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*This poll was conducted by the  
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## **STATE BUDGET SHENANIGANS**

*Plenty of blame to go around according to Monmouth/Gannett Poll*

One of the political questions surrounding this month’s budget stand-off is: who won and who lost. The latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* reveals that according to the public, no one really came out on top – least of all the state’s residents. While most New Jerseyans have resigned themselves to the sales tax increase and other provisions of the budget, they are not happy with either the process or most of the players involved.

More residents (45%) say that this year’s budget process has made them less confident rather than more confident (25%) that Governor Jon Corzine will be able to make fundamental changes in how New Jersey is run. Another 22% say this year’s budgeting has had no effect on their opinion of the governor’s ability to reform the state.

Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute commented, “Governor Corzine claims that this year’s experience has put his administration on a better footing to enact structural reforms in the budget process. After having a few days to think about it, New Jersey residents aren’t convinced.” The poll interviews were conducted July 11-13, after news of the budget resolution began to set in.

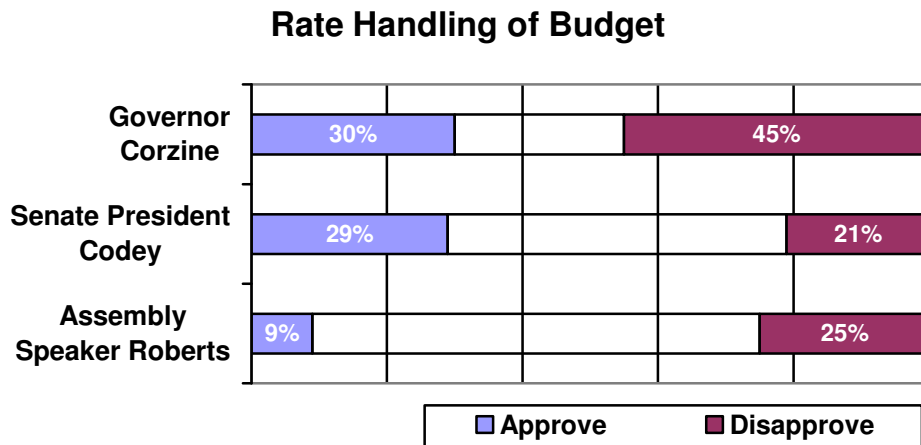
The poll shows that the governor is not alone in being held responsible for recent events. The vast majority of New Jersey residents cast equal blame on both the governor and their legislative leaders for events that led to the recent state shutdown (62%). Of those who assign

more blame to one side, they are slightly more likely to indict the legislature (19%) rather than Governor Corzine (10%).

Jon Corzine’s current job performance rating stands at an upside-down 37% approve to 43% disapprove. This is somewhat more negative than his April numbers (34%-37%). He’s viewed even worse on his handling of the recent budget situation – of which 30% approve and 45% disapprove. Even the governor’s fellow Democrats – who approve of his overall job performance by a 49%-31% margin – are split on how Corzine handled his first budget – 36% of Democrats approve to 38% disapprove of how he handled the state budget situation.

The governor may take some solace in the fact that his chief legislative adversary in the budget drama also gets a negative rating from the public for his role – 9% approve of Assembly Speaker Joe Robert’s handling of the budget to 25% who disapprove. Perhaps Robert’s saving grace is that – unlike the governor – most New Jerseyans (66%) don’t know enough about him to evaluate his performance

Dick Codey, who was widely reported as brokering the final compromise, is one leader who emerged from this process basically unscathed. More residents approve (29%) than disapprove (21%) of how the Senate President handled the budget situation, with 50% offering no opinion.



In their overall reaction to the final budget agreement, just over half of New Jersey residents (52%) say that while they are not exactly satisfied with the outcome they will learn to live with it. Only 15% of state residents are enthusiastic about the final agreement while 28% are decidedly dissatisfied with the enacted budget.

But being able to live with the budget does not mean New Jerseyans are happy about it. By a more than 2-to-1 margin (62%-26%), residents say the final budget document was just more of the same old political dealings rather than a product of tough, thoughtful choices, as Governor Corzine had promised. Those seeing this more as a political deal include majorities of Democrats (56%), independents (63%) and Republicans (75%) alike.

“The budget process did not do much to enhance Governor Corzine’s claim that he would run the state like a business,” remarked Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “The end result is that residents are more pessimistic about both the direction of the state and the governor’s ability to turn it around.”

All in all, only 1-in-4 residents (27%) feel that New Jersey is heading in the right direction. By contrast, 62% say the state is off on the wrong track, a sentiment which is up from 55% in April.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 802 New Jersey adults from July 11 to 13, 2006. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.5$  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, Home News Tribune, and Ocean County Observer).

## DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(\* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Would you say things in New Jersey are going in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Right direction	<b>27%</b>	28%	26%	35%	23%	21%
Wrong track	<b>62%</b>	63%	61%	55%	66%	72%
(VOL) DEPENDS	<b>4%</b>	4%	4%	6%	2%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>7%</b>	6%	10%	4%	9%	4%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>802</b>	670	132	243	334	197

	TREND:		
	July 2006	April 2006	September 2005
Right direction	27%	30%	31%
Wrong track	62%	55%	54%
(VOL) Depends	4%	9%	5%
(VOL) Dont know	7%	6%	10%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	802	803	800

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Jon Corzine is doing as governor?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	<b>37%</b>	40%	29%	49%	33%	28%
Disapprove	<b>43%</b>	41%	47%	31%	46%	59%
(VOL) NO OPINION/Don't Know	<b>20%</b>	19%	24%	20%	21%	13%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>802</b>	670	132	243	334	197

	TREND:	
	July 2006	April 2006
Approve	37%	34%
Disapprove	43%	37%
(VOL) Dont know	20%	29%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	802	803

3. Do you approve or disapprove of how Governor Corzine handled the recent state budget situation, or don't you have an opinion on this?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	<b>30%</b>	34%	19%	36%	31%	20%
Disapprove	<b>45%</b>	45%	45%	38%	46%	59%
No opinion	<b>21%</b>	18%	33%	22%	21%	20%
(VOL) Don't Know	<b>3%</b>	3%	3%	4%	2%	1%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>802</b>	670	132	243	334	197

4. Do you approve or disapprove of how Senate President Richard Codey handled the recent state budget situation, or don't you have an opinion on this?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	<b>29%</b>	34%	12%	32%	27%	29%
Disapprove	<b>21%</b>	19%	28%	21%	20%	27%
No opinion	<b>46%</b>	43%	55%	45%	47%	41%
(VOL) Don't Know	<b>4%</b>	3%	5%	2%	6%	3%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>802</b>	670	132	243	334	197

5. Do you approve or disapprove of how Assembly Speaker Joseph Roberts handled the recent state budget situation, or don't you have an opinion on this?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	<b>9%</b>	10%	6%	8%	11%	8%
Disapprove	<b>25%</b>	26%	19%	25%	23%	29%
No opinion	<b>59%</b>	56%	67%	62%	55%	57%
(VOL) Don't Know	<b>7%</b>	7%	8%	4%	11%	6%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>802</b>	670	132	243	334	197

6. Who is more to blame for the issues that led to the recent government shutdown in New Jersey – the governor or the leaders in the state legislature, or do both share equally in the blame?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Governor	<b>10%</b>	12%	6%	6%	9%	22%
Leaders in the state legislature	<b>19%</b>	21%	15%	20%	20%	18%
Both equally	<b>62%</b>	60%	69%	66%	61%	59%
(VOL) NEITHER/OTHER	<b>3%</b>	4%	1%	4%	5%	1%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>5%</b>	3%	9%	4%	6%	0%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>802</b>	670	132	243	334	197

7. Has the handling of this year's budget made you feel more confident, less confident or had no effect on your opinion of Governor Corzine's ability to make fundamental changes in how the state is run?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
More confident	<b>25%</b>	29%	12%	29%	25%	18%
Less confident	<b>45%</b>	44%	47%	39%	43%	61%
No effect	<b>22%</b>	20%	28%	22%	23%	17%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>8%</b>	7%	13%	10%	8%	4%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>802</b>	670	132	243	334	197

8. How would you describe your reaction to the final budget agreement – would you say you are satisfied with it, not particularly satisfied but you can live with it, or you are definitely dissatisfied with it?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Satisfied	<b>15%</b>	15%	14%	20%	14%	7%
Can live with it	<b>52%</b>	53%	49%	56%	50%	53%
Dissatisfied	<b>28%</b>	28%	28%	20%	29%	36%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>5%</b>	4%	10%	4%	6%	4%
Unwtd N	<b>802</b>	670	132	243	334	197

9. In general, would you describe the final budget as: [the product of tough, thoughtful choices] - OR – [more of the same old political dealings]?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
The product of tough, thoughtful choices	<b>26%</b>	28%	20%	31%	26%	18%
More of the same old political dealings	<b>62%</b>	61%	67%	56%	63%	75%
(VOL) SOME OF BOTH	<b>4%</b>	4%	2%	5%	3%	2%
(VOL) Don't Know	<b>8%</b>	7%	11%	7%	8%	5%
Unwtd N	<b>802</b>	670	132	243	334	197

Results for this *Monmouth University/Gannett NJ Poll* are based on telephone interviews conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on July 11-13, 2006 with a statewide random sample of 802 adult residents. 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.

*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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