	107	80	156	194

The *Monmouth University/Gannett NJ Poll* was conducted and analyzed by the Monmouth University Polling Institute research staff. The telephone interviews were collected by Braun Research on January 9-13, 2008 with a statewide random sample of 804 adult residents. 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.

*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 which affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.*

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