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NJ GOV: CHRISTIE LEAD SIZABLE BUT SMALLER

Tourism ads and White House speculation not significant factors

Gov. Chris Christie holds a 20 point lead over challenger state Senator Barbara Buono, according to the *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll*. The incumbent's reelection bid remains strong, but his lead has shrunk in the past two months. However, Christie does not appear to be significantly affected by controversy over his appearance in New Jersey tourism ads or talk about a potential run for president in 2016.

Garden State voters likely to participate in the November election give Christie a 56% to 36% lead over Buono. Two months ago, he had a 30 point advantage (61% to 31%). Republican (90%) and independent (64%) voters remain firmly in the governor's column, but Democrats are starting to return to their partisan inclinations. Christie currently garners 21% of the Democratic vote to 71% for Buono. In June, the GOP governor enjoyed the support of 36% of Democrats compared to 59% who backed their own party's nominee.

"The trend suggests that New Jersey Democrats are coming back home. But it's not quite enough for Buono to overcome Christie's sizable advantage among independents," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Most likely voters (59%) have a favorable opinion of Gov. Christie while just 33% hold an unfavorable view. Only half the likely electorate is familiar enough with Sen. Buono to offer an opinion of her, which is 27% favorable to 25% unfavorable.

There has been some controversy over the state's new "Stronger than the Storm" tourism campaign, which features Gov. Christie in television ads. Nearly two-thirds of likely voters (63%) say it is appropriate for the governor to appear. Just 24% disapprove and 13% register no opinion on the governor's presence in these ads. Among voters who are either undecided or may change their mind,

50% say that Christie’s appearance in these ads is appropriate to 31% who say it is not. [Note: 81% of likely voters have actually seen a Stronger than the Storm ad and another 10% have heard about them.]

The Buono campaign has charged that Gov. Christie is more concerned about a future run for president than serving New Jersey. The governor’s presidential ambitions come as no surprise to New Jersey voters, 19% of whom say he is definitely running in 2016 and 60% who say he is probably going to run. Among those who say he is definitely going to run, Christie still holds a lead of 50% to 39% over Buono.

“Convincing more voters that Gov. Christie has his eyes set on the White House may narrow the gap for Buono, but is unlikely to close it,” said Murray.

On the other side of New Jersey’s political battlefield, Republicans hope to use the specter of former Gov. Jon Corzine – whom Christie defeated in 2009 – to build up the incumbent’s margin and help wrest legislative seats away from what they call “Corzine Democrats.” Corzine continues to be an unpopular figure in the Garden State, with just 23% of likely voters having a favorable opinion of him and 55% holding an unfavorable view. However, 70% say Corzine will not be a factor when they cast their ballots for state legislature this November. Just 14% say Corzine will be a major factor and another 15% say he will be a minor factor in deciding whether to vote Democratic or Republican in their legislative districts.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by telephone from August 15 to 18, 2013 with 777 New Jersey voters likely to vote in the November general election. 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 Asbury Park Press and its sister publications (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 New Jersey Governor was today, would you vote for Chris Christie, the Republican, Barbara Buono, the Democrat or some other candidate? [NAMES WERE ROTATED] [IF UNDECIDED: At this moment, do you lean toward Chris Christie or lean toward Barbara Buono?]

<i>(with leaners)</i>	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		REGION		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	North	Central	South
Chris Christie	56%	21%	64%	90%	57%	54%	51%	57%	61%
Barbara Buono	36%	71%	23%	5%	33%	38%	38%	39%	30%
Other candidate	3%	1%	5%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%
Undecided	6%	7%	7%	3%	8%	4%	8%	1%	7%

TREND:	August 2013	June 2013
Chris Christie	56%	61%
Barbara Buono	36%	31%
Other	3%	4%
Undecided	6%	4%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	777	626

[QUESTIONS 2 AND 3 WERE ROTATED]

2. Is your general opinion of Chris Christie favorable, unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of him?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		REGION			VOTE INTENT		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	North	Central	South	Christie	Buono	
Favorable	59%	32%	65%	87%	61%	57%	57%	62%	59%	96%	12%	42%
Unfavorable	33%	61%	23%	10%	32%	34%	37%	33%	29%	2%	79%	40%
No opinion	8%	8%	12%	3%	6%	9%	7%	5%	11%	2%	9%	18%

3. Is your general opinion of Barbara Buono favorable, unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of her?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		REGION			VOTE INTENT		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	North	Central	South	Christie	Buono	
Favorable	27%	50%	17%	8%	27%	28%	31%	23%	25%	4%	67%	22%
Unfavorable	25%	5%	32%	44%	30%	22%	24%	29%	25%	44%	2%	9%
No opinion	48%	44%	51%	48%	44%	51%	45%	48%	50%	52%	31%	69%

4. Do you think Chris Christie plans to run for President in 2016? Definitely, probably, probably not, or definitely not?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		REGION			VOTE INTENT		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	North	Central	South	Christie	Buono	
Definitely	19%	18%	21%	17%	19%	18%	17%	19%	21%	17%	21%	19%
Probably	60%	63%	53%	62%	57%	61%	62%	60%	55%	61%	59%	56%
Probably not	11%	9%	13%	12%	13%	10%	13%	7%	14%	13%	10%	11%
Definitely not	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	5%	2%	2%	4%	3%
No opinion	8%	6%	10%	7%	8%	7%	5%	10%	9%	7%	6%	11%

5. Have you seen or heard about New Jersey's Stronger than the Storm tourism ads on television?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		REGION			VOTE INTENT		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	North	Central	South	Christie	Buono	
Seen ads themselves	81%	78%	80%	88%	78%	84%	83%	78%	82%	86%	74%	84%
Heard about ads	10%	12%	11%	5%	13%	7%	11%	9%	7%	8%	13%	9%
Not seen or heard	9%	10%	9%	7%	9%	9%	6%	13%	10%	7%	12%	7%

6. Do you think it is appropriate or not appropriate for Governor Christie to be appearing in these ads?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		REGION			VOTE INTENT		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	North	Central	South	Christie	Buono	
Appropriate	63%	45%	60%	87%	64%	61%	60%	67%	62%	83%	36%	50%
Not appropriate	24%	41%	21%	7%	25%	24%	29%	23%	18%	6%	51%	31%
Not sure	13%	14%	19%	6%	11%	15%	11%	11%	19%	10%	13%	19%

7. Is your general opinion of former New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine favorable, unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of him?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		REGION			VOTE INTENT		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	North	Central	South	Christie	Buono	
Favorable	23%	42%	13%	9%	25%	21%	27%	23%	16%	9%	44%	30%
Unfavorable	55%	25%	66%	80%	59%	52%	50%	58%	59%	76%	27%	37%
No opinion	22%	33%	21%	11%	16%	28%	23%	19%	25%	15%	29%	33%

8. How much of a factor is former governor Jon Corzine in your decision whether to vote for Democrats or Republicans in the legislature this year? A major factor, minor factor, or not a factor?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		REGION			VOTE INTENT		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	North	Central	South	Christie	Buono	
Major factor	14%	9%	15%	20%	18%	11%	16%	15%	11%	18%	10%	10%
Minor factor	15%	14%	15%	15%	13%	16%	12%	15%	19%	15%	16%	10%
Not a factor	70%	75%	68%	64%	68%	71%	72%	69%	67%	66%	74%	77%
No opinion	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	2%	3%	1%	1%	3%

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from August 15 to 18, 2013 with a statewide random sample of 777 likely voters drawn from a list of registered voters who voted in at least two of the last four general elections, including 571 contacted by interactive voice response (IVR) on a landline telephone and 206 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone. 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.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted) LIKELY VOTERS			
38% Dem	44% Male	11% 18-34	75% White
32% Ind	56% Female	19% 35-49	14% Black
30% Rep		38% 50-64	8% Hispanic
		32% 65+	3% Asian/Other

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		REGION			VOTE INTENT		Undecided/ May change mind
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	North	Central	South	Christie	Buono	
Unweighted N	777	213	358	206	305	472	311	236	230	432	215	230
moe	3.5%	6.7%	5.2%	6.8%	5.6%	4.5%	5.6%	6.4%	6.5%	4.7%	6.7%	6.5%

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