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GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE DIPS

Economic and safety concerns lead to slight decrease

In its regular tracking of residents' satisfaction with life in New Jersey, the *Monmouth University Poll* found that the current Garden State Quality of Life Index has dipped to +27, from +31 in April. While this marks a decrease from the last result, it is still higher than all other prior readings going back to December 2010.

"After months of upward movement in the Garden State Quality of Life Index, we have seen a slight drop that seems to be caused mainly by economic and security concerns," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Nearly 7-in-10 residents continue to rate the state of New Jersey as either an excellent (17%) or good (52%) place to live, but the excellent rating is down 3 points from April. The other notable drop occurred in feelings of safety, with 60% of residents saying they feel very safe in their neighborhoods at night, down from 64% in April. Positive results for other components in the Garden State Quality of Life Index – including ratings of residents' own towns (74%), local environment (74%), and schools (61%) – are all down by one or two points.

The overall drop in the Garden State Quality of Life Index seems to be concentrated among lower income households in more urban and rural parts of the state. Among those earning less than \$50,000, the index stands at +16, down 8 points from April. There has also been a 14 point drop among residents of the Urban Core counties of Essex and Hudson (now +12) and a 10 point drop among the Garden Core counties which include the far southern and northwestern parts of the state (now +18).

Furthermore, the index has seen a decrease among New Jersey men – from +33 three months ago to +26 now – while the score among state women has been more stable – from +28 to +29 now. The index score among older residents also declined. New Jerseyans age 55 and over now score +30 on the index – down from +37 in April.

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.

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

GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX											
	REGION							COMMUNITY TYPE			
	North east	Urban Core	Route 1 Corridor	Central Hills	Northern Shore	Delaware Valley	Garden Core	Urban	Stable Town	Growing Suburb	
July 2012	+37	+12	+30	+37	+34	+22	+18	+8	+34	+34	
April 2012	+38	+26	+27	+44	+34	+22	+28	+20	+35	+36	
February 2012	+33	+17	+27	+35	+29	+19	+22	+11	+31	+29	
October 2011	+31	+6	+22	+45	+35	+18	+23	-1	+31	+34	
August 2011	+24	+16	+21	+38	+27	+26	+6	+4	+29	+25	
May 2011	+28	+17	+16	+41	+29	+22	+20	+6	+29	+28	
December 2010	+26	+15	+22	+38	+23	+14	+17	+12	+23	+27	

The latest *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone with 803 New Jersey adults from July 18 to 22, 2012. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

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

- 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 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 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 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 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 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 conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on July 18 to 22, 2012 with a statewide random sample of 803 adult residents, including 603 contacted on a landline telephone and 200 on a cell phone. Live interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. and the telephone sample was obtained from Survey Sampling International. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. 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.

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>			
35% Dem	48% Male	28% 18-34	63% White
44% Ind	52% Female	40% 35-54	12% Black
22% Rep		32% 55+	16% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other

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 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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