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LAUTENBERG BY 10 IN NJ SENATE RACE

Poll shows race has been static since summer

The latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* finds Democratic incumbent Frank Lautenberg leading his Republican challenger Dick Zimmer by 46% to 33% among registered voters. Among likely voters, the Democrat holds a 10 point lead – 46% to 36%, which is basically unchanged from the 45% to 37% race measured in July.

Each candidate has widespread support among his partisan base – 77% of Democrats back Lautenberg and 74% of Republicans are for Zimmer – while independent voters give Lautenberg a slight 35% to 32% advantage.

With seven weeks to go before the election, the U.S. Senate race continues to fly under voters' radar, especially when compared with this year's presidential contest. While an astounding 83% of Garden State voters have a lot of interest in the presidential race, only 45% show the same level of interest in the U.S. Senate race. And few voters – just 6% – have been paying close attention to the senate election, compared with a whopping 62% who have been closely following the presidential campaign.

“If anyone wondered what would happen if you held an election in New Jersey and no one paid attention, these results may provide a clue. Apparently, the Democrat gets a ten point advantage,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Currently, 42% of voters have a favorable opinion of Lautenberg compared to 28% who feel unfavorably toward the incumbent, and 30% who have no opinion. This is up from the 34%-27% rating he held in July.

Dick Zimmer's personal rating is now 27% favorable to 18% unfavorable. Both numbers have increased since the summer, but 55% of voters still say they don't know enough about the GOP nominee to give him a rating. In July, he was basically unknown to 71% of voters.

Even though they haven't been paying attention to the election, nearly half (46%) the state's voters say Lautenberg has done a good job of addressing the issues important to them, compared to 31% who say he has done a bad job. For the Republican, 30% of voters say Zimmer has done a good job of addressing the issues, compared to 24% who say he has done a bad job.

Half (49%) of New Jersey voters say the senate race has been positive so far, compared to 17% who say it has been negative. In July, many more voters said they expected this year's race to be negative (61%) rather than positive (21%).

"The great irony is that both candidates appear to do better the less the voters see of them, but in the end this accrues to Lautenberg's benefit," said Murray.

Lautenberg's age continues to be a non-issue with voters. Just 31% of voters feel he is too old to be an effective senator – identical to the July poll results and down from 41% in April, when Lautenberg faced a primary challenge from Congressman Rob Andrews.

However, this could still become a campaign issue, as few voters actually know how old Lautenberg is. When asked to estimate their senior senator's age, the average guess by New Jersey voters is 75 years old, fully nine years younger than his actual age of 84. Fewer than 1-in-4 voters can estimate his age within the right decade – only 23% guess Lautenberg to be in his 80s. Another 33% tab him in his 70s, 12% say he is younger than 70, and 2% say he is in his 90s. The remaining 30% don't offer a guess.

The poll also found that Lautenberg continues to have a slight edge over Zimmer on four issue areas asked of voters in the poll. The incumbent leads the challenger 29% to 20% for understanding the problems of average New Jerseyans, 30% to 22% for sharing voters' views on economic issues, 26% to 17% for sharing voters' views on Iraq policy, and 35% to 15% for making sure New Jersey gets its fair share of federal funding. Between 18% and 22% think that neither candidate would do a good job on any of these four concerns.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 689 New Jersey registered voters September 11-14, 2008. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.7 percent. This report also includes analysis on a smaller group of 589 "likely voters" with a ± 4.0 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.)

- There will be an election for U.S. Senator from New Jersey. How much interest do you have in that election – a lot, some, a little, or none at all?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
A lot	45%	51%	42%	47%	45%	45%	44%	31%	44%	58%
Some	31%	31%	33%	26%	36%	27%	35%	37%	31%	27%
A little	16%	13%	19%	16%	13%	17%	16%	25%	17%	9%
None at all	7%	5%	5%	10%	6%	9%	5%	6%	9%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

TREND:	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008
A lot	45%	47%	31%
Some	31%	30%	31%
A little	16%	13%	26%
None at all	7%	10%	11%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%
Unwtd N	689	874	720

- If the election for Senator was held today, would you vote for Dick Zimmer the Republican, Frank Lautenberg the Democrat, or some other candidate? [IF UNDECIDED: At this moment do you lean more towards Zimmer or more towards Lautenberg?] [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

(with leaners)	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Zimmer	33%	36%	9%	32%	74%	39%	27%	25%	36%	37%
Lautenberg	46%	46%	77%	35%	9%	40%	51%	48%	41%	49%
Other candidate	5%	5%	2%	8%	5%	6%	3%	5%	4%	4%
(VOL) Will note vote	1%	1%	0%	3%	0%	1%	1%	0%	3%	1%
(VOL) Undecided	16%	14%	11%	22%	12%	14%	17%	23%	17%	9%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

	September 2008		July 2008	
	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
Zimmer	33%	36%	34%	37%
Lautenberg	46%	46%	44%	45%
Other candidate	5%	5%	7%	6%
(VOL) Will note vote	1%	1%	1%	1%
(VOL) Undecided	16%	14%	13%	11%
Unwtd N	689	589	874	698

Composite Table: Strength of Vote Choice

- If the election for Senator was held today, would you vote for [ROTATE] Dick Zimmer the Republican, Frank Lautenberg the Democrat, or some other candidate?
- At this moment do you lean more towards Zimmer or more towards Lautenberg?
- Are you very sure about voting for [Name]; or might you change your mind before Election Day?

	September 2008		July 2008	
	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
Sure Zimmer	22%	25%	21%	24%
Weak Zimmer	6%	6%	7%	7%
Lean Zimmer	5%	5%	6%	6%
Undecided-Other	21%	18%	21%	17%
Lean Lautenberg	5%	4%	5%	4%
Weak Lautenberg	10%	9%	11%	11%
Sure Lautenberg	31%	33%	29%	31%
Unwtd N	683	585	866	692

[QUESTIONS 5 AND 6 WERE ROTATED]

5. Please tell me if your general impression of Frank Lautenberg is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion.

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Favorable	42%	43%	64%	33%	18%	41%	43%	42%	39%	46%
Unfavorable	28%	30%	10%	33%	50%	32%	24%	21%	31%	30%
No opinion	30%	26%	27%	33%	32%	27%	33%	38%	30%	24%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

TREND:	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008
Favorable	42%	34%	43%
Unfavorable	28%	27%	30%
No opinion	30%	39%	27%
Unwtd N	689	874	720

6. Please tell me if your general impression of Dick Zimmer is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion.

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Favorable	27%	30%	10%	27%	57%	28%	25%	19%	28%	32%
Unfavorable	18%	18%	28%	17%	6%	22%	15%	19%	18%	18%
No opinion	55%	53%	63%	56%	37%	49%	60%	63%	53%	50%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

TREND:	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008
Favorable	27%	18%	9%
Unfavorable	18%	11%	10%
No opinion	55%	71%	80%
Unwtd N	689	874	720

7. Which candidate – Lautenberg, Zimmer, both, or neither one? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]

- A. Understands the problems of average New Jerseyans.

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Lautenberg	29%	30%	48%	21%	10%	27%	30%	28%	23%	37%
Zimmer	20%	21%	6%	18%	48%	26%	15%	15%	24%	19%
Both	9%	10%	8%	12%	7%	8%	11%	8%	11%	8%
Neither	21%	19%	16%	27%	21%	25%	18%	18%	23%	23%
(VOL) Don't know	20%	19%	22%	23%	15%	14%	26%	31%	19%	13%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

TREND:	September 2008	July 2008
Lautenberg	29%	24%
Zimmer	20%	12%
Both	9%	15%
Neither	21%	29%
(VOL) Don't know	20%	21%
Unwtd N	689	874

B. Shares your views on economic issues.

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Lautenberg	30%	31%	50%	23%	7%	30%	30%	29%	28%	33%
Zimmer	22%	24%	6%	20%	51%	28%	16%	18%	24%	23%
Both	6%	6%	7%	7%	3%	3%	9%	5%	7%	5%
Neither	21%	19%	18%	24%	22%	25%	18%	21%	21%	22%
(VOL) Don't know	21%	19%	18%	26%	18%	14%	27%	26%	20%	18%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

TREND:	September 2008	July 2008
Lautenberg	30%	26%
Zimmer	22%	17%
Both	6%	8%
Neither	21%	22%
(VOL) Don't know	21%	27%
Unwtd N	689	874

C. Shares your views on the war in Iraq.

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Lautenberg	26%	28%	46%	19%	5%	25%	28%	24%	24%	32%
Zimmer	17%	19%	5%	15%	40%	23%	12%	11%	23%	16%
Both	6%	5%	4%	8%	4%	4%	7%	5%	7%	4%
Neither	22%	19%	17%	28%	21%	26%	18%	19%	24%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	29%	30%	27%	30%	29%	23%	35%	41%	23%	27%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

TREND:	September 2008	July 2008
Lautenberg	26%	22%
Zimmer	17%	12%
Both	6%	6%
Neither	22%	26%
(VOL) Don't know	29%	34%
Unwtd N	689	874

D. Will make sure New Jersey gets its fair share of federal funding.

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Lautenberg	35%	37%	52%	29%	16%	36%	34%	34%	31%	40%
Zimmer	15%	16%	5%	15%	33%	18%	13%	11%	16%	18%
Both	11%	12%	10%	14%	11%	10%	12%	10%	16%	6%
Neither	18%	17%	14%	21%	22%	23%	14%	15%	19%	20%
(VOL) Don't know	20%	19%	20%	22%	18%	14%	26%	30%	18%	15%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

TREND:	September 2008	July 2008
Lautenberg	35%	29%
Zimmer	15%	12%
Both	11%	11%
Neither	18%	24%
(VOL) Don't know	20%	24%
Unwtd N	689	874

[QUESTIONS 8 AND 9 WERE ROTATED]

8. Has Frank Lautenberg done a good job or bad job of addressing the issues that are important to you?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Good job	46%	46%	67%	35%	24%	42%	49%	41%	43%	53%
Bad job	31%	32%	10%	40%	53%	38%	24%	24%	37%	28%
(VOL) Don't know	24%	21%	23%	26%	23%	20%	27%	34%	21%	19%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

9. Has Dick Zimmer done a good job or bad job of addressing the issues that are important to you?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Good job	30%	31%	23%	29%	46%	31%	30%	28%	34%	29%
Bad job	24%	24%	28%	28%	12%	29%	20%	22%	25%	24%
(VOL) Don't know	46%	45%	49%	43%	41%	40%	50%	50%	41%	46%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

10. So far, would you characterize the senate race as being generally positive or negative?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Positive	49%	49%	53%	49%	45%	47%	51%	46%	54%	48%
Negative	17%	17%	14%	18%	19%	19%	16%	16%	14%	20%
(VOL) Both	4%	3%	6%	3%	2%	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%
(VOL) Neither	6%	7%	3%	7%	11%	8%	4%	4%	8%	6%
(VOL) Don't know	24%	24%	25%	23%	23%	22%	25%	28%	21%	23%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

[The following question was asked only of those who said "Negative" or "Both" to Q10 moe= ± 8.1%]

11. Who has been more negative – Lautenberg or Zimmer, or both equally?

	Lautenberg	Zimmer	Both	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
Registered voters	13%	15%	67%	5%	145

12. Do you agree or disagree that Frank Lautenberg is too old to be an effective senator?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Agree	31%	31%	26%	30%	39%	33%	28%	27%	30%	34%
Disagree	57%	59%	63%	58%	48%	56%	58%	56%	58%	58%
(VOL) Don't know	12%	10%	11%	11%	12%	10%	14%	16%	12%	8%
Unwtd N	689	589	263	235	171	318	371	126	251	301

TREND:	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008	January 2008
Agree	31%	31%	41%	34%
Disagree	57%	54%	46%	51%
(VOL) Don't know	12%	15%	13%	15%
Unwtd N	689	435	639	698

13. And how old do you think he is? Your best guess is fine.

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Under 70	12%	12%	15%	10%	9%	11%	12%	19%	12%	4%
70 to 79	33%	43%	30%	33%	40%	34%	31%	28%	38%	31%
80 to 89	23%	32%	20%	23%	31%	25%	22%	16%	21%	34%
90 or older	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	30%	11%	32%	32%	18%	28%	32%	35%	27%	29%
Average guess	75	75	73	75	76	75	75	72	75	77
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<i>808</i>	<i>589</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>291</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>372</i>	<i>436</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>291</i>	<i>351</i>

14. How closely have you been following the campaign for U.S. Senate so far – very closely, somewhat closely, or not very closely?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 54	55+
Very closely	6%	6%	9%	4%	5%	8%	4%	6%	4%	9%
Somewhat closely	35%	36%	34%	33%	36%	38%	31%	36%	33%	38%
Not very closely	59%	58%	57%	61%	59%	53%	64%	56%	63%	53%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<i>689</i>	<i>589</i>	<i>263</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>171</i>	<i>318</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>251</i>	<i>301</i>

TREND:	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008
Very closely	6%	11%	6%
Somewhat closely	35%	38%	25%
Not very closely	59%	50%	68%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	<i>689</i>	<i>874</i>	<i>720</i>

The Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll was conducted and analyzed by the Monmouth University Polling Institute research staff. The telephone interviews were collected by Braun Research on September 11-14, 2008 with a statewide random sample of 689 registered voters. For results based on this voter 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)			
41% Dem	48% Male	28% 18-34	70% White
36% Ind	52% Female	41% 35-54	11% Black
23% Rep		31% 55+	12% Hispanic
			7% 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 which affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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