

Contact:

PATRICK MURRAY

732-263-5858 (office)

732-979-6769 (cell)

pdmurray@monmouth.edu

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For more information:
Monmouth University Polling Institute
West Long Branch, NJ 07764
www.monmouth.edu/polling

NJ DISSATISFIED WITH DC

Obama rating down, but residents like their own Congressman

New Jersey's opinions of the president, its senators and congressmen are basically positive, although Barack Obama's ratings have dipped. The latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Press Media Poll* also finds that the Garden State has grown increasingly dissatisfied with the national government, but doubt a change in congressional leadership would make any difference.

Only 24% of New Jersey residents are satisfied with the way things are going in Washington, while 2-in-3 (66%) are dissatisfied. Satisfaction is at its lowest level since the new administration took office last year. Large numbers of Republicans (87%) and independents (75%) express dissatisfaction with DC. Even Democrats are now more likely to be dissatisfied (47%) rather than satisfied (40%) – which is a first for New Jersey Democrats since Obama took office.

At the same time, most (51%) New Jerseyans doubt that changing party control of Congress would improve the situation. Among the rest, 22% prefer to see the Republicans in control of the nation's legislative branch while an identical 22% prefer the Democrats. Only Republicans think that the country would be better off with their party in control (63%), while another 35% say it wouldn't matter. Most independents (62%) think the country would be pretty much the same regardless of which party is in power, while the remainder split their preferences between Republican (19%) and Democratic (14%) control. Interestingly, even New Jersey Democrats are more likely to say that party control of Congress doesn't matter much (50%) rather than being better off with their own party in control (43%)

“National trends indicate that Republicans are primed to pick up seats in Congress. However, the Garden State may not be the most fertile ground for the message that a leadership change will improve the situation,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

In fact, New Jerseyans tend to feel pretty good about their own members of Congress. Most (54%) approve of the job their own Congressman is doing, compared to only 28% who disapprove.

Sizable majorities of Democrats (58%) and Republicans (57%) alike approve of their Congressional representative's job performance. They are joined in this sentiment by 47% of independents.

Garden State residents also give more positive than negative reviews to President Obama, but opinion is sharply divided along partisan lines and the numbers have been slipping. Currently, 52% of New Jersey voters approve and 42% disapprove of the job their president is doing. The state's net positive rating for the president continues to be higher than the national average of 47% approve to 47% disapprove recorded by *Real Clear Politics* on July 11. However, it also marks another decline from the 30 point positive gap Obama enjoyed in the Garden State one year ago.

The state's senior senator, Frank Lautenberg, earns positive job ratings from 46% of New Jerseyans and negative ratings from 31%, with 23% having no opinion. The junior senator, Bob Menendez, garners lower ratings – 37% approve to 31% disapprove – partially due to the larger number of voters who have no opinion of his job performance (32%).

New Jersey ratings for the president and two senators – all Democrats – fall mainly along party lines. About 8-in-10 Democrats approve of Obama's job performance (79%), 6-in-10 approve of Lautenberg (62%), and over half approve of Menendez (55%). Conversely, nearly identical numbers of Republicans *disapprove* of the job all three men are doing (82% Obama, 60% Lautenberg, and 57% Menendez). Independents split down the middle on Obama (47% approve to 47% disapprove), are more positive toward Lautenberg (40% to 34%), and are nominally more negative toward Menendez (31% to 33%).

A group identified with the Tea Party movement is attempting to mount a recall election of Senator Menendez. Few New Jerseyans (24%) think that holding such a recall election before Menendez's term is up is a particularly good idea. A majority (53%) say such an election would be bad for the state. Even among those who disapprove of Menendez's job performance, 44% say a recall election would be bad for the state, compared to 45% who say it would be a good thing.

It's worth noting that prior to California's successful petition drive to recall Governor Gray Davis seven years ago, an April 2003 *Field Poll* showed that most voters in that state thought the recall process would be a bad thing (59%) rather than good thing (33%) for the state. That opinion moderated as the recall process moved forward and Davis was eventually ousted. However, he also suffered from much lower job ratings (24% approve to 65% disapprove) than Menendez does now.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Press Media Poll* was conducted by telephone with 801 New Jersey adults from July 7 to 11, 2010. 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 New Jersey Press Media 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 Barack Obama is doing as president?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Approve | 52% | 51% | 56% | 79% | 47% | 16% | 41% | 76% | 66% | 49% | 43% |
| Disapprove | 42% | 42% | 37% | 14% | 47% | 82% | 51% | 22% | 29% | 43% | 52% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 6% | 6% | 7% | 7% | 6% | 2% | 8% | 2% | 5% | 8% | 5% |
| Unwtd N | 801 | 747 | 54 | 240 | 349 | 195 | 650 | 100 | 117 | 343 | 334 |

| TREND: Registered voters only | July 2010 | April 2010 | February 2010 | October 2009 | July 2009 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| Approve | 51% | 54% | 53% | 54% | 59% |
| Disapprove | 42% | 41% | 38% | 33% | 29% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 6% | 5% | 9% | 14% | 12% |
| Unwtd N | 747 | 719 | 716 | 785 | 792 |

[QUESTIONS 2 AND 3 WERE ROTATED]

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

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Approve | 46% | 47% | 38% | 62% | 40% | 22% | 40% | 57% | 47% | 45% | 46% |
| Disapprove | 31% | 33% | 19% | 14% | 34% | 60% | 38% | 19% | 19% | 31% | 43% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 23% | 21% | 43% | 24% | 27% | 17% | 22% | 24% | 34% | 24% | 11% |
| Unwtd N | 801 | 747 | 54 | 240 | 349 | 195 | 650 | 100 | 117 | 343 | 334 |

| TREND: Registered voters only | July 2010 | October 2008 | July 2008 | April 2008 | January 2008 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| Approve | 47% | 48% | 45% | 48% | 43% |
| Disapprove | 33% | 28% | 33% | 31% | 28% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 21% | 24% | 22% | 21% | 30% |
| Unwtd N | 747 | 900 | 874 | 720 | 698 |

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

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Approve | 37% | 38% | 30% | 55% | 31% | 16% | 33% | 44% | 37% | 36% | 39% |
| Disapprove | 31% | 33% | 15% | 15% | 33% | 57% | 34% | 26% | 22% | 30% | 40% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 32% | 29% | 55% | 30% | 36% | 28% | 32% | 29% | 41% | 34% | 21% |
| Unwtd N | 801 | 747 | 54 | 240 | 349 | 195 | 650 | 100 | 117 | 343 | 334 |

| TREND: Registered voters only | July 2010 | October 2008 | April 2008 | January 2008 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Approve | 38% | 34% | 41% | 37% |
| Disapprove | 33% | 25% | 31% | 25% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 29% | 41% | 28% | 37% |
| Unwtd N | 747 | 900 | 720 | 698 |

4. Do you approve or disapprove of the job your local member of Congress is doing?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Approve | 54% | 56% | 37% | 58% | 47% | 57% | 54% | 50% | 51% | 54% | 56% |
| Disapprove | 28% | 26% | 45% | 24% | 35% | 27% | 27% | 36% | 29% | 29% | 28% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 18% | 18% | 18% | 18% | 18% | 16% | 19% | 13% | 20% | 17% | 16% |
| Unwtd N | 801 | 747 | 54 | 240 | 349 | 195 | 650 | 100 | 117 | 343 | 334 |

| TREND: Registered voters only | July 2010 | January 2008 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Approve | 56% | 55% |
| Disapprove | 26% | 19% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 18% | 26% |
| Unwtd N | 747 | 698 |

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

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Satisfied | 24% | 23% | 28% | 40% | 19% | 8% | 18% | 36% | 33% | 22% | 20% |
| Dissatisfied | 66% | 66% | 71% | 47% | 75% | 87% | 76% | 46% | 55% | 68% | 74% |
| (VOL) Both | 7% | 8% | 0% | 10% | 4% | 4% | 5% | 13% | 9% | 8% | 4% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 3% | 3% | 1% | 3% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 5% | 4% | 2% | 2% |
| Unwtd N | 801 | 747 | 54 | 240 | 349 | 195 | 650 | 100 | 117 | 343 | 334 |

| TREND: Registered voters only | July 2010 | April 2010 | February 2010 | July 2009 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|---------------|-----------|
| Satisfied | 23% | 37% | 29% | 41% |
| Dissatisfied | 66% | 56% | 64% | 48% |
| (VOL) Both | 8% | 4% | 3% | 6% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 3% | 3% | 4% | 5% |
| Unwtd N | 747 | 719 | 716 | 792 |

6. Do you think the country would be better off if the Republicans controlled Congress, if the Democrats controlled Congress, or would the country be the same regardless of which party controlled Congress?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Republicans | 22% | 23% | 16% | 3% | 19% | 63% | 29% | 10% | 14% | 24% | 28% |
| Democrats | 22% | 21% | 25% | 43% | 14% | 1% | 18% | 33% | 27% | 21% | 18% |
| Same | 51% | 51% | 58% | 50% | 62% | 35% | 50% | 55% | 52% | 52% | 50% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 5% | 5% | 0% | 3% | 6% | 1% | 4% | 3% | 6% | 4% | 4% |
| Unwtd N | 801 | 747 | 54 | 240 | 349 | 195 | 650 | 100 | 117 | 343 | 334 |

7. Senator Menendez is up for re-election in 2012. However, some groups are trying to hold a special recall election to ask voters whether they want to remove Senator Menendez from office immediately. Do you think holding a recall election of Senator Menendez before his term is up would be a good thing or bad thing for New Jersey?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Good thing | 24% | 24% | 24% | 14% | 27% | 37% | 26% | 20% | 22% | 23% | 27% |
| Bad thing | 53% | 53% | 50% | 63% | 52% | 48% | 52% | 51% | 48% | 56% | 54% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 23% | 22% | 26% | 23% | 21% | 15% | 21% | 29% | 29% | 21% | 18% |
| Unwtd N | 801 | 747 | 54 | 240 | 349 | 195 | 650 | 100 | 117 | 343 | 334 |

The Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Press Media Poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on July 7-11, 2010 with a statewide random sample of 801 adult residents. Sampling and data collection services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. 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 | 48% Male | 28% 18-34 | 67% White |
| 40% Ind | 52% Female | 41% 35-54 | 13% Black |
| 22% Rep | | 31% 55+ | 12% Hispanic |
| | | | 8% Asian/Other |

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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