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NEW JERSEY DIVIDED ON OBAMACARE

But few want to see the law repealed

With the enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act public exchanges having come to a close, New Jersey residents are divided on their views of the law, but few actually want to see it repealed. The ***Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll*** also finds that statewide opinion of Obamacare is slightly more positive than it was during the initial rollout's website glitches and that New Jerseyans appear to be better educated about the law than they were before the exchange went online.

Just under half of New Jersey residents have either a very favorable (19%) or somewhat favorable (26%) opinion of the 2010 health reform law commonly known as Obamacare. A slightly higher number hold either a very unfavorable (32%) or somewhat unfavorable (17%) view. The 45% positive opinion is 5 points higher than the 40% result in December, while the 49% negative view is one point lower than December's 50%. In September, before the health exchanges went online, Garden State opinion was 45% positive to 40% negative.

Compared to national polls, both positive and negative opinion in New Jersey is higher. A Kaiser Health Tracking Poll conducted last month found that 38% of Americans have a favorable opinion of Obamacare – 7 points lower than New Jersey – and 46% have an unfavorable one – 3 points lower than New Jersey. On the other hand, Americans (15%) are more likely than Garden State residents (5%) to be unsure of their view of Obamacare.

“Initial glitches with the website led to an increase in negative opinion which has held since the initial rollout. However, some undecided New Jerseyans have become a little more positive over the past couple of months,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

President Barack Obama's job approval rating in New Jersey has held steady over the past two months after garnering criticism for enrollment problems when his signature policy was implemented.

Garden State opinion of the president currently stands at 51% approve to 44% disapprove among all adults and 49% approve to 47% disapprove among registered voters. These results are unchanged from February.

While just 7% of New Jerseyans say the health reform law is fine just as it is, fewer than 3-in-10 want to repeal it entirely (16%) or replace it with a Republican alternative (12%). Fully 6-in-10 (60%) prefer an approach that would keep the law and work to improve it. The 67% of New Jersey residents who want to keep the health reform law, either as is or with improvements, is 8 percentage points higher than the 59% of American adults who said the same in last month's Kaiser poll. In New Jersey, only Republicans (62%) want to see the law repealed. Far fewer independents (33%) and Democrats (6%) feel the same.

The poll finds that New Jerseyans seem have become more aware of certain aspects of the ACA despite not having a state-run exchange or public information campaign,. Specifically, 73% correctly say that the law requires nearly all Americans to have health insurance or else pay a fine. Awareness of the law's individual mandate is up significantly from the 56% who knew about it back in September. Also, New Jersey awareness levels are now closer to national awareness levels, which stood at 78% in the March 2014 Kaiser poll and have hovered between 74% and 81% over the past year. Overall, 72% of Garden State residents say they understand the health reform law either very (25%) or somewhat (47%) well. This is up from 67% in September.

A majority (52%) of New Jerseyans say they are tired of hearing about the debate over the health care law and think the country should focus more on other issues. This view is shared by 54% of independents, 52% of Democrats and 48% of Republicans. Less than half (45%) of state residents feel that it is important for the country to continue the debate over the health care law. The New Jersey results are similar to Kaiser's national poll results which found that 53% want the country to focus on other issues and 42% want the debate to continue.

In other poll findings, New Jersey voters hold positive opinions of their two U.S. Senators. Junior Senator Cory Booker, who is up for election this year, has a 47% approve to 23% disapprove job rating among registered voters, with 30% expressing no opinion. These results are nearly identical to Booker's 47% positive and 20% negative ratings in February.

Senior Senator Bob Menendez currently holds a 51% approve to 31% disapprove rating among Garden State voters, with 18% having no opinion. These results are statistically similar to the 49% positive and 30% negative ratings he received in February. However, it's worth noting that the current poll marks the first time Sen. Menendez's job approval rating has topped the 50% mark.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by telephone with 803 New Jersey adults from March 30 to April 1, 2014. 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 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	51%	49%	59%	82%	40%	17%	49%	53%	66%	48%	43%	39%	88%	56%
Disapprove	44%	47%	31%	14%	55%	82%	48%	41%	31%	47%	52%	58%	10%	30%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	3%	10%	4%	5%	1%	3%	6%	3%	5%	5%	3%	2%	14%

TREND: Registered Voters - Second Term	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Jan. 2014	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013
Approve	49%	49%	44%	47%	50%	55%	60%
Disapprove	47%	47%	50%	47%	41%	42%	33%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	5%	6%	6%	8%	2%	7%
Unwtd N	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	50%	51%	45%	67%	44%	33%	47%	53%	59%	45%	49%	45%	59%	68%
Disapprove	28%	31%	17%	12%	33%	51%	34%	23%	16%	32%	35%	35%	18%	14%
(VOL) Don't know	22%	18%	38%	21%	22%	16%	19%	24%	26%	23%	16%	20%	23%	19%

TREND: Registered voters only	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	51%	49%	47%	44%	41%	40%	41%	43%	38%	46%	38%	34%	41%	37%
Disapprove	31%	30%	27%	38%	31%	25%	26%	29%	33%	28%	33%	25%	31%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	18%	21%	26%	18%	28%	35%	33%	28%	29%	26%	29%	41%	28%	37%
Unwtd N	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	47%	47%	48%	60%	45%	30%	45%	49%	64%	43%	37%	41%	64%	54%
Disapprove	21%	23%	14%	11%	23%	39%	26%	16%	16%	23%	23%	23%	13%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	32%	30%	38%	29%	33%	31%	29%	35%	20%	34%	40%	36%	23%	25%

TREND: Registered voters only	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Dec. 2013
Approve	47%	47%	37%
Disapprove	23%	20%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	30%	32%	43%
Unwtd N	690	690	698

4. A question on the health reform bill that was signed into law in 2010, known as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it? [Is that a very or somewhat (favorable/unfavorable) opinion?]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Very favorable	19%	19%	19%	35%	13%	5%	18%	21%	15%	20%	22%	15%	45%	14%
Somewhat favorable	26%	27%	24%	40%	24%	9%	27%	26%	33%	26%	21%	24%	31%	33%
Somewhat unfavorable	17%	17%	19%	13%	20%	22%	17%	18%	24%	14%	16%	17%	6%	26%
Very unfavorable	32%	33%	25%	8%	38%	61%	34%	30%	20%	37%	36%	41%	11%	18%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	3%	13%	5%	5%	4%	5%	6%	8%	3%	6%	4%	6%	9%

TREND:	April 2014	December 2013	September 2013
Very favorable	19%	16%	22%
Somewhat favorable	26%	24%	23%
Somewhat unfavorable	17%	20%	13%
Very unfavorable	32%	30%	27%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	10%	16%
Unwtd N	803	802	783

5. All in all, how well do you feel you understand what's in the health care law – very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not at all well?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Very well	25%	26%	20%	22%	26%	28%	27%	23%	20%	26%	28%	24%	18%	22%
Somewhat well	47%	48%	45%	52%	44%	49%	46%	49%	46%	52%	44%	49%	59%	41%
Not too well	19%	18%	24%	20%	17%	14%	18%	19%	26%	15%	17%	17%	15%	26%
Not at all well	8%	8%	8%	5%	11%	7%	8%	8%	7%	7%	10%	9%	8%	9%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	0%	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%

TREND:	April 2014	September 2013
Very well	25%	18%
Somewhat well	47%	49%
Not too well	19%	19%
Not at all well	8%	12%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	3%
Unwtd N	803	783

6. To the best of your knowledge, would you say the health reform law does or does not require nearly all Americans to have health insurance or else pay a fine?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Yes, requires	73%	75%	63%	72%	75%	74%	72%	74%	71%	72%	75%	75%	81%	65%
No, does not require	21%	19%	29%	19%	21%	22%	24%	18%	21%	23%	18%	21%	15%	28%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	6%	8%	9%	4%	4%	4%	8%	7%	5%	7%	5%	5%	7%

TREND:	April 2014	September 2013
Yes, requires	73%	56%
No, does not require	21%	24%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	21%
Unwtd N	803	783

7. What would you like to see Congress do when it comes to the health care law – They should keep the law as it is. They should keep the law in place and work to improve it. They should repeal the law and replace it with a Republican-sponsored alternative. They should repeal the law and not replace it? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Keep law as is	7%	6%	11%	12%	5%	3%	8%	7%	8%	8%	6%	7%	7%	7%
Keep law and work to improve	60%	58%	67%	78%	56%	30%	55%	63%	69%	56%	56%	51%	82%	65%
Repeal law and replace with Republican sponsored alternative	12%	13%	9%	2%	14%	26%	14%	10%	7%	12%	15%	15%	5%	6%
Repeal law and not replace (VOL) None of these/Something else	16%	19%	7%	4%	19%	36%	18%	15%	14%	17%	18%	21%	6%	16%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	3%	5%	3%	3%	1%	3%	3%	1%	6%	2%	3%	0%	4%

8. Which of the following comes closer to your view – I'm tired of hearing about the debate over the health care law and I think the country should focus more on other issues – OR – I think it is important for the country to continue the debate over the health care law. [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black	Hispanic
Should focus on other issues	52%	53%	51%	52%	54%	48%	56%	49%	46%	51%	58%	51%	57%	55%
Continue the healthcare law debate	45%	45%	45%	45%	44%	51%	42%	47%	50%	47%	39%	46%	40%	41%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	2%	5%	3%	2%	1%	2%	4%	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%	4%

The Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from March 30 to April 1, 2011 with a statewide random sample of 803 adult residents, including 601 contacted via live interview on a landline telephone and 202 via live interview on a cell phone. 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
43% Ind	51% Female	40% 35-54	13% Black
19% Rep		32% 55+	15% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other
Registered Voter Sample (weighted)			
38% Dem	49% Male	22% 18-34	68% White
41% Ind	51% Female	42% 35-54	12% Black
21% Rep		36% 55+	15% Hispanic
			5% Asian/Other

	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	803	690	113	285	329	163	387	416	139	298	361	585	105	57
moe	3.5%	3.7%	9.2%	5.8%	5.4%	7.7%	5.0%	4.8%	8.3%	5.7%	5.2%	4.1%	9.6%	13.0%

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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