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NEW JERSEY UNHAPPY WITH DC

Both parties get negative marks on debt deal

President Barack Obama's job approval rating in New Jersey has declined from the "bin Laden bounce" observed in May according to the latest *Monmouth University/NJ Press Media Poll*. The poll also found dissatisfaction with Washington is at a two-year high, with both parties in Congress receiving more scorn than the president over the debt deal.

Obama's Garden State job rating now stands at 54% approve to 37% disapprove among all residents and 52% to 39% among registered voters. This marks a 6 point drop in approval among all adults and an 8 point drop among registered voters when compared to a state poll taken shortly after the death of Osama bin Laden. Currently, 84% of Democrats, 47% of independents and 19% of Republicans offer positive ratings. The New Jersey results are decidedly higher than the national average of 44% approve to 50% disapprove reported by RealClearPolitics.com.

The recent fight over the debt ceiling figures prominently in public opinion of both Obama and Congress. New Jerseyans are divided on how the president handled those negotiations, with just 41% approving of his performance to 42% who disapprove. There is less ambivalence, though, when New Jerseyans are asked to rate the performance of both parties in Congress. Congressional Republicans register a dismal 19% approve to 62% disapprove on how they handled the debt issue and Democrats do little better at 27% approve to 52% disapprove. *[Note: most of the interviews for this poll were conducted after Standard & Poor's downgrade of the national credit rating on Friday, but before Monday's stock market losses. It is unclear what independent effect these events had on the survey results.]*

“New Jerseyans tend to be cynical about government at all levels, but the debt ceiling fight really seems to have established a new low in opinion of Washington,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Currently, just 13% of Garden State residents say they are satisfied with the way things are going in the nation’s capital, while 77% are dissatisfied. This is the lowest such rating by far since Obama took office in 2009. The vast majority of Republicans (87%), Democrats (70%), and independents (78%) alike say they are unhappy with how the federal government is operating.

Most New Jerseyans followed the debate over the debt ceiling – a sizeable 61% say they read or heard a lot about it and another 29% heard a little. They are divided on whether the consequences of a potential default were overstated. While 38% say such claims were accurate, 35% feel they were exaggerated, with the remainder having no opinion. Democrats are somewhat more likely to feel the warnings of economic doom were accurate (46%) rather than exaggerated (25%), while Republicans lean slightly toward viewing them as exaggerated (43%) rather than accurate (33%). Independents are split down the middle – 40% exaggerated to 36% accurate.

Now that the deal is struck, most New Jerseyans do not believe the various parties’ promises that federal spending will go down and taxes will not be raised. As to government spending, fully half (50%) believe it will actually go up as a result of the debt ceiling agreement while only 16% believe it will go down, with 29% saying it will stay about the same. As to federal taxes, a majority of 54% feel their own income taxes will go up compared to just 8% who say their taxes will go down and 31% who say they will remain about the same because of the debt deal.

In terms of the debt agreement’s impact on New Jersey as a whole, 22% of residents feel their own state will be worse off than other states because of the deal compared to only 9% who believe New Jersey will come out ahead. Most residents (63%), though, think New Jersey will benefit no more or less than other states from the debt ceiling agreement.

The poll also asked residents to rate the job performance of the state’s Congressional delegation. New Jersey’s senior U.S. Senator, Frank Lautenberg, garners a 41% approve to 30% disapprove rating among all New Jersey adults and a 41% to 32% rating among registered voters. These results are lower than any other job rating recorded by the *Monmouth University/NJ Press Media Poll* over the last three years.

New Jersey’s junior U.S. Senator, Bob Menendez, garners a 37% approve to 32% disapprove rating from all Garden State residents and a 38% to 33% rating among registered voters. This registered voter result is down slightly from the 46% to 28% rating he received in May, but is in line with the rating he received a year ago.

Members of New Jersey’s House delegation, on the other hand, get better ratings from their constituents – 47% approve of the job their own Congressman is doing compared to 30% who disapprove among all residents. Among registered voters, this rating stands at 49% to 30%. However, this marks the first time in the past three years that these results have dipped below 50%.

“It looks like New Jersey may be starting to see cracks in the old adage that voters hate Congress, but love their Congressman,” said Murray. “We may be at a point where opinion of the institution gets so low that it starts to drag down the individual members of Congress.”

The *Monmouth University/NJ Press Media Poll* was conducted by telephone with 802 New Jersey adults from August 3 to 8, 2011. 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 NJ 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 | 54% | 52% | 62% | 84% | 47% | 19% | 42% | 74% | 66% | 53% | 43% |
| Disapprove | 37% | 39% | 25% | 10% | 41% | 74% | 48% | 17% | 22% | 40% | 48% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 9% | 9% | 13% | 6% | 12% | 7% | 10% | 9% | 12% | 7% | 9% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

| TREND: Registered voters only | August 2011 | May 2011 | September 2010 | July 2010 | April 2010 | February 2010 | October 2009 | July 2009 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|----------|----------------|-----------|------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| Approve | 52% | 60% | 47% | 51% | 54% | 53% | 54% | 59% |
| Disapprove | 39% | 36% | 44% | 42% | 41% | 38% | 33% | 29% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 9% | 4% | 9% | 6% | 5% | 9% | 14% | 12% |
| Unwtd N | 730 | 725 | 726 | 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 | 41% | 41% | 37% | 55% | 41% | 21% | 39% | 44% | 39% | 38% | 45% |
| Disapprove | 30% | 32% | 19% | 19% | 32% | 45% | 34% | 26% | 21% | 34% | 35% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 29% | 26% | 43% | 26% | 27% | 34% | 27% | 30% | 39% | 28% | 20% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

| TREND: Registered voters only | August 2011 | May 2011 | July 2010 | October 2008 | July 2008 | April 2008 | January 2008 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| Approve | 41% | 48% | 47% | 48% | 45% | 48% | 43% |
| Disapprove | 32% | 30% | 33% | 28% | 33% | 31% | 28% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 26% | 21% | 21% | 24% | 22% | 21% | 30% |
| Unwtd N | 730 | 725 | 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% | 29% | 53% | 33% | 18% | 33% | 42% | 41% | 33% | 36% |
| Disapprove | 32% | 33% | 25% | 19% | 36% | 45% | 36% | 27% | 21% | 38% | 35% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 32% | 29% | 46% | 28% | 31% | 38% | 31% | 31% | 38% | 29% | 29% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

| TREND: Registered voters only | August 2011 | May 2011 | July 2010 | October 2008 | April 2008 | January 2008 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Approve | 38% | 46% | 38% | 34% | 41% | 37% |
| Disapprove | 33% | 28% | 33% | 25% | 31% | 25% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 29% | 26% | 29% | 41% | 28% | 37% |
| Unwtd N | 730 | 725 | 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 | 47% | 49% | 34% | 49% | 46% | 45% | 45% | 52% | 49% | 45% | 47% |
| Disapprove | 30% | 30% | 34% | 30% | 32% | 30% | 30% | 30% | 26% | 32% | 32% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 23% | 21% | 32% | 21% | 22% | 25% | 25% | 18% | 25% | 23% | 21% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

| TREND: Registered voters only | August 2011 | May 2011 | July 2010 | January 2008 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------|--------------|
| Approve | 49% | 55% | 56% | 55% |
| Disapprove | 30% | 25% | 26% | 19% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 21% | 20% | 18% | 26% |
| Unwtd N | 730 | 725 | 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 | 13% | 13% | 13% | 20% | 9% | 9% | 11% | 21% | 18% | 12% | 9% |
| Dissatisfied | 77% | 78% | 69% | 70% | 78% | 87% | 81% | 63% | 69% | 76% | 86% |
| (VOL) Both | 6% | 6% | 8% | 7% | 7% | 3% | 5% | 11% | 7% | 9% | 3% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 4% | 3% | 10% | 3% | 6% | 2% | 3% | 5% | 6% | 4% | 3% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

| TREND: Registered voters only | August 2011 | May 2011 | July 2010 | April 2010 | February 2010 | July 2009 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------|------------|---------------|-----------|
| Satisfied | 13% | 31% | 23% | 37% | 29% | 41% |
| Dissatisfied | 78% | 62% | 66% | 56% | 64% | 48% |
| (VOL) Both | 6% | 4% | 8% | 4% | 3% | 6% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 5% |
| Unwtd N | 730 | 725 | 747 | 719 | 716 | 792 |

6. How much have you read or heard about the efforts this past week to raise the federal debt ceiling – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| A lot | 61% | 62% | 53% | 52% | 66% | 67% | 62% | 58% | 45% | 62% | 75% |
| A little | 29% | 29% | 30% | 35% | 25% | 25% | 28% | 31% | 39% | 28% | 20% |
| Nothing at all | 9% | 9% | 11% | 11% | 8% | 8% | 9% | 10% | 13% | 10% | 4% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 1% | 0% | 5% | 2% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 3% | 0% | 1% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

7. Some people said that the country would have suffered significant economic problems if the debt ceiling was not raised. Do you think these claims were accurate or were exaggerated, or don't you have an opinion on this?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|----------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Accurate | 38% | 40% | 31% | 46% | 36% | 33% | 36% | 40% | 39% | 37% | 39% |
| Exaggerated | 35% | 36% | 29% | 25% | 40% | 43% | 40% | 28% | 32% | 37% | 35% |
| No opinion | 16% | 15% | 23% | 16% | 15% | 16% | 14% | 21% | 12% | 16% | 21% |
| Did not follow issue | 10% | 9% | 16% | 12% | 9% | 8% | 10% | 11% | 16% | 10% | 5% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

[QUESTIONS 8, 9, AND 10 WERE ROTATED]

8. Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Obama handled the debt ceiling issue?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|----------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Approve | 41% | 40% | 42% | 64% | 35% | 15% | 32% | 58% | 44% | 43% | 34% |
| Disapprove | 42% | 44% | 35% | 20% | 48% | 69% | 51% | 24% | 33% | 42% | 52% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 7% | 7% | 6% | 4% | 8% | 8% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 5% | 9% |
| Did not follow issue | 10% | 9% | 16% | 12% | 9% | 8% | 10% | 11% | 16% | 10% | 5% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

9. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Republicans in Congress handled the debt ceiling issue?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|----------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Approve | 19% | 19% | 20% | 7% | 17% | 43% | 21% | 19% | 20% | 19% | 18% |
| Disapprove | 62% | 63% | 54% | 75% | 62% | 40% | 62% | 59% | 54% | 62% | 68% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 9% | 9% | 10% | 5% | 13% | 9% | 8% | 12% | 10% | 8% | 9% |
| Did not follow issue | 10% | 9% | 16% | 12% | 9% | 8% | 10% | 11% | 16% | 10% | 5% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

10. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Democrats in Congress handled the debt ceiling issue?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|----------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Approve | 27% | 28% | 26% | 47% | 21% | 9% | 22% | 40% | 30% | 28% | 23% |
| Disapprove | 52% | 53% | 48% | 35% | 58% | 73% | 59% | 36% | 42% | 54% | 61% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 10% | 10% | 10% | 6% | 12% | 10% | 9% | 14% | 13% | 8% | 11% |
| Did not follow issue | 10% | 9% | 16% | 12% | 9% | 8% | 10% | 11% | 16% | 10% | 5% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

[QUESTIONS 11 AND 12 WERE ROTATED]

11. Do you think federal spending will go up, go down, or stay about the same because of the debt ceiling agreement?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Go up | 50% | 51% | 43% | 41% | 49% | 65% | 53% | 45% | 43% | 53% | 52% |
| Go down | 16% | 16% | 16% | 17% | 17% | 13% | 13% | 24% | 21% | 15% | 14% |
| Stay about the same | 29% | 29% | 33% | 36% | 31% | 17% | 28% | 29% | 30% | 29% | 30% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 5% | 4% | 8% | 6% | 3% | 5% | 5% | 2% | 7% | 3% | 4% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

12. Do you think your federal income taxes will go up, go down, or stay about the same because of the debt ceiling agreement?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Go up | 54% | 55% | 51% | 49% | 54% | 62% | 57% | 49% | 45% | 58% | 59% |
| Go down | 8% | 7% | 18% | 10% | 10% | 4% | 5% | 14% | 14% | 6% | 5% |
| Stay about the same | 31% | 33% | 25% | 36% | 31% | 29% | 32% | 31% | 33% | 33% | 28% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 6% | 6% | 6% | 5% | 5% | 6% | 5% | 7% | 8% | 2% | 8% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

13. Do you think New Jersey will benefit more or benefit less than other states from the debt ceiling agreement, or will it be affected no differently than other states?

| | TOTAL | REGISTERED VOTER | | PARTY ID | | | RACE | | AGE | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | Dem | Ind | Rep | White | Black & Hisp | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Benefit more | 9% | 9% | 5% | 8% | 7% | 12% | 7% | 13% | 9% | 9% | 8% |
| Benefit less | 22% | 21% | 25% | 15% | 23% | 31% | 24% | 16% | 21% | 20% | 24% |
| No differently | 63% | 64% | 60% | 69% | 64% | 53% | 62% | 66% | 63% | 65% | 60% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 7% | 6% | 11% | 7% | 7% | 4% | 7% | 5% | 6% | 6% | 9% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 730 | 72 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 622 | 133 | 135 | 308 | 349 |

The *Monmouth University/NJ Press Media Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on August 3 to 8, 2011 with a statewide random sample of 802 adult residents, including 640 contacted on a landline telephone and 162 on a cell phone. Sampling and interviewing 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 | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| Total Sample (weighted) | | | |
| 34% Dem | 49% Male | 30% 18-34 | 64% White |
| 21% Rep | 51% Female | 39% 35-54 | 13% Black |
| 45% Ind | | 31% 55+ | 15% 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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