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GOV. CHRISTIE STILL RIDING HIGH

Minimum wage veto does not impact his standing

Governor Chris Christie maintains his high post-Sandy ratings, with more than 6-in-10 New Jersey voters saying they are ready to re-up him for a second term. The latest ***Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll*** also finds widespread support for raising the state's minimum wage, but Gov. Christie's veto does not seem to be a liability for his re-election prospects.

Currently, Gov. Christie earns a 70% approve to 17% disapprove job rating among all Garden State residents. Among registered voters, his rating stands at 70% approve to 16% disapprove. In December, his job approval rating was 67% among all residents and 69% among voters. He continues to draw majority job approval ratings from the state's Democrats (58%) and public employees (60%) in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy.

More than 6-in-10 (63%) registered voters say that Gov. Christie deserves a second term, similar to his December support (61%) and higher than in September (50%). Three-in-ten (29%) say it is time to put someone else in office and 8% are not sure whether the governor merits re-election. In a head-to-head contest with the presumptive Democratic nominee, State Senator Barbara Buono, Christie garners 62% of intended support from registered voters while Buono claims 20%.

"There is a long history that shows horse race polling has little predictive value this far out from an election. This is especially true when there is a popular incumbent and a largely unknown challenger. The important number here is that 6-in-10 voters support Gov. Christie's re-election," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. "This suggests that the race should close in on a 20 point margin as the campaign progresses and Buono becomes better known. The question remains whether the challenger can peel off Christie supporters to shrink that gap even more."

While Sen. Buono officially kicked off her campaign earlier this month, more than 3-in-4 Garden State voters (78%) do not know enough about her to form an opinion. Among those who do, Buono earns a 13% favorable to 9% unfavorable rating. This is not much different from the 11% favorable to 7% unfavorable rating she received back in September. It's worth noting that the highest ranking woman in New Jersey politics is only slightly better known. Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno receives a 25% favorable to 7% unfavorable rating from registered voters after three years in office, while 68% do not know enough about her to form an opinion. By contrast, Gov. Christie earns a whopping 71% favorable to 18% unfavorable rating from registered voters.

Sen. Buono's ability to cut into Gov. Christie's support will depend on which issues she can use to motivate the electorate. The poll indicates that Garden State voters are most concerned about jobs, which 88% say will be very important to their vote for governor this year. Three-in-four voters also say that property taxes (78%) and schools (75%) will be very important to their vote. Storm recovery (70%) and gun control (67%) will be very important considerations for 2-in-3 voters.

It should be noted that schools and gun control are more likely to be base issues than pivotal among independent voters, based on partisan differences in the level of importance. For schools, 82% of Democrats say this is very important compared to 70% of independents and 70% of Republicans. For gun control, 79% of Democrats say this is very important to their vote choice, compared to 62% of independents and 56% of Republicans who say the same.

Just under 6-in-10 voters say that funding for women's health clinics (58%) and the minimum wage (54%) will be very important to their vote. Only 36% of New Jersey voters say climate change will be one of the most important considerations when casting their ballot for governor. These issues would probably motivate the base much more than independent swing voters. Democrats are 20 to 30 percentage points more likely than independents and Republicans to say they will heavily weight any of these issues in their ultimate vote choice.

The minimum wage provides one example of the difficulties faced by any challenger in this year's gubernatorial race. Gov. Christie recently vetoed, albeit conditionally, legislation to raise the state's minimum wage. About 6-in-10 voters are aware of the veto, although only 15% have heard a lot about it, with 46% hearing just a little. Just 1-in-5 voters (21%) say they are satisfied with Gov. Christie's veto decision compared to 33% who are dissatisfied with it. Another 37% say they are not particularly satisfied but can live with it and 9% offer no opinion. Among those who have heard a lot about the veto, 31% are satisfied, 46% are dissatisfied, and 23% can live with it.

When asked about their own level of support if the legislature decides to put the minimum wage on the ballot in November, 66% of New Jersey voters say they would support it. Another 14% are

opposed and 20% are not sure how they would vote. Support comes from 81% of Democrats, 60% of independents and 56% of Republicans.

“There seems to be a disconnect between Gov. Christie’s actions and voter preferences on the minimum wage. However, this particular issue is not all that salient to voters’ decision about the governor’s race, regardless of their support for increasing the minimum wage,” said Murray.

Monmouth polling staff attempted to identify voters who could potentially be motivated to switch support from the incumbent because of this issue. This group includes voters who: feel Gov. Christie deserves re-election, are dissatisfied with his veto, say they will vote to support a minimum wage ballot measure, *and* report that the issue is very important to their vote for governor. Analysis shows that this group comprises about 7% of the total electorate. Hypothetically, if Sen. Buono were able to convince all of these voters to abandon their support for Christie, his re-election support would remain above the 50% mark.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by telephone with 803 New Jersey adults from February 6 to 10, 2013. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the Asbury Park Press and its sister publications (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 Chris Christie is doing as governor?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Approve	70%	70%	66%	58%	71%	88%	69%	70%	60%	72%
Disapprove	17%	16%	20%	26%	14%	7%	18%	16%	23%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	14%	13%	14%	16%	15%	5%	13%	14%	17%	13%

TREND: <i>All adults</i>	Feb. 2013	Dec. 2012	Sept. 2012	July 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	Feb. 2011	Sept. 2010	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010
Approve	70%	67%	53%	52%	51%	52%	54%	48%	47%	47%	45%	44%	41%	33%
Disapprove	17%	21%	35%	36%	35%	38%	38%	42%	49%	40%	38%	44%	44%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	14%	12%	11%	12%	14%	10%	9%	9%	5%	12%	17%	12%	15%	52%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	803	816	805	803	804	803	817	802	807	801	801	801	804	803

TREND: <i>Registered voters</i>	Feb. 2013	Dec. 2012	Sept. 2012	July 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	Feb. 2011	Sept. 2010	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010
Approve	70%	69%	55%	53%	50%	55%	55%	50%	46%	49%	44%	45%	42%	31%
Disapprove	16%	22%	36%	35%	38%	37%	37%	41%	49%	41%	40%	43%	44%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	13%	9%	10%	12%	12%	9%	8%	8%	5%	9%	16%	12%	13%	53%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	697	726	715	678	692	709	693	730	725	718	726	747	719	716

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the state legislature is doing?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER			PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No	
Approve	41%	40%	48%	50%	32%	45%	41%	42%	38%	43%	
Disapprove	33%	35%	26%	30%	38%	31%	36%	31%	35%	32%	
(VOL) Don't know	26%	25%	26%	20%	30%	23%	24%	28%	27%	25%	

TREND: All Adults	Feb. 2013	Dec. 2012	Sept. 2012	July 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	Feb. 2011	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010	July 2009	Feb. 2009	Sept. 2008	July 2008	April 2008	March 2008	Oct. 2007	Feb. 2007
Approve	41%	44%	32%	35%	38%	35%	35%	35%	33%	30%	24%	20%	26%	30%	25%	29%	27%	29%	28%	33%	35%
Disapprove	33%	33%	42%	43%	38%	39%	43%	47%	47%	44%	49%	56%	46%	47%	52%	47%	45%	53%	50%	41%	40%
(VOL) Don't know	26%	23%	26%	22%	24%	26%	22%	19%	20%	26%	27%	24%	28%	23%	23%	23%	28%	18%	22%	26%	25%
Unwtd N	803	816	805	803	804	803	817	802	807	801	801	804	803	923	803	808	1004	803	805	801	801

TREND: Registered Voters	Feb. 2013	Dec. 2012	Sept. 2012	July 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	Feb. 2011	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010	July 2009	Feb. 2009	Sept. 2008	July 2008	April 2008	March 2008	Oct. 2007	Feb. 2007
Approve	40%	43%	32%	34%	37%	34%	33%	35%	32%	29%	25%	19%	24%	31%	23%	29%	27%	28%	25%	32%	34%
Disapprove	35%	34%	43%	45%	41%	42%	45%	48%	48%	45%	49%	57%	49%	48%	55%	50%	47%	55%	53%	43%	42%
(VOL) Don't know	25%	22%	25%	21%	23%	24%	22%	17%	20%	26%	26%	24%	27%	22%	22%	21%	26%	17%	22%	25%	23%
Unwtd N	697	726	715	678	692	709	693	730	725	718	747	719	716	792	721	709	889	720	719	688	681

3. I'm going to read you a few names. Please tell me if your general impression of each is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion. [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

Governor Chris Christie

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER			PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No	
Favorable	70%	71%	65%	58%	72%	90%	72%	69%	60%	73%	
Unfavorable	19%	18%	20%	28%	17%	7%	20%	17%	29%	16%	
No opinion	11%	10%	15%	13%	11%	3%	8%	14%	11%	11%	

TREND: Registered voters only:	February 2013	September 2012
Favorable	71%	54%
Unfavorable	18%	34%
No opinion	10%	13%
Unwtd N	697	715

Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER			PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No	
Favorable	23%	25%	16%	18%	25%	32%	27%	20%	21%	23%	
Unfavorable	7%	7%	5%	9%	5%	7%	7%	7%	10%	6%	
No opinion	70%	68%	79%	73%	71%	61%	67%	72%	69%	71%	

TREND: Registered voters only	February 2013	September 2012	October 2011
Favorable	25%	21%	10%
Unfavorable	7%	11%	5%
No opinion	68%	67%	85%
Unwtd N	697	715	693

State Senator Barbara Buono

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER			PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No	
Favorable	14%	13%	19%	20%	11%	12%	17%	11%	18%	13%	
Unfavorable	8%	9%	4%	5%	9%	13%	9%	7%	7%	8%	
No opinion	78%	78%	76%	76%	81%	76%	74%	82%	76%	79%	

TREND: Registered voters only:	February 2013	September 2012
Favorable	13%	11%
Unfavorable	9%	7%
No opinion	78%	82%
Unwtd N	697	715

4. Looking ahead to next year's election for Governor, do you think that Chris Christie should be re-elected, or do you think that it is time to have someone else in office?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Should be re-elected	62%	63%	57%	41%	68%	86%	65%	59%	50%	65%
Time for someone else	29%	29%	29%	49%	21%	12%	28%	31%	41%	26%
(VOL) Don't know	9%	8%	14%	10%	11%	3%	8%	11%	9%	9%

TREND:	February 2013	December 2012	September 2012
Should be re-elected	62%	60%	48%
Time for someone else	29%	29%	45%
(VOL) Don't know	9%	11%	7%
Unwtd N	803	816	805

TREND: Registered voters only	February 2013	December 2012	September 2012
Should be re-elected	63%	61%	50%
Time for someone else	29%	29%	45%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	10%	5%
Unwtd N	697	726	715

[THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY: moe=+/-3.7%]

5. If the election for New Jersey Governor were today, would you vote for Chris Christie the Republican, or Barbara Buono the Democrat, or some other candidate? [IF UNDECIDED: At this moment, do you lean more towards Christie or more towards Buono?] [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

(with leaners)	Registered Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Christie	62%	35%	73%	87%	66%	59%	45%	68%
Buono	20%	42%	9%	5%	19%	21%	30%	16%
Other candidate	6%	7%	7%	2%	5%	6%	9%	5%
(VOL) Undecided	12%	15%	12%	6%	10%	14%	15%	11%

6. How important will the following issues be to you in your vote for governor this year? [READ ITEM] – very important, somewhat important, or not important? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]

Property taxes

	Registered Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Very important	78%	74%	82%	80%	76%	80%	79%	78%
Somewhat important	17%	18%	14%	17%	17%	16%	17%	17%
Not important	4%	7%	4%	3%	6%	4%	3%	5%
(VOL) Don't Know	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%

Jobs

	Registered Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Very important	88%	89%	87%	89%	84%	92%	89%	88%
Somewhat important	8%	8%	8%	8%	10%	6%	6%	9%
Not important	3%	2%	4%	3%	5%	1%	5%	3%
(VOL) Don't Know	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%

Schools

	Registered Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Very important	75%	82%	70%	70%	67%	82%	78%	74%
Somewhat important	19%	13%	25%	21%	25%	14%	16%	20%
Not important	5%	5%	4%	8%	7%	3%	4%	5%
(VOL) Don't Know	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Climate change

	Registered	PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
	Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Very important	36%	51%	30%	19%	33%	40%	39%	36%
Somewhat important	30%	27%	33%	32%	31%	30%	27%	31%
Not important	29%	16%	34%	42%	33%	25%	28%	29%
(VOL) Don't Know	5%	5%	3%	7%	4%	6%	5%	5%

Minimum wage

	Registered	PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
	Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Very important	54%	72%	43%	39%	44%	62%	56%	52%
Somewhat important	29%	19%	35%	36%	30%	28%	31%	29%
Not important	16%	8%	21%	23%	25%	9%	12%	18%
(VOL) Don't Know	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Funding for women's health clinics

	Registered	PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
	Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Very important	58%	77%	47%	43%	45%	69%	62%	56%
Somewhat important	27%	17%	33%	33%	35%	20%	25%	27%
Not important	14%	5%	17%	23%	19%	9%	11%	15%
(VOL) Don't Know	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%

Gun control

	Registered	PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
	Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Very important	67%	79%	62%	56%	58%	75%	70%	67%
Somewhat important	16%	13%	18%	16%	19%	12%	12%	16%
Not important	14%	6%	19%	22%	19%	10%	12%	15%
(VOL) Don't Know	3%	3%	1%	6%	3%	2%	6%	2%

Storm recovery

	Registered	PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
	Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Very important	70%	71%	65%	74%	63%	76%	69%	70%
Somewhat important	25%	25%	28%	22%	29%	21%	26%	25%
Not important	4%	2%	6%	4%	7%	1%	4%	4%
(VOL) Don't Know	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%

[QUESTIONS 7 AND 8 WERE ROTATED WITH QUESTION 9]

7. Governor Christie recently vetoed a bill to raise the state's minimum wage. How much have you heard or read about this – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	Registered	PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
	Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
A lot	15%	16%	15%	15%	14%	16%	19%	14%
A little	46%	46%	48%	46%	45%	47%	46%	46%
Nothing at all	39%	38%	38%	39%	41%	37%	35%	40%

8. How would you describe your reaction to the governor's veto decision – are you satisfied with it, not particularly satisfied but you can live with it, or are you definitely dissatisfied with it?

	Registered	PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
	Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Satisfied	21%	12%	21%	37%	25%	17%	15%	23%
Can live with it	37%	26%	43%	42%	36%	38%	33%	38%
Dissatisfied	33%	53%	28%	12%	31%	36%	42%	31%
(VOL) Don't Know	9%	8%	8%	9%	8%	9%	10%	8%

9. The legislature may put a measure on the ballot this November to raise the minimum wage to \$8.50 an hour with future annual cost of living increases. If this measure were on the ballot, would you vote for it or against it, or are you not sure?

	Registered	PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
	Voter	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
For	66%	81%	60%	56%	59%	73%	73%	64%
Against	14%	5%	19%	22%	22%	7%	11%	15%
Not sure	20%	14%	21%	22%	18%	20%	16%	20%

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on February 6 to 10, 2013 with a statewide random sample of 803 adult residents, including 603 contacted on a landline telephone and 200 on a cell phone. Live interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. and the telephone sample was obtained from Survey Sampling International. 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 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.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)			
38% Dem	49% Male	28% 18-34	63% White
41% Ind	51% Female	40% 35-54	12% Black
21% Rep		32% 55+	16% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other
Registered Voter Sample (weighted)			
37% Dem	47% Male	21% 18-34	68% White
40% Ind	53% Female	42% 35-54	12% Black
23% Rep		37% 55+	13% Hispanic
			7% Asian/Other

	MARGIN OF ERROR									
	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Unweighted N	803	697	106	292	322	164	387	416	196	601
moe	3.5%	3.7%	9.5%	5.7%	5.5%	7.7%	5.0%	4.8%	7.0%	4.0%

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

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