

Contact:

PATRICK MURRAY

732-263-5858 (office)

732-979-6769 (cell)

pdmurray@monmouth.edu

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

400 Cedar Avenue

West Long Branch, NJ 07764

www.monmouth.edu/polling

EMBARGOED to:

Sunday, January 20, 2008, 5:00 am

LAUTENBERG: TIME FOR SOMEONE NEW, BUT WHO?

Senator still seen as strong voice for the state

New Jersey voters have mixed views of Senator Frank Lautenberg's bid for re-election this year, according to the latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll*. On the one hand, more voters approve than disapprove of the job he is doing and most say he is a strong voice for the state. On the other hand, most voters feel it is time for someone else to take his seat, although it doesn't appear that the senator's age plays a decisive role in this sentiment.

Overall, 43% of registered voters in the Garden State approve of the job Frank Lautenberg is doing in the United States Senate. Another 28% disapprove and 30% have no opinion. Democrats approve of his job performance by a 56% to 16% margin, independents split 37% approve to 33% disapprove, and Republicans are largely negative – 31% approve to 43% disapprove.

By comparison, Lautenberg is doing slightly better than New Jersey's junior senator Bob Menendez, who receives a 37% approve to 25% disapprove job performance rating from the state's voters, with another 37% having no opinion. Democrats approve of Menendez's job performance by a 49% to 13% margin, independents split 32% approve to 30% disapprove and Republicans, are largely negative – 29% approve to 41% disapprove.

Turning to the state's House of Representatives delegation, New Jersey voters tend to like their own member of Congress – 55% approve of the job their local representative is doing versus 19% who disapprove and 26% who have no opinion.

“Right now, the state's House delegation stands in better stead than its two U.S. senators,” commented Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

“Lautenberg is seen as a strong voice for the state, but it’s not clear that New Jersey voters really want to give him another six years.”

By a margin of 51% to 31% New Jersey voters agree that Frank Lautenberg has been a strong voice for the state. They are more divided about his political ideology, though. When asked whether Lautenberg’s political views are in line with most New Jerseyans, 41% agree compared to 34% who disagree.

The poll also found that most voters don’t feel that the senator’s age is getting in the way of his job performance. A majority (51%) disagree that Lautenberg is getting too old to be an effective senator, while 34% agree with this statement.

Despite his strong voice on behalf of the state, nearly 6-in-10 (58%) voters feel that it is time to have someone else in the U.S. Senate. Only 19% feel that Lautenberg should be re-elected. Another 22% have no opinion. Democrats (50%), independents (59%), and Republicans (76%) alike feel that it is time for someone new.

“Considering that even Democrats would prefer a fresh face in the Senate, there are probably many reasons voters feel it is time for a change, but Lautenberg’s age does not seem to be the deciding factor,” said Murray.

Among those voters who say that it is time for someone new in Lautenberg’s seat, 51% say he is too old to be an effective senator, but 39% feel age is not a factor in his performance and 10% have no opinion.

Murray added, “Of course, the alternative has to be palatable to the voters, and right now the Republican field does not seem to be particularly strong when pitted head-to-head with Lautenberg.”

In a hypothetical election match-up between the Democratic senator and two potential Republican challengers, Lautenberg leads state legislator Joe Pennacchio by 40% to 25% and businesswoman Anne Evans Estabrook by a similar 38% to 24%. [*Editor’s note: Murray Sabrin announced his bid for the Republican nomination after this poll went into the field.*]

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 698 New Jersey registered voters from January 9 to 13, 2008. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.7 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).

Methodological note on poll questions about Lautenberg's age:

Other polls have shown Lautenberg's age to be an issue with voters. Those polls have specified his age in the context of serving another six years in office. For example:

Quinnipiac, 9/25/07: "At age 83, do you think Frank Lautenberg is too old to effectively serve another six year term, or not?" 54% Yes

Eagleton, 8/16/07: "If Lautenberg wins re-election next year, he will be 84 at the start of his next six-year term. Given his age, will he be able to represent New Jersey effectively, or not?" 61% No

Eagleton, 8/16/07: "If Lautenberg wins re-election next year, he will be 90 at the end of his next six-year term. Given his age, will he be able to represent New Jersey effectively, or not?" 64% No

The Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll made a decision not to mention his specific age so that the poll results would reflect current voter perception of what his age may be. Of course, if, as most observers expect, Senator Lautenberg's actual age becomes more widely discussed in the context of the upcoming campaign, one may expect public opinion to be more malleable on this issue.

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 Frank Lautenberg is doing as United States Senator?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 or over
Approve	43%	56%	37%	31%	44%	42%	45%	39%	45%
Disapprove	28%	16%	33%	43%	33%	23%	21%	30%	31%
(VOL) Don't know	30%	28%	30%	26%	23%	36%	34%	32%	24%
Unwtd N	698	212	286	168	336	362	141	297	252

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

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 or over
Approve	37%	49%	32%	29%	36%	38%	34%	34%	43%
Disapprove	25%	13%	30%	41%	32%	19%	25%	28%	23%
(VOL) Don't know	37%	38%	37%	30%	31%	43%	41%	37%	34%
Unwtd N	698	212	286	168	336	362	141	297	252

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the job your local member of Congress is doing?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 or over
Approve	55%	60%	52%	56%	53%	56%	51%	58%	55%
Disapprove	19%	13%	22%	27%	23%	16%	22%	16%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	26%	27%	26%	17%	24%	28%	27%	26%	24%
Unwtd N	698	212	286	168	336	362	141	297	252

4. Looking ahead to this year's election for United States Senator, do you think that Frank Lautenberg should be re-elected, or do you think that it is time to have someone else in office?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 or over
Re-elected	19%	29%	18%	11%	23%	17%	23%	13%	25%
Someone else	58%	50%	59%	76%	61%	56%	49%	67%	57%
(VOL) Don't know	22%	22%	23%	12%	17%	27%	28%	20%	19%
Unwtd N	698	212	286	168	336	362	141	297	252

[NOTE: The following question was asked of a random sub-sample: moe=+/-4.9%]

5. If the election for Senator was held today, would you vote for Frank Lautenberg the Democrat or state legislator Joe Pennacchio the Republican?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Lautenberg	40%	65%	39%	9%
Pennacchio	25%	12%	26%	52%
(VOL) Other candidate	7%	4%	8%	9%
(VOL) Undecided	28%	20%	27%	30%
Unwtd N	400	134	153	97

[NOTE: The following question was asked of a random sub-sample: moe=+/-5.7%]

6. If the election for Senator was held today, would you vote for Frank Lautenberg the Democrat or businesswoman Anne Estabrook the Republican?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Lautenberg	38%	61%	32%	18%
Estabrook	24%	3%	25%	62%
(VOL) Other candidate	4%	5%	6%	2%
(VOL) Undecided	34%	31%	37%	17%
Unwtd N	298	78	133	71

7. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Senator Lautenberg?

A. Frank Lautenberg has been a strong voice for New Jersey.

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER			AGE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 or over	
Agree	51%	63%	50%	33%	50%	52%	46%	46%	62%	
Disagree	31%	17%	35%	53%	37%	27%	30%	39%	23%	
(VOL) Don't know	18%	20%	15%	14%	14%	21%	23%	15%	14%	
Unwtd N	698	212	286	168	336	362	141	297	252	

B. Frank Lautenberg's political views are in line with most New Jerseyans.

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER			AGE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 or over	
Agree	41%	50%	35%	33%	45%	37%	41%	35%	46%	
Disagree	34%	21%	40%	49%	36%	32%	30%	42%	28%	
(VOL) Don't know	26%	29%	24%	18%	19%	31%	29%	23%	26%	
Unwtd N	698	212	286	168	336	362	141	297	252	

C. Frank Lautenberg is getting too old to be an effective Senator.

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER			AGE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 or over	
Agree	34%	24%	39%	47%	40%	29%	27%	37%	37%	
Disagree	51%	58%	50%	39%	50%	51%	57%	47%	50%	
(VOL) Don't know	15%	18%	11%	13%	11%	19%	15%	16%	13%	
Unwtd N	698	212	286	168	336	362	141	297	252	

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 698 registered voters. 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.

###