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CONTRADICTIONARY VIEWS ON NEW JERSEY SENATE RACE

*Challenger's lack of enthusiastic base rather than
incumbent endorsement give Lautenberg early lead in the race*

At first glance, Senator Frank Lautenberg looks to be in fairly good position to return to Washington next year, but there are some warning signs for the incumbent in the guise of middling job approval and large numbers of uncommitted voters. The latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* finds the Democratic leading his Republican challenger Dick Zimmer by 39% to 28% among registered voters, or 44% to 34% if undecided voters who lean toward a candidate are included. Among likely voters, Lautenberg leads Zimmer by a narrower 8 points – 45% to 37%, including leaners.

Lautenberg benefits by starting off this campaign with somewhat stronger support from his partisan base – 70% of Democrats say they will vote for him – than does Zimmer – just 64% of Republicans are willing to support their U.S. Senate nominee at this point. Independents are split 26% for Lautenberg and 31% for Zimmer, with 21% on the fence and a significant 20% saying they may vote for a third party candidate.

“While Lautenberg leads, many voters cannot commit to either candidate. This is usually bad news for the incumbent. However, Republicans are not showing their typical early support for the GOP nominee,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “Couple this with the high number of voters entertaining a third party vote, and it’s clear that Dick Zimmer still has work to do with his own base before he can start courting independent voters.”

Despite the unenthusiastic Republican base, the poll indicates that Lautenberg should not set his campaign on cruise control. One cautionary sign is the incumbent's job approval rating, which is positive, but not overwhelmingly so. Currently, 45% of registered voters approve of the job Frank Lautenberg is doing compared to 33% who disapprove. This is down from 48% approve to 31% disapprove in an April poll.

The Democrat's favorability ratings are also nothing to write home about. Currently, 34% of voters have a favorable opinion of Lautenberg compared to 27% who feel unfavorably, and 39% who have no opinion. Of course, the senator can take comfort that the Republican isn't doing much better. Just 18% of voters have a favorable opinion of Zimmer compared to 11% who feel unfavorably. This also means that fully 7-in-10 voters (71%) don't know enough about the GOP nominee to form an opinion of him.

While Lautenberg's age – at 84 he is the third oldest sitting Senator – was an issue in his primary against Congressman Rob Andrews and is expected to be raised in the general election, just 31% of voters feel he is too old to be an effective senator – down from 41% in April. However, when voters were asked a separate, hypothetical question about age, 46% say that someone 84 years of age is probably too old to be an effective senator, indicating that voter concerns about this issue could be rekindled.

Lautenberg has a slight edge over Zimmer on four issue areas asked about in the poll. Specifically, the incumbent leads the challenger 24% to 12% for understanding the average problems of New Jerseyans, 26% to 17% for sharing voters' views on economic issues, 22% to 12% for sharing voters' views on Iraq policy, and 29% to 12% for making sure New Jersey gets its fair share of federal funding. Between 6% and 15% of voters think that both are equal in these areas. However, between 22% and 29% think that neither candidate would do a good job on any of these four concerns. Furthermore, many voters don't know enough about either candidate to express a preference on these issues.

“The U.S. Senate race is being run in the shadow of the presidential contest, and Lautenberg may win this one because of Obama's coattails as much as on his own record. New Jersey voters have yet to tune in to the senate campaign and few see any reason to do so. Probably because they anticipate a mudfest,” said Murray.

According to many observers, two of the nastiest U.S. Senate races on record involved the current contenders (Lautenberg in 1988 and Zimmer in 1996). Fully 61% of voters think that the 2008 Lautenberg-Zimmer race will be characterized mainly by negative attacks. Only 21%

expect it to be a positive debate focusing on the issues. By contrast, more New Jersey voters expect the presidential contest between John McCain and Barack Obama to be positive (49%) rather than negative (37%).

New Jersey voters are also more likely to express a lot of interest in the national contest (76%) compared to the state race (47%), and more have been following the presidential campaign very closely (51%) compared to the senate (11%).

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 874 New Jersey registered voters July 17-21, 2008. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.3 percent. This report also includes analysis on a smaller group of 698 “likely voters” with a ± 3.7 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. There will be an election for U.S. Senator from New Jersey. How much interest do you have in that election – a lot, some, a little, or none at all?

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| A lot | 47% | 54% | 45% | 44% | 54% | 48% | 45% | 38% | 47% | 53% |
| Some | 30% | 30% | 34% | 30% | 26% | 27% | 33% | 34% | 31% | 28% |
| A little | 13% | 10% | 13% | 14% | 8% | 14% | 11% | 15% | 12% | 11% |
| None at all | 10% | 6% | 7% | 12% | 11% | 10% | 10% | 11% | 11% | 7% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 0% | 0% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 | 332 | 293 | 220 | 415 | 459 | 140 | 397 | 321 |

2. And if the election for Senator was held today, would you vote for Dick Zimmer the Republican, Frank Lautenberg the Democrat, or some other candidate? *[NAMES WERE ROTATED]*

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Zimmer | 28% | 31% | 7% | 31% | 64% | 30% | 27% | 23% | 31% | 28% |
| Lautenberg | 39% | 41% | 70% | 26% | 10% | 36% | 42% | 38% | 37% | 44% |
| Other candidate | 14% | 11% | 11% | 20% | 10% | 15% | 12% | 16% | 12% | 13% |
| (VOL) Will not vote | 1% | 1% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 2% | 4% | 0% | 1% |
| (VOL) Undecided | 17% | 16% | 11% | 21% | 15% | 18% | 17% | 19% | 18% | 14% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 | 332 | 293 | 220 | 415 | 459 | 140 | 397 | 321 |

Senate Vote with “Leaners”

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Zimmer | 34% | 37% |
| Lautenberg | 44% | 45% |
| Other candidate | 7% | 6% |
| (VOL) Will not vote | 1% | 1% |
| (VOL) Undecided | 13% | 11% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 |

Composite Table: Strength of Vote Choice

2. If the election for Senator was held today, would you vote for [ROTATE] Dick Zimmer the Republican, Frank Lautenberg the Democrat, or some other candidate?
3. At this moment do you lean more towards Zimmer or more towards Lautenberg?
4. 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 Zimmer | 21% | 24% | 5% | 22% | 50% |
| Weak Zimmer | 7% | 7% | 1% | 10% | 15% |
| Lean Zimmer | 6% | 6% | 4% | 8% | 6% |
| Undecided-Other | 21% | 17% | 14% | 27% | 15% |
| Lean Lautenberg | 5% | 4% | 4% | 7% | 4% |
| Weak Lautenberg | 11% | 11% | 15% | 11% | 6% |
| Sure Lautenberg | 29% | 31% | 56% | 16% | 4% |
| Unwtd N | 866 | 692 | 328 | 290 | 219 |

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

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Approve | 45% | 46% | 66% | 37% | 22% | 43% | 47% | 42% | 44% | 49% |
| Disapprove | 33% | 33% | 14% | 37% | 59% | 38% | 28% | 29% | 32% | 36% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 22% | 20% | 20% | 26% | 19% | 20% | 25% | 29% | 24% | 15% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 | 332 | 293 | 220 | 415 | 459 | 140 | 397 | 321 |

| TREND: | July 2008 | April 2008 | January 2008 |
|------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| Approve | 45% | 48% | 43% |
| Disapprove | 33% | 31% | 28% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 22% | 21% | 30% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 720 | 698 |

[QUESTIONS 6 AND 7 WERE ROTATED]

6. Is your general impression of Frank Lautenberg favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion about him?

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Favorable | 34% | 37% | 54% | 26% | 16% | 35% | 33% | 31% | 34% | 38% |
| Unfavorable | 27% | 29% | 9% | 33% | 51% | 32% | 22% | 19% | 28% | 30% |
| No opinion | 39% | 33% | 37% | 42% | 33% | 34% | 44% | 49% | 37% | 32% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 | 332 | 293 | 220 | 415 | 459 | 140 | 397 | 321 |

| TREND: | July 2008 | April 2008 |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Favorable | 34% | 43% |
| Unfavorable | 27% | 30% |
| No opinion | 39% | 33% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 720 |

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

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Favorable | 18% | 20% | 12% | 20% | 29% | 20% | 16% | 16% | 18% | 21% |
| Unfavorable | 11% | 12% | 13% | 10% | 7% | 14% | 8% | 10% | 11% | 12% |
| No opinion | 71% | 68% | 75% | 70% | 63% | 66% | 76% | 74% | 71% | 67% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 | 332 | 293 | 220 | 415 | 459 | 140 | 397 | 321 |

| TREND: | July 2008 | April 2008 |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Favorable | 18% | 9% |
| Unfavorable | 11% | 10% |
| No opinion | 71% | 80% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 720 |

8. Which candidate [READ] – Lautenberg, Zimmer, both, or neither one? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]
 A. Understands the problems of average New Jerseyans

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Lautenberg | 24% | 25% | 40% | 15% | 9% | 23% | 25% | 21% | 24% | 28% |
| Zimmer | 12% | 13% | 4% | 16% | 22% | 15% | 9% | 8% | 13% | 14% |
| Both | 15% | 15% | 16% | 13% | 16% | 14% | 15% | 18% | 13% | 15% |
| Neither | 29% | 27% | 22% | 37% | 29% | 31% | 26% | 26% | 29% | 29% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 21% | 20% | 19% | 19% | 24% | 17% | 25% | 27% | 22% | 14% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 | 332 | 293 | 220 | 415 | 459 | 140 | 397 | 321 |

- B. Shares your views on economic issues

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Lautenberg | 26% | 28% | 43% | 21% | 8% | 27% | 25% | 26% | 26% | 26% |
| Zimmer | 17% | 19% | 3% | 20% | 39% | 22% | 13% | 15% | 20% | 16% |
| Both | 8% | 7% | 8% | 10% | 6% | 7% | 9% | 11% | 5% | 10% |
| Neither | 22% | 21% | 20% | 23% | 22% | 22% | 22% | 22% | 21% | 23% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 27% | 26% | 26% | 26% | 25% | 22% | 31% | 26% | 27% | 25% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 | 332 | 293 | 220 | 415 | 459 | 140 | 397 | 321 |

- C. Shares your views on the war in Iraq

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Lautenberg | 22% | 24% | 37% | 15% | 7% | 22% | 21% | 23% | 24% | 20% |
| Zimmer | 12% | 14% | 3% | 15% | 25% | 16% | 9% | 12% | 13% | 13% |
| Both | 6% | 6% | 7% | 8% | 2% | 5% | 6% | 11% | 3% | 5% |
| Neither | 26% | 22% | 22% | 32% | 26% | 27% | 25% | 23% | 24% | 31% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 34% | 34% | 31% | 30% | 40% | 29% | 38% | 31% | 36% | 32% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 | 332 | 293 | 220 | 415 | 459 | 140 | 397 | 321 |

- D. Will make sure New Jersey gets its fair share of federal funding

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Lautenberg | 29% | 30% | 47% | 19% | 16% | 30% | 28% | 29% | 29% | 31% |
| Zimmer | 12% | 13% | 4% | 14% | 25% | 14% | 10% | 9% | 15% | 11% |
| Both | 11% | 12% | 9% | 15% | 12% | 12% | 11% | 10% | 11% | 13% |
| Neither | 24% | 22% | 22% | 27% | 23% | 24% | 23% | 24% | 20% | 26% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 24% | 23% | 19% | 25% | 25% | 20% | 28% | 28% | 25% | 19% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 | 332 | 293 | 220 | 415 | 459 | 140 | 397 | 321 |

9. Do you think the campaign between Lautenberg and Zimmer is more likely to be positive where the candidates talk about the issues or more likely to be negative where the candidate's attack each other?

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Positive | 21% | 20% | 30% | 13% | 18% | 20% | 22% | 32% | 15% | 20% |
| Negative | 61% | 62% | 54% | 67% | 69% | 63% | 59% | 49% | 67% | 63% |
| (VOL) Both | 4% | 4% | 4% | 6% | 1% | 4% | 4% | 5% | 4% | 3% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 14% | 13% | 12% | 14% | 12% | 13% | 15% | 15% | 13% | 14% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 | 332 | 293 | 220 | 415 | 459 | 140 | 397 | 321 |

[Question 10 was asked of a random sub-sample: moe= ± 4.7%]

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

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Agree | 31% | 33% | 27% | 33% | 34% | 28% | 33% | 25% | 29% | 37% |
| Disagree | 54% | 54% | 61% | 51% | 45% | 58% | 51% | 56% | 57% | 52% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 15% | 13% | 12% | 15% | 21% | 14% | 16% | 19% | 15% | 12% |
| Unwtd N | 435 | 355 | 160 | 154 | 106 | 199 | 236 | 59 | 199 | 169 |

| TREND: | July 2008 | April 2008 | January 2008 |
|------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| Agree | 31% | 41% | 34% |
| Disagree | 54% | 46% | 51% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 15% | 13% | 15% |
| Unwtd N | 435 | 639 | 698 |

[Question 11 was asked of a random sub-sample: moe= ± 4.7%]

11. In general, do you agree or disagree that someone 84 years of age is probably too old to be an effective senator?

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Agree | 46% | 45% | 40% | 48% | 58% | 42% | 49% | 50% | 40% | 50% |
| Disagree | 45% | 45% | 55% | 42% | 37% | 49% | 42% | 47% | 46% | 44% |
| Depends | 5% | 5% | 2% | 6% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 1% | 8% | 4% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 4% | 5% | 3% | 5% | 0% | 3% | 4% | 2% | 6% | 2% |
| Unwtd N | 439 | 343 | 172 | 139 | 114 | 216 | 223 | 81 | 198 | 152 |

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

| | Registered Voters | Likely Voters | PARTY ID | | | GENDER | | AGE | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|--------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Male | Female | 18 to 34 | 35 to 54 | 55+ |
| Very closely | 11% | 13% | 11% | 12% | 9% | 14% | 8% | 11% | 10% | 11% |
| Somewhat closely | 38% | 39% | 41% | 33% | 39% | 36% | 40% | 35% | 40% | 39% |
| Not very closely | 50% | 47% | 47% | 54% | 51% | 50% | 51% | 52% | 50% | 48% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 1% | 1% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 0% | 1% |
| Unwtd N | 874 | 698 | 332 | 293 | 220 | 415 | 459 | 140 | 397 | 321 |

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 17-21, 2008 with a statewide random sample of 874 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 3.3 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) | | | |
| 42% Dem | 46% Male | 26% 18-34 | 71% White |
| 33% Ind | 54% Female | 42% 35-54 | 13% Black |
| 25% Rep | | 32% 55+ | 10% Hispanic |
| | | | 6% 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 which affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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