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*This poll was conducted by the  
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## **SENATE RACE IN A TENTATIVE TIE**

*Menendez hurt by state budget, but Bush a drag on Kean*

In a race where only 1-in-10 voters have been paying close attention so far, the two major party candidates for U.S. Senate stand in a statistical tie. Six-month Democratic incumbent Robert Menendez stands at 38% and his Republican opponent, state legislator Tom Kean, Jr. garners 37% in a preference poll of New Jersey registered voters. The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* also found 5% of voters saying they will vote for another candidate and 20% are undecided.

While the media campaign has already started with ad buys and two unusually early debates in June, the majority of voters (56%), including those who state a candidate preference, admit they have not been paying any attention to the race.

“At this early stage, where neither candidate is well known, these early numbers are based more on party ID and external events than on informed assessments of the two candidates,” commented Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

There is evidence in the poll that recent issues with the state budget are having at least a short-term impact on the race for U.S. Senate. When asked to name the top issues they would like to see the U.S. Senate candidates address in the campaign, most voters name state issues – especially New Jersey’s property tax (43%) – rather than national issues such as immigration (5%), terrorism (4%), Iraq (9%), federal taxes (14%) or jobs and the economy (12%). Education (11%), health care (8%) and gas prices (4%) are also mentioned by voters.

When asked specifically whether the state budget will impact their vote this November, 17% of registered voters say it has made them more likely to vote for Kean. However, 12% say the New Jersey budget situation has in fact swayed them toward Menendez and more than half say the state budget makes no difference in their vote.

“It looks like the recent budget drama has boosted the Kean campaign a few points, but it’s unclear whether that will carry through to November,” remarked Murray. “Especially since Kean has a millstone of his own, namely George Bush.”

With President Bush’s job approval rating at a negative 31%-57% among New Jersey voters, it is perhaps no surprise that about half (49%) say that it would be better for New Jersey to elect a Democratic senator who can stand up to Bush and the Republican majority in Congress. This compares to only 28% who feel it would be better for the state to elect a Republican who can work with the president and his fellow Congressional Republicans.

The independent vote will be key, as it is in every New Jersey election. Right now, Kean holds a 39%-24% lead over Menendez among independent voters. In the long run, though, more independent voters feel that it would be better for New Jersey to have a Democrat (45%) rather than Republican (21%) in the U.S. Senate. This, combined with the fact that only 1-in-4 independent voters have firmly made up their minds in this race “means that Kean still has a good deal of work to overcome the natural Democratic advantage in New Jersey elections by November,” said Murray.

The poll also found similar personal assessments for both candidates – Kean at 28% favorable to 12% unfavorable and Menendez at 29% favorable to 13% unfavorable. However, nearly 6-in-10 voters do not know enough about either candidate to have formed an opinion about them – a finding that Murray said, “underscores the volatility of these early horse race numbers.”

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 670 New Jersey registered voters from July 11 to 13, 2006. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.8$  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.)

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

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
A lot	<b>38%</b>	37%	36%	43%
Some	<b>34%</b>	34%	33%	33%
A little	<b>17%</b>	16%	20%	16%
None at all	<b>11%</b>	13%	12%	7%
Unwtd N	<b>670</b>	208	267	175

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

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Very closely	<b>10%</b>	10%	9%	9%
Somewhat closely	<b>34%</b>	33%	30%	43%
Not very closely	<b>56%</b>	56%	61%	48%
Unwtd N	<b>670</b>	208	267	175

4. If the election for Senator was held today, would you vote for [ROTATE] Tom Kean, Junior the Republican, Robert Menendez the Democrat, or some other candidate?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			GENDER		RACE		AGE				REGION OF STATE		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Black & Hispanic	18-29	30-49	50-69	70+	North	Central	South
Kean	<b>37%</b>	10%	39%	77%	40%	34%	45%	14%	*	39%	43%	36%	36%	34%	40%
Menendez	<b>38%</b>	77%	24%	7%	35%	41%	28%	70%	*	35%	32%	42%	39%	40%	34%
Other	<b>5%</b>	1%	11%	3%	5%	5%	5%	4%	*	5%	4%	5%	3%	5%	8%
Undecided	<b>20%</b>	13%	27%	13%	20%	20%	21%	12%	*	22%	21%	18%	21%	20%	18%
Unwtd N	<b>670</b>	208	267	175	320	350	577	66	45	248	241	130	284	192	182

**Composite Table: Strength of Vote Choice**

4. If the election for Senator was held today, would you vote for [ROTATE] Tom Kean Junior the Republican Robert Menendez the Democrat, or some other candidate?  
 5. At this moment do you lean more towards Kean or more towards Menendez?  
 6. Are you very sure about voting for [Name]; or might you change your mind before election?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Sure Kean	<b>17%</b>	1%	12%	53%
Weak Kean	<b>12%</b>	4%	15%	19%
Lean Kean	<b>8%</b>	4%	12%	5%
Undecided- Other	<b>25%</b>	13%	38%	16%
Lean Menendez	<b>6%</b>	11%	5%	1%
Weak Menendez	<b>11%</b>	24%	6%	3%
Sure Menendez	<b>21%</b>	42%	13%	3%
Unwtd N	<b>670</b>	208	267	175

7A. Is your general impression of Tom Kean Junior favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion about him?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Favorable	<b>28%</b>	14%	29%	50%
Unfavorable	<b>12%</b>	17%	13%	4%
No opinion	<b>58%</b>	67%	56%	45%
(VOL) Don't Know	<b>2%</b>	2%	2%	0%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>670</b>	208	267	175

7B. Is your general impression of Robert Menendez favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion about him?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Favorable	<b>29%</b>	49%	24%	11%
Unfavorable	<b>13%</b>	1%	14%	32%
No opinion	<b>55%</b>	48%	60%	55%
(VOL) Don't Know	<b>2%</b>	3%	2%	2%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>670</b>	208	267	175

8. In your opinion, what are the most important one or two issues that the candidates should talk about during this year's senate campaign? [*Note: More than one answer accepted.*]

	TOTAL	VOTE INTENTION		
		Kean	Menendez	Undecided
New Jersey Property Taxes	<b>43%</b>	52%	31%	47%
Other New Jersey taxes-issues	<b>14%</b>	18%	9%	15%
Federal taxes	<b>14%</b>	16%	13%	11%
Economy, jobs, cost of living	<b>12%</b>	7%	19%	11%
Gas prices	<b>4%</b>	2%	3%	5%
Health care	<b>8%</b>	3%	8%	10%
Education	<b>11%</b>	7%	17%	8%
Social security	<b>3%</b>	1%	3%	5%
Environment	<b>3%</b>	2%	4%	2%
Abortion	<b>1%</b>	3%	1%	0%
Immigration	<b>5%</b>	10%	4%	3%
Terrorism, security	<b>4%</b>	6%	4%	2%
War in Iraq	<b>9%</b>	7%	16%	3%
Ethics, corruption	<b>3%</b>	6%	1%	2%
Party control, Bush	<b>1%</b>	0%	2%	1%
Other	<b>6%</b>	5%	8%	5%
Dont Know	<b>15%</b>	9%	19%	21%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>670</b>	233	192	179

9. Regardless of how you plan to vote, do you believe it would be better for New Jersey to have a Republican Senator who can work with President Bush and the majority in Congress or a Democratic Senator who will stand up to President Bush and the majority in Congress?

	TOTAL	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
		Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Better to have Republican	<b>28%</b>	73%	5%	12%	4%	21%	77%
Better to have Democrat	<b>49%</b>	12%	86%	44%	84%	45%	7%
(VOL) Makes no difference	<b>12%</b>	11%	4%	20%	4%	21%	11%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>11%</b>	4%	6%	24%	7%	13%	5%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>670</b>	233	192	179	208	267	175

10. Do you approve or disapprove of the job George W. Bush is doing as president?

	TOTAL	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
		Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	<b>31%</b>	69%	3%	26%	8%	24%	78%
Disapprove	<b>57%</b>	24%	91%	49%	84%	58%	17%
(VOL) Don't Know	<b>12%</b>	7%	5%	26%	7%	18%	5%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>670</b>	233	192	179	208	267	175

11. Will the New Jersey budget affect your vote for United States Senate this fall, or not? IF YES: Are you now more likely to vote for Kean or Menendez because of the state budget?

	TOTAL	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
		Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Yes, More likely for Kean	<b>17%</b>	47%	0%	9%	5%	15%	42%
Yes, More likely for Menendez	<b>12%</b>	1%	25%	7%	22%	8%	1%
No effect	<b>52%</b>	44%	65%	50%	54%	54%	46%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>19%</b>	8%	10%	34%	19%	23%	11%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<b>670</b>	233	192	179	208	267	175

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 670 registered voters. 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 3.8 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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