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CHRISTIE BUILDS LEAD OVER CORZINE

Republican makes gains with teachers and unions

The latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* finds Republican challenger Chris Christie widening his lead over incumbent Democrat Jon Corzine in the race for governor. Among likely voters, Christie now holds a 14 point advantage – 50% to 36% – with 4% for independent Chris Daggett. Last month, Christie held an 8 point lead – 45% to 37% – among likely voters in this poll.

Among registered voters, including those both likely and unlikely to vote on November 3rd, the gap narrows to 4 points – 43% for Christie to 39% for Corzine – which is statistically similar to the 6 point gap among registered voters in the July poll.

“As an election heats up most polls focus only on likely voters with the aim of predicting the eventual outcome. However, we are still in the early days of this race and the role of a public poll should be to increase our understanding of electoral dynamics, including which registered voters may or may not show up on election day,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “In this case, we find that Corzine has made some gains with black and Hispanic voters, while Christie has increased his vote share among union workers. But the bottom line is that Christie’s supporters are more engaged, which is why the Republican’s lead among likely voters has grown.”

The poll, which was conducted after both the July campaign stop by President Barack Obama and the arrests of dozens of public officials and political operatives, is a tale of two still unsettled electorates. The Obama visit seems to have helped Governor Jon Corzine increase his support among some registered voters, but it has not made those voters any more likely to vote on election day. For example, Corzine now claims the support of 65% of black and Hispanic voters, which is up from 50% last month. However, only 58% of all Corzine supporters among registered voters are deemed likely to vote on November 3rd, which is down slightly from 62% in July.

On the other hand, Chris Christie now holds a 48% to 30% lead among voters in union households and a 47% to 37% lead among teachers. He also draws nearly even with the governor for state government worker support – 43% for Corzine to 40% for Christie. These findings mark significant gains for the Republican challenger among these highly engaged and traditionally Democratic voting blocs. Among all registered voters in the poll, 78% of Christie supporters are deemed likely to turnout on election day, which is up significantly from 64% last month.

Support among Democratic voter groups						
Vote choice	Democrats	Black & Hispanic	Urban	State worker households	Teacher households	Union households
<u>August 2009</u>						
Corzine	73%	65%	51%	43%	37%	30%
Christie	14%	19%	37%	40%	47%	48%
Other	5%	8%	6%	8%	12%	8%
Undecided	8%	8%	7%	10%	4%	14%
<u>July 2009</u>						
Corzine	67%	50%	50%	44%	47%	38%
Christie	17%	24%	30%	31%	36%	40%
Other	4%	8%	4%	6%	7%	10%
Undecided	11%	18%	15%	18%	10%	13%

The poll found that registered voters’ personal evaluations of Governor Corzine stand at 39% favorable to 46% unfavorable, which is nearly identical to the 38% to 46% rating he held last month. Chris Christie’s standing among registered voters is now 42% favorable to 30% unfavorable. The Republican’s favorable ratings continue to remain steady, but his unfavorable ratings have grown by 6 points since July and by 18 points since January.

“The Corzine campaign strategy so far has been to go extremely negative on Christie in order to slowly chip away at the former U.S. Attorney’s reputation on ethics. Even in the wake of last week’s corruption busts, for which Christie can take some credit, this slow bleed on his unfavorable ratings has not abated,” said Murray. “However, the Republican has been able to make gains in voters’ choice because New Jerseyans have grown more negative about the job their current governor is doing.”

Currently 38% of registered voters approve of the job Governor Corzine is doing while 54% disapprove. This marks no change in his approval number and a 3 point increase in his disapproval number since July. Among likely voters, nearly 6-in-10 (58%) disapprove of the job their governor is doing compared to just 35% who approve.

As it has done since the beginning of this year, the poll continues to track the issues that voters say are most important in deciding their choice for governor. Prior to the federal arrests on July 23, no more than 6% of Garden State voters named corruption as one of their top issues. In the current poll, that number has increased, but not dramatically, to 13%. Voters continue to view property taxes (43%) as the overriding issue in this race, with the economy (21%), health care (17%), jobs (16%) and the state budget (13%) all seen as at least as important an issue, if not more so, than corruption.

Voters were asked which candidate would better handle eight important policy areas. Chris Christie is seen as having a clear advantage over Jon Corzine for handling property taxes (45% to 27%) and corruption (46% to 28%). Christie also holds the issue advantage over Corzine for handling the state budget (44% to 32%) as well as the economy and jobs (40% to 35%).

The Republican challenger is basically tied with the incumbent Democrat on handling education (36% to 36%), health care (35% to 36%), and improving New Jersey’s cities (38% to 35%). Christie trails Corzine only in the area of environmental policy (31% to 37%).

The Republican has made headlines for campaigning traditionally Democratic urban strongholds and touting his urban renewal agenda, education reforms such as school vouchers, and green energy.

“It’s very unusual to have New Jersey voters view the Republican candidate as more capable of dealing with urban issues and education. Christie’s strategy of going directly after Corzine’s base appears to be paying off,” said Murray.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 723 New Jersey registered voters from July 29 to August 2, 2009. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.7 percent. This report also includes analysis on a smaller group of 484 “likely voters” with a ± 4.5 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	Likely	PARTY ID		
	Voters	Voters	Dem	Ind	Rep
Corzine	39%	36%	73%	28%	9%
Christie	43%	50%	14%	48%	81%
Daggett	4%	4%	2%	7%	4%
Other candidate	3%	2%	3%	4%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	10%	8%	8%	12%	4%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	723	484	233	281	193

TREND:	August 2009		July 2009	
	Reg voters	Likely voters	Reg voters	Likely voters
Corzine	39%	36%	37%	37%
Christie	43%	50%	43%	45%
Daggett	4%	4%	5%	4%
Other candidate	3%	2%	1%	1%
(VOL) Don't know	10%	8%	15%	13%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	723	484	792	527

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?]

TREND:	August 2009		July 2009	
	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
Sure Corzine	23%	24%	24%	25%
Weak Corzine	10%	7%	8%	8%
Lean Corzine	6%	5%	5%	4%
Undecided-Other	17%	14%	21%	18%
Lean Christie	9%	8%	9%	8%
Weak Christie	9%	11%	10%	8%
Sure Christie	25%	31%	24%	29%
Unwtd N	723	484	792	527

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	39%	37%	67%	32%	12%	92%	4%	29%
Unfavorable	46%	53%	19%	57%	74%	0%	89%	41%
No opinion/Don't recognize	15%	10%	14%	12%	14%	7%	8%	30%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

TREND:	August 2009	July 2009	April 2009	January 2009	July 2008	September 2006
Favorable	39%	38%	43%	49%	43%	46%
Unfavorable	46%	46%	47%	38%	44%	30%
No opinion/Don't recognize	15%	16%	9%	12%	12%	24%
Unwtd N	723	792	690	413	889	630

Chris Christie

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Favorable	42%	49%	15%	46%	78%	10%	89%	25%
Unfavorable	30%	33%	50%	29%	7%	59%	2%	24%
No opinion/Don't recognize	28%	18%	35%	25%	16%	31%	9%	51%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

TREND:	August 2009	July 2009	April 2009	January 2009	July 2008
Favorable	42%	43%	41%	42%	30%
Unfavorable	30%	24%	16%	12%	9%
No opinion/Don't recognize	28%	34%	43%	46%	62%
Unwtd N	723	792	690	413	889

Chris Daggett

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Favorable	9%	11%	6%	13%	8%	6%	9%	6%
Unfavorable	9%	9%	12%	7%	8%	14%	7%	3%
No opinion/Don't recognize	82%	80%	83%	80%	83%	79%	84%	91%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

TREND:	August 2009	July 2009	April 2009
Favorable	9%	6%	5%
Unfavorable	9%	9%	6%
No opinion/Don't recognize	82%	86%	89%
Unwtd N	723	792	690

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Jon Corzine is doing as governor?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Approve	38%	35%	67%	26%	13%	86%	4%	29%
Disapprove	54%	58%	26%	64%	82%	8%	94%	48%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	7%	7%	10%	5%	6%	2%	23%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

TREND:	August 2009	July 2009	April 2009	February 2009	January 2009	October 2008	Sept 2008	July 2008	April 2008	March 2008	January 2008	October 2007	July 2007	April 2007	February 2007	Sept 2006	July 2006	April 2006
Registered voters	38%	38%	40%	34%	43%	38%	40%	39%	36%	34%	42%	47%	46%	52%	44%	44%	40%	33%
Approve	38%	38%	40%	34%	43%	38%	40%	39%	36%	34%	42%	47%	46%	52%	44%	44%	40%	33%
Disapprove	54%	51%	49%	51%	40%	45%	49%	47%	53%	55%	46%	34%	36%	30%	36%	41%	41%	38%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	12%	11%	15%	17%	18%	11%	14%	11%	11%	12%	19%	17%	17%	20%	16%	19%	29%
Unwtd N	723	792	690	721	413	900	709	889	720	719	698	688	678	668	681	663	670	652

4. 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	43%	47%	34%	49%	50%	34%	52%	43%
Income tax	7%	7%	5%	6%	13%	4%	10%	8%
Sales tax	3%	4%	1%	4%	6%	3%	5%	1%
Other tax	6%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	7%	3%
Jobs	16%	16%	19%	16%	7%	20%	10%	20%
Cost of living/affordability	2%	2%	4%	1%	2%	3%	2%	3%
The economy/downturn in general	21%	22%	25%	19%	20%	28%	21%	14%
Development/building boom	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	4%
Roads/traffic/congestion	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%
Health care/prescription drug costs	17%	14%	21%	16%	9%	18%	13%	23%
Environment	1%	2%	2%	1%	0%	3%	0%	2%
Same-sex/Gay marriage	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Immigration	1%	2%	0%	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%
Corruption/government ethics	13%	17%	8%	16%	16%	7%	17%	11%
Education/schools	10%	9%	16%	6%	8%	14%	6%	9%
State Budget/Govt spending	13%	14%	11%	16%	13%	12%	15%	11%
Crime, safety, police	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Energy/fuel/gas prices	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Abortion	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Other	3%	2%	5%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	5%	7%	6%	9%	10%	5%	7%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

TREND:	August 2009	July 2009	April 2009	January 2009
Property taxes	43%	45%	48%	38%
Income tax	7%	7%	12%	6%
Sales tax	3%	4%	7%	4%
Other tax	6%	5%	6%	2%
Jobs	16%	18%	14%	19%
Cost of living/affordability	2%	4%	3%	3%
The economy/downturn in general	21%	23%	33%	35%
Development/building boom	1%	2%	1%	1%
Roads/traffic/congestion	1%	1%	2%	2%
Health care/prescription drug costs	17%	18%	13%	14%
Environment	1%	2%	5%	2%
Same-sex/Gay marriage	1%	0%	2%	1%
Immigration	1%	2%	2%	3%
Corruption/government ethics	13%	4%	4%	6%
Education/schools	10%	12%	18%	18%
State Budget/Govt spending	13%	18%	5%	6%
Crime, safety, police	2%	2%	2%	2%
Energy/fuel/gas prices	0%	1%	n/a	n/a
Abortion	1%	1%	n/a	n/a
Other	3%	3%	6%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	3%	4%	5%
Unwtd N	723	792	690	413

5. Regardless of who you may support for governor... Who would do a better job on [READ ITEM] – Jon Corzine or Chris Christie? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]
The economy and jobs

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Corzine better	35%	33%	70%	22%	9%	79%	2%	26%
Christie better	40%	47%	12%	47%	72%	7%	83%	22%
(VOL) Both equally	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%	3%	1%	2%
(VOL) Neither	8%	9%	6%	10%	4%	3%	6%	11%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	10%	9%	20%	13%	9%	9%	39%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

Property taxes

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Corzine better	27%	28%	53%	19%	6%	65%	2%	14%
Christie better	45%	50%	22%	49%	77%	10%	87%	34%
(VOL) Both equally	2%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	3%
(VOL) Neither	9%	9%	5%	14%	5%	4%	4%	12%
(VOL) Don't know	18%	11%	19%	16%	12%	20%	6%	37%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

The state budget

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Corzine better	32%	30%	61%	21%	10%	75%	3%	20%
Christie better	44%	50%	17%	48%	77%	8%	87%	33%
(VOL) Both equally	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%
(VOL) Neither	7%	8%	4%	12%	3%	4%	3%	9%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	12%	15%	18%	9%	10%	7%	36%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

Education

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Corzine better	36%	39%	66%	27%	10%	75%	8%	30%
Christie better	36%	39%	13%	38%	67%	8%	72%	21%
(VOL) Both equally	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	3%	1%
(VOL) Neither	6%	6%	3%	9%	4%	2%	4%	7%
(VOL) Don't know	20%	14%	16%	23%	17%	14%	13%	41%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

Reducing corruption

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Corzine better	28%	26%	57%	17%	7%	65%	3%	18%
Christie better	46%	52%	17%	55%	75%	13%	86%	37%
(VOL) Both equally	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%	1%	3%	2%
(VOL) Neither	10%	10%	11%	13%	6%	10%	5%	12%
(VOL) Don't know	13%	9%	15%	13%	9%	12%	3%	32%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

The environment

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Corzine better	37%	37%	63%	31%	12%	74%	13%	28%
Christie better	31%	34%	12%	33%	58%	8%	58%	21%
(VOL) Both equally	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
(VOL) Neither	7%	8%	5%	11%	3%	5%	6%	7%
(VOL) Don't know	22%	18%	17%	23%	24%	12%	21%	41%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

Improving our cities

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Corzine better	35%	35%	67%	24%	10%	78%	4%	24%
Christie better	38%	42%	11%	44%	69%	7%	77%	20%
(VOL) Both equally	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
(VOL) Neither	7%	8%	4%	11%	4%	2%	6%	10%
(VOL) Don't know	18%	13%	16%	20%	16%	10%	12%	44%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

Health care

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Corzine better	36%	36%	65%	27%	11%	79%	8%	21%
Christie better	35%	39%	14%	35%	70%	6%	72%	20%
(VOL) Both equally	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
(VOL) Neither	9%	9%	7%	14%	4%	5%	7%	11%
(VOL) Don't know	18%	14%	12%	23%	14%	9%	11%	47%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

TRENDS: Registered voters	ECONOMY & JOBS*		PROPERTY TAX		STATE BUDGET		EDUCATION		CORRUPTION	
	August 2009	January 2009	August 2009	January 2009	August 2009	January 2009	August 2009	January 2009	August 2009	January 2009
Corzine better	35%	38%	27%	32%	32%	37%	36%	39%	28%	25%
Christie better	40%	33%	45%	36%	44%	34%	36%	29%	46%	43%
(VOL) Both equally	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%
(VOL) Neither	8%	4%	9%	4%	7%	4%	6%	3%	10%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	23%	18%	27%	15%	24%	20%	28%	13%	26%
Unwtd N	723	413	723	413	723	413	723	413	723	413

* Jan. 09 wording was "The economy"

The Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll was conducted and analyzed by the Monmouth University Polling Institute research staff. The telephone interviews were collected on July 29 to August 2, 2009 with a statewide random sample of 723 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 3.7 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)			
36% Dem	47% Male	23% 18-34	70% White
40% Ind	53% Female	43% 35-54	12% Black
24% Rep		34% 55+	13% Hispanic
			5% Asian/Other
Likely Voter Sample (weighted)			
33% Dem	47% Male	17% 18-34	75% White
42% Ind	53% Female	44% 35-54	9% Black
25% Rep		39% 55+	13% Hispanic
			4% Asian/Other

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