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## **NEW JERSEY: STATE RATING AT RECORD LOW**

### *Drop in Quality of Life Index tempered by solid local ratings*

West Long Branch, N.J. – In its regular tracking of residents’ satisfaction with life in New Jersey, the **Monmouth University Poll** finds that positive opinion of the state as a place to live stands at a 35-year low of 55%. This has caused the overall Garden State Quality of Life Index to drop to +18. The decline could have been greater if the index was not buoyed by stable ratings from residents for their local communities.

Currently, just over half of New Jerseyans say the state is either an excellent (12%) or good (43%) place to call home, while 30% rate it as only fair and 15% as poor. This 55% positive rating is down from 63% just a few months ago. It also marks an all-time low since this question has been asked in New Jersey opinion polls going back to 1980. The prior bottom point was 57% in August 2011.

Monmouth’s Garden State Quality of Life Index score now stands at +18, down from +23 in February. Half of the index score comes from residents’ overall rating of the state as a place to live. The score would have declined more if not for the fact that local community evaluations comprising the other half of the index remained stable. Specifically, positive evaluations of one’s hometown as a place to live held steady at 71% compared to 72% in February. Positive evaluations of local public schools stand at 60%, which is basically the same as the 61% positive rating recorded earlier this year. Evaluations of local environmental quality have remained steady at 71% positive, compared to 72% in February. Perceptions of personal safety have actually increased. Currently, 67% of Garden State residents say they feel very safe in their own neighborhood at night, which is up from 62% who said the same in February.

“New Jerseyans still like their towns and their neighbors. They’re just having a hard time with the state as a whole,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

The Garden State Quality of Life Index score dropped less among adults age 18 to 34 (+25 from +26) than it did among those age 35 to 54 (+11 from +18) and age 55 and older (+20 from +28). It also declined more in urban areas (-2 from +11) than it did in stable towns (+28 from +30) and growing

suburbs (+23 from +27). Regionally, the Garden State Quality of Life Index dropped by 9 or 10 points in North Jersey, the Jersey Shore, and rural counties in the state. It only dropped by 2 or 3 points in Central Jersey. The index actually went up by 6 points in the Delaware Valley counties.

<b>GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX</b>											
	<b>NJ TOTAL</b>	<u>GENDER</u>		<u>AGE</u>			<u>RACE</u>		<u>INCOME</u>		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/ Hispanic	<\$50K	\$50- 100K	>\$100K
July 2015	<b>+18</b>	+18	+18	+25	+11	+20	+24	+5	n/a	n/a	n/a
February 2015	<b>+23</b>	+21	+26	+26	+18	+28	+29	+10	+13	+30	+31
September 2014	<b>+18</b>	+19	+17	+12	+20	+20	+23	+5	+13	+15	+30
April 2014	<b>+25</b>	+24	+25	+31	+20	+25	+27	+16	+17	+24	+33
February 2014	<b>+23</b>	+28	+18	+23	+21	+26	+27	+11	+8	+23	+35
December 2013	<b>+24</b>	+25	+23	+24	+21	+27	+29	+10	+10	+24	+35
September 2013	<b>+26</b>	+26	+26	+27	+23	+30	+33	+10	+17	+25	+42
April 2013	<b>+21</b>	+19	+24	+19	+19	+27	+29	+3	+12	+19	+35
February 2013	<b>+29</b>	+28	+30	+30	+27	+31	+36	+12	+20	+30	+36
December 2012	<b>+30</b>	+31	+29	+30	+30	+30	+36	+14	+17	+33	+38
September 2012	<b>+24</b>	+28	+20	+16	+21	+32	+30	+5	+10	+23	+37
July 2012	<b>+27</b>	+26	+29	+21	+31	+30	+32	+16	+16	+31	+37
April 2012	<b>+31</b>	+33	+28	+25	+30	+37	+36	+19	+24	+28	+42
February 2012	<b>+25</b>	+20	+30	+25	+24	+26	+29	+13	+17	+23	+38
October 2011	<b>+24</b>	+24	+24	+23	+21	+29	+31	+7	+15	+25	+31
August 2011	<b>+22</b>	+25	+19	+27	+19	+21	+26	+9	+9	+22	+32
May 2011	<b>+23</b>	+24	+22	+23	+22	+23	+26	+14	+15	+22	+32
December 2010	<b>+21</b>	+20	+23	+23	+20	+23	+26	+13	+15	+21	+31

<b>GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX</b>											
		<u>REGION</u>						<u>COMMUNITY TYPE</u>			
		North east	Urban Core	Route 1 Corridor	Central Hills	Northern Shore	Delaware Valley	Garden Core	Urban	Stable Town	Growing Suburb
July 2015	<b>+21</b>	+4	+22	+35	+22	+17	+10	-2	+28	+23	
February 2015	<b>+31</b>	+13	+24	+38	+31	+11	+19	+11	+30	+27	
September 2014	<b>+23</b>	+8	+12	+42	+27	+18	+4	+10	+22	+19	
April 2014	<b>+24</b>	+10	+22	+43	+29	+25	+23	+4	+26	+33	
February 2014	<b>+27</b>	+16	+20	+37	+30	+14	+16	+6	+28	+28	
December 2013	<b>+31</b>	+15	+26	+40	+25	+14	+17	+5	+29	+30	
September 2013	<b>+27</b>	+8	+21	+52	+33	+27	+19	+1	+34	+32	
April 2013	<b>+31</b>	+4	+19	+38	+22	+21	+21	-3	+30	+27	
February 2013	<b>+31</b>	+17	+35	+37	+36	+25	+23	+11	+33	+36	
December 2012	<b>+36</b>	+18	+26	+47	+40	+21	+31	+9	+37	+37	
September 2012	<b>+29</b>	+14	+17	+45	+33	+26	+13	-1	+27	+31	
July 2012	<b>+37</b>	+12	+30	+37	+34	+22	+18	+8	+34	+34	
April 2012	<b>+38</b>	+26	+27	+44	+34	+22	+28	+20	+35	+36	
February 2012	<b>+33</b>	+17	+27	+35	+29	+19	+22	+11	+31	+29	
October 2011	<b>+31</b>	+6	+22	+45	+35	+18	+23	-1	+31	+34	
August 2011	<b>+24</b>	+16	+21	+38	+27	+26	+6	+4	+29	+25	
May 2011	<b>+28</b>	+17	+16	+41	+29	+22	+20	+6	+29	+28	
December 2010	<b>+26</b>	+15	+22	+38	+23	+14	+17	+12	+23	+27	

The Garden State Quality of Life Index was created by the Monmouth University Polling Institute to serve as a resident-based indicator of the quality of life offered by the state of New Jersey. The index is based on five separate poll questions: overall opinion of the state as a place to live – which contributes half the index score – and ratings of one’s hometown, the performance of local schools, the quality of the local environment, and feelings of safety in one’s own neighborhood. The index can potentially range from -100 to +100.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone with 503 New Jersey adults from June 30 to July 1, 2015. The total sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.4$  percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, N.J.

### DATA TABLES

*The questions referred to in this release are as follows:*

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

1. Overall, how would you rate New Jersey as a place to live – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
July 2015	55%	12%	43%	30%	15%	0%	(503)
May 2015	63%	13%	50%	27%	10%	1%	(500)
February 2015	63%	15%	48%	25%	11%	1%	(805)
September 2014	61%	13%	48%	25%	13%	1%	(802)
June 2014	62%	15%	47%	26%	11%	0%	(800)
April 2014	64%	15%	49%	26%	10%	0%	(803)
February 2014	63%	15%	48%	26%	11%	0%	(803)
December 2013	65%	20%	45%	26%	9%	0%	(802)
September 2013	65%	19%	46%	25%	10%	1%	(783)
April 2013	61%	15%	46%	27%	11%	0%	(806)
February 2013	68%	18%	50%	24%	7%	1%	(803)
December 2012	72%	20%	52%	21%	5%	1%	(816)
September 2012	65%	15%	50%	23%	11%	0%	(805)
July 2012	69%	17%	52%	23%	8%	0%	(803)
April 2012	70%	20%	50%	23%	7%	0%	(804)
February 2012	62%	15%	47%	26%	11%	1%	(803)
October 2011	67%	15%	52%	24%	8%	0%	(817)
August 2011	57%	14%	43%	31%	11%	1%	(802)
May 2011	59%	14%	45%	29%	11%	0%	(807)
December 2010	63%	17%	46%	26%	10%	1%	(2864)
October 2007	63%	17%	46%	25%	12%	1%	(1001)
August 2004	68%	22%	46%	21%	10%	1%	(800)
May 2003	72%	20%	52%	23%	5%	0%	(1002)
April 2001	76%	23%	53%	19%	4%	1%	(802)
March 2000	76%	25%	51%	17%	6%	0%	(800)
May 1999	76%	22%	54%	19%	5%	0%	(800)
February 1994	71%	18%	53%	22%	7%	0%	(801)
March 1990	68%	21%	47%	25%	6%	1%	(800)
February 1988	78%	27%	51%	17%	4%	1%	(800)
February 1987	84%	31%	53%	11%	4%	0%	(800)
May 1985	81%	29%	52%	14%	3%	1%	(500)
October 1984	80%	29%	51%	15%	4%	1%	(1000)
January 1981	66%	16%	50%	26%	7%	1%	(1003)
July 1980	68%	18%	50%	23%	7%	2%	(1005)

2. How would you rate your town or city as a place to live – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
July 2015	71%	29%	42%	19%	10%	0%	(503)
February 2015	72%	29%	43%	21%	7%	0%	(805)
September 2014	69%	24%	45%	22%	10%	0%	(802)
April 2014	71%	27%	44%	20%	9%	0%	(803)
February 2014	70%	31%	39%	23%	7%	0%	(803)
December 2013	70%	29%	41%	21%	8%	1%	(802)
September 2013	72%	32%	40%	18%	9%	1%	(783)
April 2013	67%	29%	38%	25%	8%	0%	(806)
February 2013	73%	30%	43%	20%	7%	0%	(803)
December 2012	74%	32%	42%	17%	9%	0%	(816)
September 2012	72%	33%	39%	19%	9%	0%	(805)
July 2012	74%	32%	42%	18%	7%	1%	(803)
April 2012	76%	34%	42%	17%	7%	0%	(804)
February 2012	74%	33%	41%	21%	5%	0%	(803)
October 2011	73%	26%	47%	20%	8%	0%	(817)
August 2011	76%	28%	48%	18%	6%	0%	(802)
May 2011	73%	33%	40%	20%	7%	0%	(807)
December 2010	73%	27%	46%	20%	8%	0%	(2864)
May 2003	74%	29%	45%	19%	7%	0%	(1002)
April 2001	73%	28%	45%	21%	6%	0%	(802)
May 1995	70%	30%	40%	21%	8%	0%	(802)
June 1994	72%	31%	41%	19%	9%	0%	(801)
September 1988	72%	26%	46%	18%	9%	1%	(500)
October 1984	71%	30%	41%	21%	7%	1%	(999)
June 1980	67%	23%	44%	24%	9%	0%	(1005)
May 1977	66%	25%	41%	24%	10%	0%	(1005)

[QUESTIONS 3, 4 AND 5 WERE ROTATED]

3. How would you rate the quality of the environment in the area where you live – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
July 2015	71%	27%	44%	20%	9%	0%	(503)
February 2015	72%	27%	45%	23%	4%	0%	(805)
September 2014	72%	24%	48%	21%	5%	1%	(802)
April 2014	76%	27%	49%	18%	6%	0%	(803)
February 2014	73%	29%	44%	21%	6%	0%	(803)
December 2013	69%	27%	42%	24%	7%	0%	(802)
September 2013	75%	30%	45%	18%	7%	1%	(783)
April 2013	70%	27%	43%	22%	7%	0%	(806)
February 2013	71%	26%	45%	24%	4%	2%	(803)
December 2012	73%	25%	48%	20%	7%	1%	(816)
September 2012	72%	30%	42%	20%	7%	0%	(805)
July 2012	74%	30%	44%	19%	7%	1%	(803)
April 2012	75%	30%	45%	18%	6%	1%	(804)
February 2012	77%	29%	48%	17%	5%	0%	(803)
October 2011	72%	25%	47%	19%	9%	0%	(817)
August 2011	79%	31%	48%	16%	5%	0%	(802)
May 2011	79%	33%	46%	15%	6%	0%	(807)
December 2010	66%	14%	52%	25%	9%	0%	(2864)
April 2001	70%	27%	43%	22%	7%	1%	(402)
September 1988	53%	10%	43%	31%	15%	1%	(500)

4. How would you rate the job your local schools are doing – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
July 2015	60%	27%	33%	22%	9%	8%	(503)
February 2015	61%	21%	40%	24%	8%	7%	(805)
September 2014	60%	21%	39%	24%	9%	7%	(802)
April 2014	63%	24%	39%	22%	9%	6%	(803)
February 2014	61%	22%	39%	22%	10%	7%	(803)
December 2013	60%	20%	40%	23%	12%	5%	(802)
September 2013	62%	24%	38%	21%	7%	9%	(783)
April 2013	59%	21%	38%	27%	9%	5%	(806)
February 2013	64%	24%	40%	20%	7%	9%	(803)
December 2012	61%	21%	40%	23%	7%	9%	(816)
September 2012	61%	27%	34%	21%	10%	8%	(805)
July 2012	61%	22%	39%	20%	11%	8%	(803)
April 2012	63%	23%	40%	21%	7%	8%	(804)
February 2012	68%	26%	42%	16%	8%	8%	(803)
October 2011	60%	21%	39%	20%	13%	7%	(817)
August 2011	63%	19%	44%	26%	6%	5%	(802)
May 2011	63%	24%	39%	22%	10%	6%	(807)
December 2010	64%	24%	40%	23%	8%	5%	(2864)
August 2004	61%	24%	37%	17%	12%	9%	(800)
April 2001	64%	21%	43%	21%	6%	9%	(802)
September 1999	62%	18%	44%	21%	9%	8%	(802)
September 1998	62%	20%	42%	23%	9%	7%	(804)
February 1996	60%	20%	40%	20%	11%	9%	(804)
September 1993	52%	16%	36%	29%	14%	5%	(801)
January 1992	53%	15%	38%	26%	15%	5%	(800)
October 1987	60%	14%	46%	23%	6%	11%	(500)
October 1986	55%	15%	40%	26%	10%	9%	(800)
October 1983	59%	16%	43%	23%	10%	8%	(802)
May 1978	52%	12%	40%	25%	12%	11%	(1003)

5. How safe do you feel in your neighborhood at night – very safe, somewhat safe, or not at all safe?

TREND:	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Not at all safe	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
July 2015	67%	27%	6%	0%	(503)
February 2015	62%	33%	4%	0%	(805)
September 2014	58%	36%	6%	0%	(802)
April 2014	66%	30%	4%	1%	(803)
February 2014	67%	28%	6%	0%	(803)
December 2013	60%	33%	7%	0%	(802)
September 2013	65%	27%	7%	1%	(783)
April 2013	66%	28%	6%	0%	(806)
February 2013	63%	30%	6%	1%	(803)
December 2012	64%	29%	6%	1%	(816)
September 2012	65%	25%	6%	0%	(805)
July 2012	60%	32%	7%	1%	(803)
April 2012	64%	31%	5%	1%	(804)
February 2012	62%	32%	5%	0%	(803)
October 2011	62%	31%	7%	0%	(817)
August 2011	63%	31%	6%	0%	(802)
May 2011	68%	27%	5%	0%	(807)
December 2010	59%	35%	6%	0%	(2864)
February 1993	42%	44%	13%	0%	(801)
October 1987	51%	36%	11%	2%	(499)
October 1984	53%	36%	9%	2%	(500)
May 1981	43%	43%	13%	1%	(497)

[Note: All trend results prior to 2005 come from Rutgers University's Eagleton Poll.]

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from June 30 to July 1, 2015 with a statewide random sample of 503 adult residents, including 377 contacted via live interview on a landline telephone and 126 via live interview on a cell phone, in English. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). 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 4.4 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). 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.

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>			
<i>35% Dem</i>	<i>48% Male</i>	<i>28% 18-34</i>	<i>63% White</i>
<i>45% Ind</i>	<i>52% Female</i>	<i>38% 35-54</i>	<i>13% Black</i>
<i>20% Rep</i>		<i>34% 55+</i>	<i>15% Hispanic</i>
			<i>9% Asian/Other</i>

Region is defined by county boundaries: Northeast (Bergen, Passaic), Urban Core (Essex, Hudson), Route 1 Corridor (Mercer, Middlesex, Union), Central Hills (Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset), Northern Shore (Monmouth, Ocean), Delaware Valley (Burlington, Camden, Gloucester), and Garden Core (Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Salem, Sussex, Warren).

*It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect them. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.*

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