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GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE TICKS UP

Now stands at +25

In its regular tracking of New Jerseyans' satisfaction with life in their state, the **Monmouth University Poll** found that the current Garden State Quality of Life Index has ticked up another notch to +25. This marks the third consecutive increase in the index.

"We have seen some upward movement in the Garden State Quality of Life Index over the past few months, led by increasingly positive views of towns and schools," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Currently, 2-in-3 residents rate the state of New Jersey as either an excellent (15%) or good (47%) place to live. This 62% positive rating is down slightly from October. However, ratings of residents' own towns stand at 33% excellent and 41% good. The 33% excellent number matches the prior three-decade high for this measure.

Ratings of local schools have ticked up as well, to 26% excellent and 42% good. This 68% positive rating marks an all-time high on this question in polls going back to 1978.

Positive views of other local concerns stayed stable, including ratings of the local environment (77%) and crime (62%).

Examining the Garden State Quality of Life Index across various demographic groups, we currently find women (+30) much more positive than men (+20). There has also been an increase in the state's urban communities, where the index now stands at +11, up from -1 in October. On the other hand, there has been a notable drop in the generally positive Central Hills area of New Jersey (Hunterdon, Somerset and Morris counties), with the score being +35, down from +45.

The Garden State Quality of Life Index was created by the Monmouth University Polling Institute to serve as a resident-based indicator of the quality of life offered by the state of New Jersey. The index is based on five separate poll questions: overall opinion of the state as a place to live – which contributes half the index score – and ratings of one's hometown, the performance of local schools, the quality of the

local environment, and feelings of safety in one’s own neighborhood. The index can potentially range from -100 to +100.

GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX											
	NJ TOTAL	GENDER		AGE			RACE		INCOME		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/ Hispanic	<\$50K	\$50- 100K	>\$100K
February 2012	+25	+20	+30	+25	+24	+26	+29	+13	+17	+23	+38
October 2011	+24	+24	+24	+23	+21	+29	+31	+7	+15	+25	+31
August 2011	+22	+25	+19	+27	+19	+21	+26	+9	+9	+22	+32
May 2011	+23	+24	+22	+23	+22	+23	+26	+14	+15	+22	+32
December 2010	+21	+20	+23	+23	+20	+23	+26	+13	+15	+21	+31

GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX											
	North east	REGION						COMMUNITY TYPE			
		Urban Core	Route 1 Corridor	Central Hills	Northern Shore	Delaware Valley	Garden Core	Urban	Stable Town	Growing Suburb	
February 2012	+33	+17	+27	+35	+29	+19	+22	+11	+31	+29	
October 2011	+31	+6	+22	+45	+35	+18	+23	-1	+31	+34	
August 2011	+24	+16	+21	+38	+27	+26	+6	+4	+29	+25	
May 2011	+28	+17	+16	+41	+29	+22	+20	+6	+29	+28	
December 2010	+26	+15	+22	+38	+23	+14	+17	+12	+23	+27	

The latest *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone with 803 New Jersey adults from January 31 to February 4, 2012. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 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 rows may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Overall, how would you rate New Jersey as a place to live – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
February 2012	15%	47%	26%	11%	1%	(803)
October 2011	15%	52%	24%	8%	0%	(817)
August 2011	14%	43%	31%	11%	1%	(802)
May 2011	14%	45%	29%	11%	0%	(807)
December 2010	17%	46%	26%	10%	1%	(2864)
October 2007	17%	46%	25%	12%	1%	(1001)
August 2004	22%	46%	21%	10%	1%	(800)
May 2003	20%	52%	23%	5%	0%	(1002)
April 2001	23%	53%	19%	4%	1%	(802)
March 2000	25%	51%	17%	6%	0%	(800)
May 1999	22%	54%	19%	5%	0%	(800)
February 1994	18%	53%	22%	7%	0%	(801)
March 1990	21%	47%	25%	6%	1%	(800)
February 1988	27%	51%	17%	4%	1%	(800)
February 1987	31%	53%	11%	4%	0%	(800)
May 1985	29%	52%	14%	3%	1%	(500)
October 1984	29%	51%	15%	4%	1%	(1000)
January 1981	16%	50%	26%	7%	1%	(1003)
July 1980	18%	50%	23%	7%	2%	(1005)

2. How would you rate your town or city as a place to live – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
February 2012	33%	41%	21%	5%	0%	(803)
October 2011	26%	47%	20%	8%	0%	(817)
August 2011	28%	48%	18%	6%	0%	(802)
May 2011	33%	40%	20%	7%	0%	(807)
December 2010	27%	46%	20%	8%	0%	(2864)
May 2003	29%	45%	19%	7%	0%	(1002)
April 2001	28%	45%	21%	6%	0%	(802)
May 1995	30%	40%	21%	8%	0%	(802)
June 1994	31%	41%	19%	9%	0%	(801)
September 1988	26%	46%	18%	9%	1%	(500)
October 1984	30%	41%	21%	7%	1%	(999)
June 1980	23%	44%	24%	9%	0%	(1005)
May 1977	25%	41%	24%	10%	0%	(1005)

[QUESTIONS 3, 4 AND 5 WERE ROTATED]

3. How would you rate the quality of the environment in the area where you live – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
February 2012	29%	48%	17%	5%	0%	(803)
October 2011	25%	47%	19%	9%	0%	(817)
August 2011	31%	48%	16%	5%	0%	(802)
May 2011	33%	46%	15%	6%	0%	(807)
December 2010	14%	52%	25%	9%	0%	(2864)
April 2001	27%	43%	22%	7%	1%	(402)
September 1988	10%	43%	31%	15%	1%	(500)

4. How would you rate the job your local schools are doing – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
February 2012	26%	42%	16%	8%	8%	(803)
October 2011	21%	39%	20%	13%	7%	(817)
August 2011	19%	44%	26%	6%	5%	(802)
May 2011	24%	39%	22%	10%	6%	(807)
December 2010	24%	40%	23%	8%	5%	(2864)
August 2004	24%	37%	17%	12%	9%	(800)
April 2001	21%	43%	21%	6%	9%	(802)
September 1999	18%	44%	21%	9%	8%	(802)
September 1998	20%	42%	23%	9%	7%	(804)
February 1996	20%	40%	20%	11%	9%	(804)
September 1993	16%	36%	29%	14%	5%	(801)
January 1992	15%	38%	26%	15%	5%	(800)
October 1987	14%	46%	23%	6%	11%	(500)
October 1986	15%	40%	26%	10%	9%	(800)
October 1983	16%	43%	23%	10%	8%	(802)
May 1978	12%	40%	25%	12%	11%	(1003)

5. How safe do you feel in your neighborhood at night – very safe, somewhat safe, or not at all safe?

TREND:	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Not at all safe	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
February 2012	62%	32%	5%	0%	(803)
October 2011	62%	31%	7%	0%	(817)
August 2011	63%	31%	6%	0%	(802)
May 2011	68%	27%	5%	0%	(807)
December 2010	59%	35%	6%	0%	(2864)
February 1993	42%	44%	13%	0%	(801)
October 1987	51%	36%	11%	2%	(499)
October 1984	53%	36%	9%	2%	(500)
May 1981	43%	43%	13%	1%	(497)

[Note: All trend results prior to 2005 come from Rutgers University's Eagleton Poll.]

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on January 31 to February 4, 2012 with a statewide random sample of 803 adult residents, including 641 contacted on a landline telephone and 162 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)			
36% Dem	49% Male	29% 18-34	63% White
22% Rep	51% Female	39% 35-54	12% Black
42% Ind		32% 55+	15% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other

Region is defined by county boundaries: Northeast (Bergen, Passaic), Urban Core (Essex, Hudson), Route 1 Corridor (Mercer, Middlesex, Union), Central Hills (Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset), Northern Shore (Monmouth, Ocean), Delaware Valley (Burlington, Camden, Gloucester), and Garden Core (Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Salem, Sussex, Warren).

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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