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NEW JERSEY: OBAMA RATINGS UP

Sen. Booker - high job ratings, but not ready for VP

West Long Branch, N.J. – Pres. Obama has reversed his downward slide in Garden State public opinion and both of New Jersey’s U.S. Senators enjoy positive job approval ratings in the latest *Monmouth University Poll*. While a majority give junior Sen. Cory Booker thumbs up on his performance so far, they feel he may be a bit too junior to start eyeing his party’s vice presidential slot.

Senior senator Bob Menendez garners a 48% approve to 26% disapprove rating among all New Jersey residents and a 49% approve to 27% disapprove rating among registered voters. This marks a slight improvement over his September 2014 voter rating of 45% approve to 30% disapprove.

Cory Booker earns a solid 51% approve to 21% disapprove rating among all Garden State residents and an identical 51% approve to 21% disapprove rating among registered voters. This is an improvement from his September voter ratings of 42% approve to 23% disapprove when he was running for election to his first full term. It also marks the first time his job approval rating has topped 50% since he took office in late 2013.

There has been some buzz about Booker being considered as a potential running mate for Hillary Clinton should she be the Democrats’ presidential nominee in 2016. While most New Jerseyans are satisfied with Booker’s job performance so far, few feel that he has enough experience under his belt to step into the role of Vice President. Just 32% of New Jerseyans say Booker has enough experience to be next in line to the president, while 53% say he does not. Among registered voters, 30% say he has enough experience to be Vice President and 59% say he does not.

“Cory Booker may be settling in well in as U.S. Senator, but his current employers –New Jersey voters – do not think he’s ready for a promotion just yet,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, N.J.

Turning to opinion of the current president, 55% of New Jersey adults now approve of the job Barack Obama is doing and 41% disapprove. Among registered voters in the Garden State, 54% approve compared to 42% who disapprove. This marks a reversal of previously declining views of the president. In September, he received a career low 41% approve to 54% disapprove rating among the state's voters. The partisan breakdown of Obama's current rating is 82% approve to 14% disapprove among New Jersey Democrats, 45% approve to 49% disapprove among independents, and 22% approve to 73% disapprove among Republicans. Obama has seen his approval ratings increase by 10 points among Democrats, 6 points among independents, and 15 points among Republicans since the fall.

"This marks a significant turnaround. The president's approval ratings may have been boosted by his forceful State of the Union speech which focused on measures to help the middle class. This is an area where his past performance has been particularly weak in the public's mind," said Murray.

Nearly 6-in-10 (59%) Garden State residents believe Pres. Obama when he says he wants to focus the remainder of his term helping the middle class compared to 38% who do not believe this claim. The *Monmouth University Poll* finds he has some work to do, though, before the middle class benefits as much from Obama's policies as other segments of society have.

Just 17% of New Jerseyans say that middle class families have benefitted a lot from Obama's policies, 45% say they have benefitted a little, and 37% say they have not benefitted at all. The number who say the middle class has been helped a lot by Obama is up by 8 points since 2011, while the percentage saying the middle class has not been helped at all is down 7 points.

The middle class continues to be seen as the group least likely to have benefited from Obama's policies. One-third (34%) say wealthy families have benefited a lot, 32% say they have benefited a little, and 27% say they have not benefited at all. These findings are nearly identical to the 2011 poll results. Similarly, 33% of New Jerseyans say that poor families have gained a lot of benefit, 41% a little benefit, and 24% no benefit. The number saying poor families have received a lot of benefit from Obama's policies is up from 19% who said the same in 2011.

Wall Street bankers and health insurance companies are most likely to be seen as benefitting from the president's policies. Thirty-seven percent of New Jerseyans say Wall Street has seen a lot of benefit, 33% a little, and 18% none. The number saying Wall Street has seen a lot of benefit is down, though, from 49% in 2011. Health insurers seem to be doing best, with nearly half (47%) saying they have benefitted a lot from Obama's policies, 30% saying they have benefitted some, and 18% saying they have not benefitted at all. In 2011 – before the Affordable Care Act was implemented – fewer New Jerseyans (36%) said health insurance companies enjoyed a lot of benefit from White House policies.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone with 805 New Jersey adults, including 712 registered voters, from January 30 to February 2, 2015. The total sample has a margin of

error of ± 3.5 percent and the registered voter sample has a margin of error of ± 3.7 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

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 Barack Obama is doing as president?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Approve	55%	54%	59%	82%	45%	22%	51%	58%	66%	53%	48%	41%	85%	75%
Disapprove	41%	42%	34%	14%	49%	73%	45%	37%	28%	42%	49%	53%	10%	24%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	4%	8%	3%	6%	4%	4%	5%	6%	5%	3%	6%	5%	2%

TREND: Registered Voters - Second Term	Feb. 2015	Sept. 2014	June 2014	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Jan. 2014	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013
Approve	54%	41%	45%	49%	49%	44%	47%	50%	55%	60%
Disapprove	42%	54%	51%	47%	47%	50%	47%	41%	42%	33%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	5%	4%	3%	5%	6%	6%	8%	2%	7%
Unwtd N	712	680	717	690	690	470	698	674	694	697

TREND: Registered voters - First Term	Dec. 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	Sept. 2010	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010	Oct. 2009	July 2009
Approve	58%	54%	51%	47%	52%	60%	47%	51%	54%	53%	54%	59%
Disapprove	35%	41%	42%	46%	39%	36%	44%	42%	41%	38%	33%	29%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	5%	6%	7%	9%	4%	9%	6%	5%	9%	14%	12%
Unwtd N	726	692	709	693	730	725	726	747	719	716	785	792

[QUESTIONS 2 AND 3 WERE ROTATED]

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

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Approve	48%	49%	41%	61%	40%	41%	46%	49%	47%	48%	48%	42%	59%	60%
Disapprove	26%	27%	22%	14%	34%	34%	31%	21%	23%	26%	29%	31%	15%	19%
(VOL) Don't know	26%	24%	37%	25%	27%	25%	23%	30%	30%	26%	23%	27%	26%	20%

TREND: Registered voters only	Feb. 2015	Sept. 2014	June 2014	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Dec. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	July 2010	Oct. 2008	April 2008	Jan. 2008
Approve	49%	45%	47%	51%	49%	47%	44%	41%	40%	41%	43%	38%	46%	38%	34%	41%	37%
Disapprove	27%	30%	34%	31%	30%	27%	38%	31%	25%	26%	29%	33%	28%	33%	25%	31%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	24%	26%	19%	18%	21%	26%	18%	28%	35%	33%	28%	29%	26%	29%	41%	28%	37%
Unwtd N	712	680	717	690	690	698	694	697	692	709	693	730	725	747	900	720	698

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Cory Booker is doing as United States Senator?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Approve	51%	51%	49%	67%	44%	39%	47%	54%	57%	48%	49%	44%	71%	63%
Disapprove	21%	21%	17%	8%	27%	33%	26%	16%	16%	24%	21%	24%	9%	17%
(VOL) Don't know	29%	27%	33%	26%	29%	28%	27%	30%	27%	28%	30%	31%	19%	20%

TREND: Registered voters only	Feb. 2015	Sept. 2014	June 2014	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Dec. 2013
Approve	51%	42%	48%	47%	47%	37%
Disapprove	21%	23%	25%	23%	20%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	27%	35%	27%	30%	32%	43%
Unwtd N	712	680	717	690	690	698

4. Cory Booker's name has been mentioned as a possible vice presidential running mate on the Democratic ticket in 2016. Do you think he has enough experience or not enough experience to be Vice President?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Has enough experience	32%	30%	39%	42%	27%	22%	30%	33%	42%	31%	24%	28%	42%	40%
Does not have enough experience	53%	59%	30%	40%	59%	71%	58%	48%	39%	53%	65%	60%	48%	40%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	11%	31%	18%	14%	7%	11%	19%	19%	16%	11%	12%	10%	21%

5. Turning to the current president. How much have each of the following groups benefited from President Obama's policies. [READ ITEM] – Have they benefited a lot, a little, or not at all? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]

Middle class families

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Lot	17%	15%	25%	31%	10%	7%	17%	17%	24%	17%	12%	14%	29%	21%
Little	45%	44%	48%	51%	42%	36%	41%	48%	45%	42%	47%	40%	56%	55%
Not at all	37%	39%	26%	16%	47%	57%	41%	33%	29%	40%	39%	45%	12%	24%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%	0%

Wealthy families

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Lot	34%	33%	40%	40%	33%	23%	37%	32%	27%	37%	37%	30%	42%	45%
Little	32%	34%	22%	36%	31%	27%	28%	35%	34%	30%	31%	32%	28%	37%
Not at all	27%	27%	25%	18%	25%	47%	28%	25%	32%	25%	25%	31%	23%	12%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	6%	12%	6%	11%	3%	7%	8%	7%	8%	7%	7%	7%	6%

Poor families

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Lot	33%	33%	35%	40%	24%	41%	31%	35%	37%	33%	29%	31%	38%	29%
Little	41%	41%	41%	43%	44%	32%	43%	39%	45%	37%	44%	41%	44%	44%
Not at all	24%	24%	23%	15%	29%	26%	24%	23%	17%	28%	24%	25%	16%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%	3%	2%	1%	4%	3%	1%	2%

Wall Street bankers

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Lot	37%	39%	30%	39%	42%	23%	42%	33%	25%	41%	44%	35%	45%	44%
Little	33%	32%	38%	32%	32%	40%	34%	33%	43%	29%	30%	32%	35%	40%
Not at all	18%	19%	15%	17%	16%	27%	17%	19%	24%	17%	14%	21%	10%	9%
(VOL) Don't know	11%	10%	17%	12%	10%	10%	7%	15%	7%	13%	13%	12%	10%	7%

Health insurance companies

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Lot	47%	49%	38%	49%	48%	43%	54%	41%	36%	53%	48%	47%	59%	43%
Little	30%	28%	41%	37%	26%	22%	28%	33%	42%	27%	24%	25%	26%	51%
Not at all	18%	18%	16%	11%	20%	27%	15%	20%	19%	17%	18%	22%	11%	6%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%	8%	4%	6%	3%	3%	9%	7%	4%	0%

TREND:	Middle class families			Wealthy families			Poor families			Wall Street bankers			Health insurance companies		
	Feb. 2015	Oct. 2011	Feb. 2010	Feb. 2015	Oct. 2011	Feb. 2010	Feb. 2015	Oct. 2011	Feb. 2010	Feb. 2015	Oct. 2011	Feb. 2010	Feb. 2015	Oct. 2011	Feb. 2010
Lot	17%	9%	9%	34%	33%	20%	33%	19%	17%	37%	49%	51%	47%	36%	33%
Little	45%	43%	43%	32%	32%	25%	41%	43%	43%	33%	25%	21%	30%	29%	30%
Not at all	37%	44%	43%	27%	26%	38%	24%	34%	33%	18%	15%	19%	18%	25%	26%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	3%	4%	8%	9%	16%	2%	4%	7%	11%	11%	9%	5%	10%	12%
Unwtd N	805	817	803	805	817	803	805	817	803	805	817	803	805	817	803

6. Do you generally believe or not believe President Obama when he says he wants to focus the remainder of his term on helping the middle class?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Believe	59%	57%	64%	82%	48%	34%	56%	62%	71%	55%	53%	49%	88%	72%
Not believe	38%	39%	34%	14%	48%	65%	42%	35%	27%	41%	45%	48%	9%	24%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	3%	1%	3%	3%	1%	2%	4%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from January 30 to February 2, 2015 with a statewide random sample of 805 adult residents, including 605 contacted via live interview on a landline telephone and 200 via live interview on a cell phone, in English. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). For results based on this 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 (unadjusted for sample design). 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 (weighted)			
38% Dem	49% Male	28% 18-34	64% White
43% Ind	51% Female	39% 35-54	12% Black
19% Rep		33% 55+	15% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other
Registered Voter Sample (weighted)			
38% Dem	49% Male	24% 18-34	70% White
41% Ind	51% Female	40% 35-54	13% Black
21% Rep		37% 55+	11% Hispanic
			5% Asian/Other

	MARGIN OF ERROR													
	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Unweighted N	805	712	93	283	342	162	387	418	155	235	411	605	102	49
moe	3.5%	3.7%	10.2%	5.8%	5.3%	7.7%	5.0%	4.8%	7.9%	6.4%	4.8%	4.0%	9.7%	14%

It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect them. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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