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Released:

Wednesday, August 5, 2009

*Please attribute this information to:
Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll*

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LT. GOVERNOR – GOOD IDEA, BUT WHO’S RUNNING?

Few Jersey voters say L.G. pick would change their choice for Governor

While most New Jersey voters think having a Lieutenant Governor is a good idea, few have heard much about either the position or the nominees. The latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* also found very few voters whose gubernatorial choice hinges on the lieutenant governor pick.

Nearly 6-in-10 Garden State voters are aware that this year marks the first time they will be electing a Lieutenant Governor. This includes just 16% who have heard a lot about this new position and 42% who have heard a little. However, another 43% of the state’s voters have not heard anything about it.

Fewer than 1-in-5 voters can identify anyone in the current field of L.G. candidates. Specifically, just 11% can name Democrat Loretta Weinberg, 6% can name Republican Kim Guadagno, and 1% can name independent Frank Esposito. Even when the survey prompted respondents with the candidates’ names, few voters registered any opinion of the candidates. Personal ratings for the L.G. nominees are 13% favorable to 7% unfavorable for Bergen County State Senator Weinberg, 8% favorable to 2% unfavorable for Monmouth County Sheriff Guadagno, and 7% favorable to 2% unfavorable for Kean University administrator Esposito. The vast majority of voters have no opinion of the L.G. nominees.

More than 8-in-10 voters say that that the L.G. pick will have no bearing on their choice for governor. Specifically, only 11% say that Jon Corzine’s pick of Weinberg makes them more likely to vote for him, compared to 8% who say it makes them less likely. Similarly, just 9% of voters say Chris Christie’s choice of Kim Guadagno makes them more likely to vote for him, compared to 5% who are less likely to support him because of his pick.

Overall, only 10% of Garden State voters say that the choice of running mate is a very important part of their vote calculation for governor, a number which includes just 4% who say it could cause them

to change their vote. Another 41% say the lieutenant governor choice is somewhat important to their vote for governor and 47% say it is not too or not at all important.

“As we have seen in presidential elections and governors races in other states, the prime directive in picking a running mate is to do no harm. On this criterion, the major candidates have succeeded,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “While attention has been given to the fact that the party picks are both women, this does not translate into attracting female voters to either side.”

Among women voters, 10% say the Weinberg pick makes them more likely to support Corzine compared to 7% who are less likely (this compares to a similar 11% more likely to 9% less likely among male voters). For the Republican ticket, 7% of female voters say the Guadagno pick makes them more likely to support Christie compared to 4% who are less likely (this compares to a similar 12% more likely to 7% less likely among male voters).

Despite a lack of awareness regarding the L.G. nominations and a sense that they will have little impact anyway, most New Jersey voters do approve of having a lieutenant governor step in when the governor’s office is vacant rather than having the State Senate President fill that role. Overall, 66% of Garden State voters think having a lieutenant governor is a good idea on the whole, compared to only 17% who feel it is a bad idea. Another 16% have no opinion.

The public is divided, though, on how long a lieutenant governor should serve as chief executive if a vacancy occurs. A bare majority (51%) feel that the L.G. should be able to serve out the remainder of the governor’s term, while a sizable minority (44%) feel that the L.G. should serve only until a special election can be held. The current law states that a lieutenant governor shall serve as governor only until a special election can be called the following November unless the vacancy occurs within 14 months of a regularly scheduled gubernatorial election.

Half (50%) of registered voters also agree with the current selection process whereby the gubernatorial nominees choose running mates to run as a ticket. However, a sizable 45% feel that the lieutenant governor candidates should be elected separately from the top of the ticket.

While the role of New Jersey’s lieutenant governor has not been clearly defined, just under half (47%) of the state’s electorate say it would be a good idea to have the L.G. run a cabinet level agency as part of his or her responsibilities. Only 29% say this is a bad idea and 24% have no opinion.

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. 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. This year will be the first time New Jersey elects a Lieutenant Governor. Have you heard anything about this, or not? [If "Yes": Have you heard a lot or just a little?]

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Yes, heard a lot	16%	19%	13%	16%	19%	17%	20%	8%
Yes, heard a little	42%	48%	37%	44%	45%	39%	49%	36%
No, not heard	43%	34%	50%	39%	35%	44%	30%	56%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

2. Currently, the president of the State Senate steps in when the governor's seat is vacant. Compared to the current system, do you think having a lieutenant governor is a good idea or bad idea for New Jersey?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Good idea	66%	66%	75%	62%	64%	73%	60%	68%
Bad idea	17%	16%	9%	23%	19%	10%	23%	16%
(VOL) Don't know	16%	18%	16%	15%	17%	17%	18%	16%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

3. If a governor resigns or dies in office, should the lieutenant governor serve out the remainder of the governor's term, OR should the lieutenant governor serve only until there can be a special election to fill out the term?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Serve out term	51%	53%	54%	51%	50%	57%	49%	52%
Special election	44%	42%	41%	46%	45%	40%	46%	39%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	4%	5%	4%	5%	3%	5%	9%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

4. The role of New Jersey's Lieutenant Governor has yet to be defined. Do you think it would be a good idea or a bad idea to have the Lieutenant Governor run a cabinet-level agency as part of his or her responsibilities?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Good idea	47%	45%	54%	44%	45%	53%	41%	44%
Bad idea	29%	31%	21%	34%	32%	23%	37%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	24%	24%	25%	22%	23%	24%	22%	31%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

5. Should the candidates for Lieutenant Governor run for office on the same ticket with the Governor, or should the Lieutenant Governor be elected separately from the Governor?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Same ticket	50%	55%	56%	46%	51%	60%	49%	48%
Elected separately	45%	41%	40%	49%	44%	37%	44%	48%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	4%	4%	5%	6%	3%	6%	5%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

6. Can you name any of the candidates for Lieutenant Governor, or not? [If "Yes": Who?]
 [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
Loretta Weinberg	11%	15%	9%	12%	13%	15%	13%	7%
Kim Guadagno	6%	8%	3%	5%	11%	6%	10%	1%
Frank Esposito	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
No, none	87%	82%	91%	86%	85%	84%	83%	93%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

7. I'm going to name the lieutenant governor candidates. Please tell me if your general impression of each 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]

Loretta Weinberg

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Favorable	13%	16%	17%	11%	10%	21%	9%	11%
Unfavorable	7%	9%	2%	8%	13%	3%	13%	3%
No opinion/Don't recognize	79%	76%	82%	81%	77%	75%	78%	86%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

Kim Guadagno

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Favorable	8%	10%	3%	9%	11%	5%	14%	3%
Unfavorable	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%
No opinion/Don't recognize	90%	88%	95%	90%	87%	92%	85%	95%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

Frank Esposito

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Favorable	7%	8%	8%	7%	5%	10%	3%	4%
Unfavorable	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	4%	2%	1%
No opinion/Don't recognize	91%	90%	89%	91%	93%	87%	94%	96%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

[QUESTIONS 8 AND 9 WERE ROTATED]

8. Jon Corzine selected Bergen County State Senator Loretta Weinberg to be his lieutenant governor running mate. Does this make you more likely or less likely to vote for Corzine, or does it have no effect on your vote?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
More likely	11%	9%	17%	9%	5%	22%	2%	9%
Less likely	8%	9%	2%	7%	17%	2%	13%	8%
No effect	79%	79%	78%	81%	78%	74%	84%	76%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	1%	6%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

9. Chris Christie selected Monmouth County Sheriff Kim Guadagno to be his lieutenant governor running mate. Does this make you more likely or less likely to vote for Christie, or does it have no effect on your vote?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
More likely	9%	9%	2%	12%	14%	6%	15%	5%
Less likely	5%	5%	10%	3%	3%	10%	1%	3%
No effect	81%	83%	83%	80%	82%	80%	83%	83%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	3%	5%	5%	1%	4%	2%	9%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

10. How important is the choice of a Lieutenant Governor running mate to your eventual vote for Governor – very, somewhat, not too, or not at all important? [IF “VERY IMPORTANT”: Would you actually change your vote for governor based on the lieutenant governor running mate, or not?]

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			VOTE CHOICE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Corzine	Christie	Undecided
Very important – would change vote	4%	5%	5%	3%	0%	3%	2%	5%
Very important – but would not change vote	6%	6%	9%	5%	4%	9%	4%	5%
Somewhat important	41%	40%	38%	40%	47%	43%	41%	45%
Not too important	20%	21%	19%	23%	20%	21%	21%	17%
Not at all important	27%	27%	25%	28%	26%	22%	30%	23%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	2%	5%	1%	3%	2%	2%	3%
Unwtd N	723	484	233	281	193	221	281	145

The Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll was conducted and analyzed by the Monmouth University Polling Institute research staff. The telephone interviews were collected 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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