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Released:

Wednesday, April 30, 2008

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NEW JERSEY VOTERS' TAKE ON 2008

*Senate – Lautenberg in good position for re-election;
President – Dem voters turning from Clinton to Obama*

New Jersey voters have a lot to ponder, with unexpected contests in both parties' U.S. Senate primaries and a national Democratic nomination that has yet to be settled. On the presidential side, Barack Obama's message of change seems to have caused a change of heart among many Democratic voters who supported Hillary Clinton in the state's February 5th primary. And while a call for change also resonates in the U.S. Senate race, it does not seem to be enough in itself to incite voters to oust incumbent Frank Lautenberg. These are among the findings in the latest **Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll**.

The Senate Race

Despite New Jersey voters' stated preference for a change of face, all signs point to Frank Lautenberg being in a strong position for re-election in both the primary and general elections.

Overall, 48% of registered voters in the Garden State approve of the job Frank Lautenberg is doing in the United States Senate, another 31% disapprove and 21% have no opinion. Democrats approve of his job performance by a 59% to 19% margin, and independents give him an advantage at 49% approve to 32% disapprove. Republicans are largely negative – 24% approve to 54% disapprove.

Senator Lautenberg tends to be viewed more favorably (43%) than unfavorably (30%) by New Jersey voters, with 21% offering no opinion. This increases to a 55% to 19% favorability advantage among Democratic voters. His main primary opponent, Congressman Rob Andrews, has a 13% to 15% favorability rating among New Jersey Democrats, with 16% offering no opinion.

Importantly, less than half (44%) of Democratic voters in the state actually recognize the South Jersey challenger’s name. Regionally, Andrews’ name recognition stands at 36% in North Jersey, 39% in Central Jersey, and 59% in South Jersey. The other primary contender, Morristown Mayor Donald Cresitello, is known to just 28% of the state’s Democratic voters.

In what should be a good sign for Andrews’ bid, most New Jersey voters feel that the 25-year Washington veteran should make room for someone new. Fully 61% of registered voters say it is time for another person in the state’s U.S. Senate seat, compared to just 26% who say that Frank Lautenberg should be re-elected. Even Democrats (56%) join independents (61%) and Republicans (76%) in saying that it is time for someone new. These findings are similar to the results of a Monmouth/Gannett poll taken in January.

“Saying you want new blood is a far cry from actually voting against a seasoned incumbent,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “While we did not run a true likely voter match-up for the Senate primaries, the poll indicates that Democratic voters appear unwilling to oust Lautenberg.”

When asked to name who they would like to see as the Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate, 35% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents select the incumbent, compared to 20% who choose Andrews and just 4% for Cresitello. Another 8% say they would be happy with any of these candidates, and 28% are undecided about who they would prefer as the Democrat’s standard-bearer.

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion	Do not recognize
Among Democratic voters				
Frank Lautenberg	55%	19%	19%	7%
Rob Andrews	13%	15%	16%	56%
Donald Cresitello	7%	7%	14%	72%
Among Republican voters				
Dick Zimmer	14%	8%	24%	54%
Joe Pennacchio	6%	7%	20%	67%
Murray Sabrin	5%	5%	15%	75%

On the Republican side of the Senate race, former congressman Dick Zimmer – a late entrant to the race – is known to 46% of the state’s GOP voters, with 14% viewing him favorably, 8% unfavorably, and 24% having no opinion. State senator Joe Pennacchio (33%) and professor Murray Sabrin (25%) are known to between a quarter and a third of Republican voters.

When asked to name who they would like to see as the GOP nominee for U.S. Senate, 25% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents choose Zimmer, compared to just 5% for Pennacchio and 4% for Sabrin. Another 20% say they have no preference among any of these three. With just over a month to go before the June 3rd primary, the largest portion of Republican voters – 40% – say they are undecided.

“The Republican contenders don’t seem to be generating a lot of enthusiasm among GOP voters,” said poll director Murray.

The poll also found that fewer than half of the state’s voters feel that the 84 year old senator’s age is affecting his job performance. However, that sentiment has grown somewhat over the past few months. Currently, 41% say Lautenberg is getting too old to be an effective senator, while 46% disagree with this statement. In January, 34% said that Lautenberg was getting too old, while 51% disagreed.

Negative opinion on Lautenberg’s age is less common among his fellow Democrats – only 36% of these voters feel that Lautenberg is too old compared to 50% who disagree. Opinion is divided among independent voters – 46% feel Lautenberg is too old compared to 42% who say he is not. Republicans are also split on the age issue, with 41% who agree that the incumbent is too old to be effective and 46% who disagree.

Regardless of who gets the nomination, New Jersey voters prefer to keep the state’s U.S. Senate seat in Democratic hands. More than half (54%) say they are likely to vote for the Democratic candidate in November, compared to 24% who say they are likely to support the Republican.

The Presidential Race

Among the three remaining major presidential contenders, Barack Obama has the highest favorability rating among Garden State voters. The Illinois senator is viewed favorably by 58%, compared to 27% who have an unfavorable opinion of him. New Jersey is split on his primary opponent, with 46% viewing Hillary Clinton favorably and 43% unfavorably. Voter opinion is also divided on the expected Republican nominee – 39% give John McCain a favorable rating compared to 45% who are unfavorable.

Clinton bested Obama in the New Jersey presidential primary on February 5th by a 54% to 44% margin. However, the ongoing nomination contest seems to have given some Garden State Democrats second thoughts. Currently, more Democrats and Democrat-leaning

independents say they would like to see Obama (45%) rather than Clinton (38%) get the party's nomination.

“It appears that less than three months after giving Hillary Clinton a 10 point victory in the state's primary, some New Jersey voters feel buyer's remorse,” said poll director Patrick Murray. “Many state Democrats are concerned that the prolonged battle could hobble their party's eventual nominee in November.”

Nearly 4-in-10 (39%) New Jersey Democrats say that the ongoing contest between Clinton and Obama will hurt the eventual nominee's chances of winning in November, compared to only 13% who say it will actually help the nominee. Another 42% say the current primary campaign will have no effect on whether the Democrat can win in November.

While Democrats may want to unite behind a nominee, few New Jersey voters feel that the Clinton-Obama contest is having any lasting negative effects on race relations in the country. Equal numbers say that the Democratic campaign has brought blacks and white closer together (19%) as has pushed the two races apart (19%). Fully half (50%) say that the Democratic campaign hasn't had much effect on race relations one way or the other.

The poll also found that New Jersey is shaping up as true to its “blue state” reputation, no matter who gets the Democratic nomination. At this stage, Barack Obama leads John McCain by a sizable 24 point margin among the state's voters – 56% to 32%. Hillary Clinton is also an early favorite over the Republican nominee, besting McCain by a smaller but still significant 14 point margin – 52% to 38%.

Importantly, Obama is doing particularly well among New Jersey's independent voters, outpolling McCain by 50% to 33%. Clinton and McCain are virtually tied among this group at 42% to 41%. Regardless of who the contenders are in November, New Jersey voters indicate a strong preference for seeing a Democrat (57%) rather than a Republican (25%) take the White House in 2008.

Other Approval Ratings

The poll also found that Governor Jon Corzine's job performance rating has changed little from the prior career low measured last month. Overall, 34% of all state residents approve of the job he is doing, compared to a majority of 52% who disapprove. Corzine's job rating among registered voters is 36% to 53%. In March, his job rating stood at 37% approve to 52% disapprove among all residents and 34% approve to 55% disapprove among registered voters.

As poorly as the governor is doing, the state legislature continues to get even worse marks than New Jersey's chief executive. Just 29% of residents approve of the job their legislature is doing, compared to 53% who disapprove. The legislature's job rating among registered voters is 28% to 55%.

Finally, the state's junior U.S. Senator, Bob Menendez, gets positive marks from 41% of the state's voters, while 31% of registered voters disapprove of his job performance.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 803 New Jersey adults from April 24 to 28, 2008. Most of the results in this release are based on a sub-sample of 720 registered voters, which 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).

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 Jon Corzine is doing as governor?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	34%	36%	26%	45%	31%	18%
Disapprove	52%	53%	47%	40%	54%	74%
(VOL) Don't know	14%	11%	27%	15%	15%	8%
Unwtd N	803	720	83	319	302	165

TREND:	April 2008	March 2008	January 2008	October 2007	July 2007	April 2007	February 2007	September 2006	July 2006	April 2006
Approve	34%	37%	40%	46%	46%	51%	44%	42%	37%	34%
Disapprove	52%	52%	44%	32%	36%	29%	34%	38%	43%	37%
(VOL) Don't know	14%	11%	16%	22%	18%	20%	22%	20%	20%	29%
Unwtd N	803	805	804	801	800	804	801	800	802	803

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

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	29%	28%	33%	37%	26%	16%
Disapprove	53%	55%	42%	45%	57%	65%
(VOL) Don't know	18%	17%	26%	18%	17%	19%
Unwtd N	803	720	83	319	302	165

TREND:	April 2008	March 2008	October 2007	February 2007
Approve	29%	28%	33%	35%
Disapprove	53%	50%	41%	40%
(VOL) Don't know	18%	22%	26%	25%
Unwtd N	803	805	801	801

[THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY:]

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

	REGISTERED VOTERS	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	48%	59%	49%	24%
Disapprove	31%	19%	32%	54%
(VOL) Don't know	21%	22%	19%	22%
Unwtd N	720	288	256	160

TREND:	April 2008	January 2008
Approve	48%	43%
Disapprove	31%	28%
(VOL) Don't know	21%	30%
Unwtd N	720	698

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

	REGISTERED VOTERS	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	41%	51%	42%	20%
Disapprove	31%	19%	36%	46%
(VOL) Don't know	28%	30%	22%	34%
Unwtd N	720	288	256	160

TREND:	April 2008	January 2008
Approve	41%	37%
Disapprove	31%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	28%	37%
Unwtd N	720	698

5. I'm going to read you the names of a few people in the news recently. Please tell me if your general impression of each is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion. If you don't recognize a name, just let me know. **[NAMES ROTATED]**

[NOTE: READ PERCENTAGES ACROSS ROWS FOR THIS TABLE]

Presidential race	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion	Do not recognize	(n)
Barack Obama	58%	27%	14%	1%	720
John McCain	39%	45%	14%	2%	720

Senate race	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion	Do not recognize	(n)
Rob Andrews	13%	12%	18%	57%	720
Donald Cresitello	5%	7%	14%	74%	720
Dick Zimmer	9%	10%	24%	56%	720
Joe Pennacchio	7%	9%	14%	70%	720
Murray Sabrin	4%	7%	17%	71%	720

6. How much interest do you have in the election for president this year – a lot, some, a little, or none at all?

	REGISTERED	PARTY ID		
	VOTERS	Dem	Ind	Rep
A lot	76%	83%	68%	74%
Some	13%	9%	18%	12%
A little	9%	6%	11%	9%
None at all	3%	1%	4%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unwtd N	720	288	256	160

7. And how closely have you been following the campaign – very closely, somewhat closely, or not very closely so far?

	REGISTERED	PARTY ID		
	VOTERS	Dem	Ind	Rep
Very closely	50%	54%	47%	49%
Somewhat closely	43%	42%	44%	41%
Not very closely	7%	4%	9%	10%
(VOL) Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unwtd N	720	288	256	160

[NOTE: The following question was asked of DEMOCRATS only: moe=+/-4.9%]

8. Who would you personally like to see the Democratic party nominate as its presidential candidate —Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama? [NAMES ROTATED]

	DEMS AND LEANERS	PARTY ID	
		Solid Dem	Lean Dem
Clinton	38%	38%	39%
Obama	45%	45%	45%
(VOL) No preference	7%	6%	9%
(VOL) Neither	3%	3%	3%
(VOL) Undecided	7%	7%	4%
Unwtd N	396	288	106

[NOTE: The following question was asked of DEMOCRATS only: moe=+/-4.9%]

9. Do you think that the ongoing contest between Clinton and Obama will help or hurt the eventual nominee's chances of winning in November, or will it have no effect?

	DEMS AND LEANERS	PARTY ID	
		Solid Dem	Lean Dem
Help	13%	13%	15%
Hurt	39%	37%	42%
No effect	42%	43%	37%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	7%	5%
Unwtd N	396	288	106

10. Has the campaign for the Democratic nomination brought blacks and whites closer together, has it pushed them further apart, or hasn't it had much effect one way or the other?

	REGISTERED	PARTY ID			RACE	
		VOTERS	Dem	Ind	Rep	White
Brought together	19%	26%	17%	11%	20%	28%
Farther apart	19%	16%	19%	25%	18%	25%
Not much effect	50%	46%	54%	49%	48%	41%
(VOL) Don't know	12%	12%	10%	15%	14%	5%
Unwtd N	720	288	256	160	578	82

[QUESTIONS 11, 12 and 13 WERE ROTATED]

11. Regardless of who the candidates are, do you think you are more likely to vote for the Democrat or the Republican candidate for president in November?

	REGISTERED	PARTY ID			GENDER	
	VOTERS	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female
Democrat	57%	88%	48%	12%	55%	59%
Republican	25%	2%	24%	76%	27%	23%
(VOL) Other candidate	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
(VOL) Neither, won't vote	3%	2%	4%	4%	3%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	14%	7%	23%	9%	13%	14%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	720	<i>288</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>353</i>	<i>367</i>

12. If the election for president was held today between John McCain the Republican and Barack Obama the Democrat, for whom would you vote? **[NAMES ROTATED]**

	REGISTERED	PARTY ID			GENDER	
	VOTERS	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female
McCain	32%	10%	33%	79%	35%	30%
Obama	56%	84%	50%	14%	57%	56%
(VOL) Other candidate	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%
(VOL) Neither, won't vote	4%	2%	5%	3%	4%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	4%	12%	4%	4%	10%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	720	<i>288</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>353</i>	<i>367</i>

13. If the election for president was held today between John McCain the Republican and Hillary Clinton the Democrat, for whom would you vote? **[NAMES ROTATED]**

	REGISTERED	PARTY ID			GENDER	
	VOTERS	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female
McCain	38%	13%	41%	86%	41%	35%
Clinton	52%	81%	42%	11%	50%	54%
(VOL) Other candidate	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
(VOL) Neither, won't vote	4%	3%	6%	1%	4%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	2%	11%	3%	5%	7%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	720	<i>288</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>353</i>	<i>367</i>

14. As you may know, there will also be an election for United States Senator from New Jersey this November. How much interest do you have in the upcoming election for Senator – a lot, some, a little, or none at all?

	REGISTERED	PARTY ID		
	VOTERS	Dem	Ind	Rep
A lot	31%	36%	27%	26%
Some	31%	27%	33%	36%
A little	26%	27%	25%	27%
None at all	11%	10%	14%	9%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	2%	2%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	720	<i>288</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>160</i>

15. How closely have you been following the campaign for U.S. Senate – very closely, somewhat closely, or not very closely so far?

	REGISTERED	PARTY ID		
	VOTERS	Dem	Ind	Rep
Very closely	6%	7%	4%	7%
Somewhat closely	25%	25%	28%	22%
Not very closely	68%	67%	68%	70%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%	0%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	720	<i>288</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>160</i>

16. Looking ahead to this year's election for 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?

	REGISTERED	PARTY ID			AGE		
	VOTERS	Dem	Ind	Rep	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 or over
Re-elected	26%	31%	26%	15%	24%	25%	30%
Someone else	61%	56%	61%	76%	65%	61%	60%
(VOL) Don't know	13%	13%	13%	9%	11%	15%	10%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	720	<i>288</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>316</i>	<i>263</i>

TREND:	April 2008	January 2008
Re-elected	26%	19%
Someone else	61%	58%
(VOL) Don't know	13%	22%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<i>720</i>	<i>698</i>

[NOTE: The following question was asked of DEMOCRATS only: moe=+/-4.9%]

17. Who would you like to personally see as the Democratic candidate for Senate — Frank Lautenberg, or Rob Andrews, or Donald Cresitello? [NAMES ROTATED]

	DEMS AND LEANERS	PARTY ID	
		Solid Dem	Lean Dem
Lautenberg	35%	36%	30%
Andrews	20%	20%	20%
Cresitello	4%	2%	8%
(VOL) No preference	8%	6%	11%
(VOL) None of these	6%	5%	7%
(VOL) Undecided	28%	30%	25%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	396	<i>288</i>	<i>106</i>

[NOTE: The following question was asked of REPUBLICANS only: moe=+/-6.5%]

18. Who would you like to personally see as the Republican candidate for Senate — Dick Zimmer, or Joe Pennacchio, or Murray Sabrin? [NAMES ROTATED]

	REPS AND LEANERS	PARTY ID	
		Solid Rep	Lean Rep
Zimmer	25%	25%	28%
Pennacchio	5%	5%	3%
Sabrin	4%	5%	2%
(VOL) No preference	20%	19%	24%
(VOL) None of these	6%	6%	6%
(VOL) Undecided	40%	41%	36%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	230	<i>160</i>	<i>68</i>

19. Regardless of who the candidates are, do you think you are more likely to vote for the Democrat or the Republican candidate for senator in November?

	REGISTERED	PARTY ID		
	VOTERS	Dem	Ind	Rep
Democrat	54%	89%	40%	10%
Republican	24%	2%	20%	79%
(VOL) Other candidate	1%	0%	2%	0%
(VOL) Neither, won't vote	2%	1%	2%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	19%	8%	36%	9%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	720	<i>288</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>160</i>

[NOTE: The following question was asked of a sub-sample of voters: moe=+/-3.9%]

20. Do you agree or disagree that Frank Lautenberg is getting too old to be an effective senator?

	REGISTERED VOTERS	PARTY ID			AGE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 or over
Agree	41%	36%	46%	41%	44%	36%	45%
Disagree	46%	50%	42%	46%	46%	50%	41%
(VOL) Don't know	13%	15%	11%	13%	10%	15%	14%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	639	255	227	142	125	292	215

TREND:	April 2008	January 2008
Agree	41%	34%
Disagree	46%	51%
(VOL) Don't know	13%	15%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	639	698

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted and analyzed by the Monmouth University Polling Institute research staff. The telephone interviews were collected by Braun Research on April 24-28, 2008 with a statewide random sample of 803 adult residents. Most of the results in this release are based on a sub-sample of 720 registered voters. For results based on this voter 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.

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

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