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## **OBAMA MAY BE LITTLE HELP TO CORZINE**

### *Governor continues to trail challenger Christie*

President Barack Obama is making an unusual summer appearance in the Garden State to boost Governor Jon Corzine's re-election bid. However, the latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* finds his visit may do little to help the Democratic incumbent overcome his deficit against Republican challenger Chris Christie.

Christie currently leads Corzine by 43% to 37% among registered voters in the governor's race. Independent Chris Daggett garners 5% of the vote and 15% of voters remain undecided. Among likely voters – those who are most probable to vote on November 3<sup>rd</sup> – Christie leads Corzine by 8 points, 45% to 37%, with Daggett at 4%.

While Christie has maintained an advantage in most polls this year, the race is far from over. Only 54% of likely voters say they have definitely made up their mind on which candidate they will be supporting. If voters who are only "leaning" toward a candidate are removed from the equation, Christie's advantage shrinks to 4 points, 37% to 33%.

Another indication of the volatility of these early polls is the change in favorability rating for the two main candidates. Currently, Jon Corzine stands at 38% favorable to 46% unfavorable, with 16% who have no opinion. This indicates a drop in the governor's favorable ratings since January, when they stood at 49% favorable to 38% unfavorable.

Chris Christie has a better overall rating than his opponent, but there are some warning signs that the Republican should keep an eye on. Currently, Christie's rating stands at 43% favorable to 24% unfavorable. While the GOP nominee's favorable rating has remained basically steady since January, his unfavorable rating has climbed by 12 points.

Moreover, 34% of New Jersey voters still do not have an opinion of Christie. Among the important group of undecided voters, 25% have a favorable view of Christie, 16% have an unfavorable view, and 59% have not formed an opinion of the Republican.

“There is evidence that Corzine’s ratings have taken a hit from the state budget process. On the other hand, the Democrat’s decision to air an attack ad may be putting a dent in the Christie armor,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “Favorability ratings tend to be leading indicators of where an election is headed. At this stage, these numbers can be more meaningful to the campaigns than the horse race itself.”

– *The Obama Effect* –

President Obama comes to New Jersey enjoying a healthy 59% approve to 29% disapprove rating among Garden State voters. Democrats approve 92% to 3% while Republicans disapprove by 58% to 30%. More independent voters approve than disapprove of the president’s job performance, but not by much – 46% to 38%.

While most New Jerseyans give Obama positive marks, the same can’t be said for the Washington establishment in general. Only 41% of state voters say they are satisfied with the way things are going in DC compared to 48% who are dissatisfied.

However, the poll indicates that voters’ opinion of Obama or even Washington in general is likely to have little impact on their vote choice in New Jersey. Fully 3-in-4 voters (76%) say that their vote for governor will be based solely on state and local issues. Another 18% say they view their vote for governor as a way to express their feelings about what is happening in Washington. However, only 6% of voters say that they would actually change their gubernatorial choice if things were going differently in Washington. This small group is about twice as likely to be Christie voters as Corzine voters.

“At this stage of the race, it would be hard to claim that New Jersey voters view this campaign as a referendum on the Obama administration. Still, the president’s presence here could change that. The Corzine camp’s task is to make sure he activates the right group of voters,” said Murray.

The vast majority (70%) of New Jersey voters say that having President Obama actively campaign for Jon Corzine would have no effect on their vote for governor. Among the remainder, 14% say Obama’s presence would make them more likely to support Corzine while 15% say it would make them less likely.

Among independent voters, more say that Obama’s presence would make them less likely (18%) rather than more likely (9%) to support Jon Corzine in November. However, among core Democratic voting groups – e.g. urban voters and state workers – the net effect would be the opposite, with nominally more voters in these groups saying Obama’s participation in the campaign would make them more rather than less likely to support Corzine.

“Jon Corzine is not doing as well among Democrats as he would like at this point. The Obama visit is meant to link the fortunes of these two men in the minds of voters who already have a high opinion of the president, but are unenthusiastic about their governor and might sit this race out,” said Murray.

Currently, Republican Christie is garnering the support of 3-in-10 urban voters (30%), state worker households (31%), and teacher households (36%). Governor Corzine is hovering at about 50% with all these groups. Christie (40%) and Corzine (38%) are basically tied among voters in non-public union households.

<b>Democratic voter groups</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Black &amp; Hispanic</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>State worker households</b>	<b>Teacher households</b>	<b>Non-public union households</b>
<b><u>Vote choice</u></b>						
Corzine	67%	50%	50%	44%	47%	38%
Christie	17%	24%	30%	31%	36%	40%
Daggett	4%	8%	4%	5%	7%	10%
Undecided	11%	18%	15%	18%	10%	13%
<b><u>Obama Impact</u></b>						
More for Corzine	25%	21%	13%	16%	14%	12%
Less for Corzine	4%	6%	10%	10%	14%	15%
No Impact	70%	72%	76%	72%	72%	73%

***– The Daggett Effect –***

Independent Chris Daggett has filed paperwork to qualify him for public financing and participation in state-sanctioned debates. He is currently polling at 4% in the gubernatorial field among likely voters. The vast majority of New Jersey voters (86%) do not recognize his name or do not know enough about him to form an opinion, while 6% of voters have a favorable opinion of him and 9% have an unfavorable one. These numbers are basically unchanged from April.

As a former state Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner and regional EPA administrator, some have speculated that Daggett may pull environmental voters away from Corzine. That does not appear to be the case right now, mainly because so few voters place the environment as a priority in this race. Only 3% of Garden State voters name the environment or energy as one of their top issues in this race. Property taxes (45%) continues to lead the list of voters’ concerns, with the economy (23%), jobs (18%), health care (18%), and education (12%) now being joined by state spending (18%) as the most important issues in this race.

To the extent he is having an impact, it appears that Daggett is drawing more support from Christie than Corzine. Daggett voters were asked which of the two major party candidates they prefer. Without Daggett in the race, Christie’s overall lead would increase to 10 points among likely voters, 48% to 38%.

***– Other Dynamics of the Race –***

While most New Jersey voters say they have at least some idea what the two main candidates would do in office, few say they have been given a clear idea what either Jon Corzine would do with his second term (25%) or Chris Christie would do in his first (13%).

Only 41% of voters agree that their governor understands the problems of average New Jerseyans, while 50% disagree. Compared to the incumbent, about the same number of voters (42%)

feels that Christie understands their problems, but only 28% say he does not. Another 30% say they don't know whether Christie understands the problems of average New Jerseyans.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 792 New Jersey registered voters from July 9-14, 2009. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.5$  percent. This report also includes analysis on a smaller group of 527 "likely voters" with a  $\pm 4.3$  percent margin of error. 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. If the election for governor was held today, would you vote for Jon Corzine the Democrat, Chris Christie the Republican, Chris Daggett the independent, or some other candidate? [*If undecided: At this moment do you lean more towards Corzine or more towards Christie?*] [*NAMES WERE ROTATED*]

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
			Dem	Ind	Rep
Corzine	37%	37%	67%	24%	10%
Christie	43%	45%	17%	47%	78%
Daggett	5%	4%	4%	7%	4%
Other candidate	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	13%	11%	20%	8%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206

TREND: Registered voters only	July 2009	April 2009	January 2009
Corzine	37%	35%	38%
Christie	43%	39%	36%
Daggett	5%	--	--
Other candidate	1%	2%	2%
(VOL) None, won't vote	n/a	7%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	18%	21%
Unwtd N	792	690	413

#### Composite Table: Strength of Vote Choice

If the election for governor was held today, would you vote for [ROTATE]: Jon Corzine the Democrat, Chris Christie the Republican, Chris Daggett the independent, or some other candidate? [*If undecided: At this moment do you lean more towards Corzine or more towards Christie?*] [*If answered Corzine or Christie to Q1: Are you very sure about voting for [NAME]; or might you change your mind before Election Day?*]

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
			Dem	Ind	Rep
Sure Corzine	24%	25%	46%	13%	6%
Weak Corzine	8%	8%	14%	6%	3%
Lean Corzine	5%	4%	7%	5%	1%
Undecided-Other	21%	18%	15%	29%	12%
Lean Christie	9%	8%	4%	11%	12%
Weak Christie	10%	8%	7%	12%	13%
Sure Christie	24%	29%	6%	25%	53%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206

2. Please tell me if your general impression of the following candidates 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 WERE ROTATED]

Jon Corzine

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Favorable	38%	41%	66%	24%	17%	90%	7%	25%
Unfavorable	46%	50%	19%	61%	71%	3%	83%	42%
No opinion/Don't recognize	16%	9%	15%	16%	11%	7%	10%	32%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206	245	302	191

TREND:	July 2009	April 2009	January 2009	July 2008	September 2006
Favorable	38%	43%	49%	43%	46%
Unfavorable	46%	47%	38%	44%	30%
No opinion/Don't recognize	16%	9%	12%	12%	24%
Unwtd N	792	690	413	889	630

Chris Christie

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Favorable	43%	50%	21%	48%	76%	14%	87%	25%
Unfavorable	24%	26%	44%	16%	4%	52%	3%	16%
No opinion/Don't recognize	34%	24%	35%	36%	20%	35%	11%	59%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206	245	302	191

TREND:	July 2009	April 2009	January 2009	July 2008
Favorable	43%	41%	42%	30%
Unfavorable	24%	16%	12%	9%
No opinion/Don't recognize	34%	43%	46%	62%
Unwtd N	792	690	413	889

Chris Daggett

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Favorable	6%	7%	3%	9%	8%	2%	7%	3%
Unfavorable	9%	10%	16%	4%	6%	16%	7%	3%
No opinion/Don't recognize	86%	82%	81%	88%	86%	81%	86%	93%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206	245	302	191

TREND:	July 2009	April 2009
Favorable	6%	5%
Unfavorable	9%	6%
No opinion/Don't recognize	86%	89%
Unwtd N	792	690

[QUESTIONS 3 AND 4 WERE ROTATED]

3. Has Jon Corzine given you a clear idea, some idea, not much of an idea, or no idea at all about what he would do in his second term as governor?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Clear idea	25%	32%	26%	24%	27%	36%	28%	11%
Some idea	35%	35%	44%	30%	29%	47%	27%	32%
Not much of an idea	14%	12%	11%	16%	19%	9%	16%	20%
No idea at all	19%	16%	13%	22%	21%	4%	24%	27%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	5%	6%	7%	4%	4%	5%	11%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206	245	302	191

4. Has Chris Christie given you a clear idea, some idea, not much of an idea, or no idea at all about what he would as governor?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Clear idea	13%	16%	8%	15%	20%	10%	25%	3%
Some idea	42%	49%	38%	44%	50%	33%	56%	36%
Not much of an idea	16%	16%	20%	16%	10%	22%	9%	21%
No idea at all	21%	15%	27%	20%	12%	30%	8%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	5%	7%	5%	7%	5%	2%	16%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>792</b>	<b>527</b>	<i>270</i>	<i>297</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>245</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>191</i>

5. In your opinion, what are the most important one or two issues that the candidates for governor should talk about? [Note: Results add to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted]

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Property taxes	45%	49%	41%	45%	50%	38%	51%	45%
Income tax	7%	8%	5%	7%	13%	2%	12%	10%
Sales tax	4%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	6%	3%
Other tax	5%	6%	4%	8%	4%	2%	7%	5%
Jobs	18%	17%	24%	13%	15%	25%	13%	18%
Cost of living/affordability	4%	5%	4%	3%	5%	4%	4%	3%
The economy/downturn in general	23%	21%	23%	22%	22%	24%	22%	20%
Development/building boom	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	4%	1%	1%
Roads/traffic/congestion	1%	2%	2%	0%	2%	3%	0%	0%
Health care/prescription drug costs	18%	17%	27%	14%	11%	24%	13%	15%
Environment	2%	2%	3%	2%	0%	4%	1%	3%
Same-sex/Gay marriage	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Immigration	2%	2%	0%	2%	4%	0%	2%	1%
Corruption/government ethics	4%	5%	2%	4%	5%	3%	5%	3%
Education/schools	12%	12%	18%	11%	8%	17%	8%	9%
State Budget/Govt spending	18%	20%	13%	25%	20%	15%	22%	20%
Crime, safety, police	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Energy/fuel/gas prices	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Abortion	1%	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	2%	1%
Other	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	5%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>792</b>	<b>527</b>	<i>270</i>	<i>297</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>245</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>191</i>

TREND:	July 2009	April 2009	January 2009
Property taxes	45%	48%	38%
Income tax	7%	12%	6%
Sales tax	4%	7%	4%
Other tax	5%	6%	2%
Jobs	18%	14%	19%
Cost of living/affordability	4%	3%	3%
The economy/downturn in general	23%	33%	35%
Development/building boom	2%	1%	1%
Roads/traffic/congestion	1%	2%	2%
Health care/prescription drug costs	18%	13%	14%
Environment	2%	5%	2%
Same-sex/Gay marriage	0%	2%	1%
Immigration	2%	2%	3%
Corruption/government ethics	4%	4%	6%
Education/schools	12%	18%	18%
State Budget/Govt spending	18%	5%	6%
Crime, safety, police	2%	2%	2%
Energy/fuel/gas prices	1%	n/a	n/a
Abortion	1%	n/a	n/a
Other	3%	6%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	4%	5%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<i>792</i>	<i>690</i>	<i>413</i>

[QUESTIONS 6 AND 7 WERE ROTATED]

6. Do you agree or disagree that Jon Corzine really understands the problems of average New Jerseyans?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Agree	41%	44%	64%	30%	23%	81%	18%	29%
Disagree	50%	50%	29%	62%	70%	12%	79%	51%
(VOL) Don't know	9%	7%	7%	8%	7%	6%	3%	20%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206	245	302	191

7. Do you agree or disagree that Chris Christie really understands the problems of average New Jerseyans?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Agree	42%	44%	29%	44%	62%	21%	71%	30%
Disagree	28%	31%	40%	28%	15%	54%	8%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	30%	25%	31%	28%	23%	25%	21%	49%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206	245	302	191

8. Turning to national issues, do you approve or disapprove of the job Barack Obama is doing as president?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Approve	59%	56%	92%	46%	30%	89%	36%	52%
Disapprove	29%	34%	3%	38%	58%	5%	54%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	12%	10%	5%	16%	11%	6%	10%	23%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206	245	302	191

9. Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are currently going in Washington?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Satisfied	41%	38%	64%	31%	19%	64%	22%	38%
Dissatisfied	48%	54%	23%	62%	74%	25%	70%	47%
(VOL) Both	6%	5%	10%	3%	3%	9%	5%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	3%	3%	4%	5%	2%	3%	10%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206	245	302	191

10. Do you view your vote for New Jersey governor as a way to express your feelings about the government in Washington, or is your vote for governor based only on state and local issues? [IF "a way to express your feelings about the government in Washington" ASK: Is sending a message to Washington a major reason or a minor reason behind your choice for governor?]

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Major reason to express feelings about Washington	9%	10%	10%	8%	7%	9%	11%	2%
Minor reason to express feelings about Washington	9%	9%	6%	11%	13%	9%	12%	8%
Based on state and local issues	76%	75%	78%	78%	72%	75%	72%	85%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	5%	6%	4%	7%	6%	5%	5%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206	245	302	191

11. Now imagine you felt differently about how things were going in Washington. Would that cause you to change your vote in the New Jersey governor's race, or would you still vote for the same candidate you currently support?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Change vote	6%	5%	5%	6%	4%	3%	4%	12%
Vote for same candidate	86%	88%	86%	89%	88%	92%	93%	71%
(VOL) Haven't decided who to support	5%	4%	5%	3%	5%	3%	1%	11%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	6%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206	245	302	191

12. If President Obama actively campaigns for Jon Corzine, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for Corzine, or would it have no effect either way?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
More likely	14%	13%	25%	9%	4%	29%	5%	11%
Less likely	15%	17%	4%	18%	29%	1%	28%	13%
No effect	70%	69%	70%	72%	65%	70%	66%	73%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	3%
Unwtd N	792	527	270	297	206	245	302	191

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 July 9-14, 2009 with a statewide random sample of 792 registered voters. For results based on this 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			
Registered Voter Sample (weighted)			
39% Dem	46% Male	27% 18-34	69% White
37% Ind	54% Female	41% 35-54	11% Black
24% Rep		32% 55+	13% Hispanic
			6% Asian/Other
Likely Voter Sample (weighted)			
36% Dem	48% Male	19% 18-34	76% White
37% Ind	52% Female	45% 35-54	12% Black
27% Rep		35% 55+	9% Hispanic
			4% Asian/Other

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