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KEAN TAKES 6 POINT LEAD IN SENATE RACE

Poll finds Menendez support is stagnant

In the *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll's* first fall reading of the U.S. Senate race, Republican challenger Tom Kean, Jr. holds a 44% to 38% advantage over the appointed Democratic incumbent Bob Menendez among likely voters, with 14% undecided and 3% choosing another candidate. With the election just over six weeks away, the poll also found that few voters have yet to tune into the race.

Among all registered voters, Kean's lead is slightly wider at 44% to 36% for Menendez. This marks a notable increase in Kean's support among registered voters since the summer. A Monmouth/Gannett poll taken in July pegged the Republican's support at 37% among all registered voters. At the same time, Menendez' support among all voters has not moved, standing at 38% in July.

"The Kean campaign can claim the momentum heading into the fall, while the Menendez effort has stalled," remarked Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

In more good news for the Republican and bad news for the Democrat, Kean's favorable ratings and Menendez's unfavorable ratings have simultaneously increased. The poll found that 37% of registered voters view the Republican favorably, which is up from 28% in July. Another 14% view him unfavorably, similar to his July numbers. At the same time, Bob Menendez's

favorable ratings among registered voters stayed steady at 29%, but his unfavorables have increased by 9 points to 22% and they are even higher (30%) among likely voters.

Internal poll numbers indicate that voter dissatisfaction with the Democrats in Trenton may be a liability for the party's U.S. Senate nominee. Specifically, Menendez performs decently with voters who approve of the job Governor Jon Corzine is doing. Among this group, 48% intend to vote for the Democrat in the senate race compared to 36% who choose the Republican. On the other hand, Kean has an overwhelming lead of 55% to 24% among voters who disapprove of how the state's governor has handled his job.

Tom Kean can also claim small advantages in a few issue areas in this race – notably ethics and homeland security – but there is a good deal of voter ambivalence as well. One-in-four (24%) voters choose the Republican as the candidate with high ethical standards, compared to 13% who say this describes Menendez more. However, 21 percent say that both candidates have high ethical standards whereas 17% feel that neither can claim the ethical high road. And despite the fact that Menendez has made homeland security a key part of his campaign, slightly more voters say that Kean (26%) rather than Menendez (19%) is likely to secure New Jersey its fair share of funding for homeland security.

Another key message of both campaigns is which candidate can claim to be more outside the political mainstream and power structure. Here Menendez has a slight 21% to 15% advantage over Kean, although 33% of voters say that neither one can be believably cast as a political outsider.

A common theme in Democratic mid-term campaigns across the nation is to tap into public disapproval of the war in Iraq. In New Jersey, that does not appear to be a winning issue for Menendez. Only 20% of voters feel he shares their views on the war while 22% say the Republican nominee is more in line with their thinking on Iraq. In fact, among politically independent voters Kean actually has another slight 20% to 13% advantage on this issue. However, as with all the issues asked about in the poll, a majority of voters give neither candidate the edge or say they don't know enough about the two nominees to offer an opinion.

Overall, only 13% of voters say they have been paying very close attention to the upcoming race. Another 45% say they are paying some attention and 42% have not really paid any attention.

“It's important to note that voters still have not tuned in to this race and about half of the New Jersey electorate has yet to form an opinion about these candidates,” commented Murray.

“Neither Kean nor Menendez has made a solid case to the majority of voters about why he should be senator.”

When asked who is doing a better job explaining his vision for why he should be elected, equal numbers choose Kean (22%) and Menendez (21%), while 33% say that neither candidate has articulated his case well and 19% have no opinion.

Many pundits have already characterized this race as being particularly negative and certain to get worse. However, a majority (55%) of voters say the tone of the race so far has been generally positive. Only 27% say it has been negative, “which is probably another sign that they’re not paying much attention,” said Murray.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 630 New Jersey registered voters from September 18 to 21, 2006. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.9 percent. Analysis was also done on a smaller group of 391 “likely voters” with a ± 5.0 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, Home News Tribune, and Ocean County Observer).

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

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

- As you may know, there will be an election for United States Senator from New Jersey this November. How much interest do you have in the upcoming election – a lot, some, a little, or none at all?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
			Dem	Ind	Rep
A lot	44%	66%	48%	40%	47%
Some	29%	34%	22%	33%	31%
A little	18%	0%	18%	20%	14%
None at all	8%	0%	12%	6%	8%
Unwtd N	630	391	172	265	173

TREND	September 2006		July 2006	
	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
A lot	44%	66%	38%	N/A
Some	29%	34%	34%	N/A
A little	18%	0%	17%	N/A
None at all	8%	0%	11%	N/A
Unwtd N	630	391	670	N/A

4. If the election for Senator was held today, would you vote for [ROTATE] Tom Kean, Junior the Republican, Robert Menendez the Democrat, or some other candidate?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		RACE		AGE			REGION OF STATE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Black & Hispanic	18-29	30-49	50+	North	Central	South
Kean	44%	44%	16%	43%	81%	42%	46%	50%	29%	-	44%	46%	43%	40%	48%
Menendez	36%	38%	71%	29%	8%	36%	36%	31%	51%	-	34%	36%	36%	39%	35%
Other	3%	3%	2%	5%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%	-	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%
Undecided	17%	14%	10%	23%	8%	18%	15%	15%	16%	-	18%	16%	18%	19%	13%
Unwtd N	630	391	172	265	173	285	345	504	94	49	247	327	292	152	183

TREND	September 2006						July 2006					
	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID				
			Dem	Ind	Rep			Dem	Ind	Rep		
Kean	44%	44%	16%	43%	81%	37%	N/A	10%	39%	77%		
Menendez	36%	38%	71%	29%	8%	38%	N/A	77%	24%	7%		
Other	3%	3%	2%	5%	3%	5%	N/A	1%	11%	3%		
Undecided	17%	14%	10%	23%	8%	20%	N/A	13%	27%	13%		
Unwtd N	630	391	172	265	173	670	N/A	208	267	175		

Composite Table: Strength of Vote Choice

- If the election for Senator was held today, would you vote for [ROTATE] Tom Kean Junior the Republican Robert Menendez the Democrat, or some other candidate?
- At this moment do you lean more towards Kean or more towards Menendez?
- Are you very sure about voting for [Name]; or might you change your mind before election?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
			Dem	Ind	Rep
Sure Kean	24%	28%	9%	19%	53%
Weak Kean	12%	9%	4%	14%	19%
Lean Kean	8%	7%	4%	10%	9%
Undecided- Other	20%	17%	12%	28%	11%
Lean Menendez	4%	4%	6%	5%	1%
Weak Menendez	9%	8%	10%	13%	4%
Sure Menendez	23%	26%	56%	11%	3%
Unwtd N	630	391	172	265	173

TREND	September 2006		July 2006	
	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
Sure Kean	24%	28%	17%	N/A
Weak Kean	12%	9%	12%	N/A
Lean Kean	8%	7%	8%	N/A
Undecided- Other	20%	17%	25%	N/A
Lean Menendez	4%	4%	6%	N/A
Weak Menendez	9%	8%	11%	N/A
Sure Menendez	23%	26%	21%	N/A
Unwtd N	630	391	670	N/A

7A. Is your general impression of Tom Kean Junior favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion about him?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
			Dem	Ind	Rep
Favorable	37%	42%	20%	37%	61%
Unfavorable	14%	17%	24%	12%	8%
No opinion	48%	41%	56%	52%	31%
Unwtd N	630	391	172	265	173

TREND	September 2006		July 2006	
	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
Favorable	37%	42%	28%	N/A
Unfavorable	14%	17%	12%	N/A
No opinion	48%	41%	60%	N/A
Unwtd N	630	391	670	N/A

7B. Is your general impression of Robert Menendez favorable or unfavorable, or don't you really have an opinion about him?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
			Dem	Ind	Rep
Favorable	29%	33%	54%	20%	15%
Unfavorable	22%	30%	8%	26%	34%
No opinion	49%	37%	38%	54%	51%
Unwtd N	630	391	172	265	173

TREND	September 2006		July 2006	
	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
Favorable	29%	33%	29%	N/A
Unfavorable	22%	30%	13%	N/A
No opinion	49%	37%	57%	N/A
Unwtd N	630	391	670	N/A

8. Have the candidates so far done a good job or addressing the issues that are important to you?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
			Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Good job	38%	41%	46%	51%	17%	42%	34%	37%
Bad job	29%	32%	30%	17%	33%	23%	38%	26%
(VOL) Don't Know	33%	26%	24%	32%	50%	35%	28%	38%
Unwtd N	630	391	246	186	156	172	265	173

9. Who do you think is doing a better job explaining his vision for why he wants to be Senator—Kean, Menendez, or neither one?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
			Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Kean	22%	23%	51%	2%	8%	13%	19%	39%
Menendez	21%	24%	4%	56%	6%	41%	16%	5%
Neither	33%	33%	29%	16%	49%	23%	45%	28%
(VOL) Both equally	5%	6%	6%	6%	4%	6%	5%	6%
(VOL) Don't Know	19%	14%	10%	19%	33%	17%	16%	22%
Unwtd N	630	391	246	186	156	172	265	173

10. So far, would you characterize this race as being positive or negative?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
			Dem	Ind	Rep
Positive	55%	55%	65%	47%	55%
Negative	27%	32%	19%	36%	25%
(VOL) Some of both	4%	3%	5%	5%	2%
(VOL) Neither	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	11%	8%	9%	10%	15%
Unwtd N	630	391	172	265	173

11. Which candidate [READ ITEM]—Kean, Menendez, both, or neither one?

a. Is a political outsider

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
			Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Kean	15%	16%	17%	16%	10%	16%	13%	17%
Menendez	21%	21%	28%	26%	8%	24%	15%	26%
Both	5%	4%	4%	7%	3%	5%	7%	2%
Neither	33%	39%	34%	29%	34%	28%	42%	30%
(VOL) Don't Know	26%	20%	17%	22%	45%	27%	24%	26%
Unwtd N	630	391	246	186	156	172	265	173

b. Understands the problems of average New Jerseyans

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
			Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Kean	20%	22%	42%	2%	10%	10%	18%	35%
Menendez	26%	28%	4%	61%	16%	52%	15%	10%
Both	15%	13%	20%	7%	17%	10%	19%	16%
Neither	23%	24%	25%	16%	21%	17%	30%	24%
(VOL) Don't Know	17%	13%	8%	14%	36%	11%	19%	15%
Unwtd N	630	391	246	186	156	172	265	173

c. Has high ethical standards

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
			Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Kean	24%	29%	53%	2%	14%	13%	24%	40%
Menendez	13%	13%	1%	37%	3%	26%	9%	4%
Both	21%	23%	21%	25%	15%	18%	23%	22%
Neither	17%	19%	10%	14%	18%	16%	20%	14%
(VOL) Don't Know	25%	17%	14%	21%	50%	27%	24%	20%
Unwtd N	630	391	246	186	156	172	265	173

d. Will make sure New Jersey gets its fair share of homeland security funding

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
			Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Kean	26%	29%	49%	8%	18%	13%	27%	41%
Menendez	19%	22%	2%	49%	8%	37%	14%	7%
Both	15%	14%	15%	18%	15%	16%	17%	14%
Neither	15%	16%	17%	7%	14%	13%	18%	12%
(VOL) Don't Know	25%	19%	17%	18%	44%	21%	24%	26%
Unwtd N	630	391	246	186	156	172	265	173

e. Shares your views on immigration policy

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
			Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Kean	18%	19%	38%	6%	9%	9%	16%	36%
Menendez	18%	18%	9%	37%	8%	36%	12%	6%
Both	7%	7%	8%	6%	8%	5%	11%	5%
Neither	17%	20%	17%	12%	17%	13%	20%	16%
(VOL) Don't Know	40%	35%	29%	39%	57%	37%	41%	37%
Unwtd N	630	391	246	186	156	172	265	173

f. Shares your views on the war in Iraq

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
			Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Kean	22%	24%	48%	4%	9%	9%	20%	43%
Menendez	20%	23%	4%	49%	9%	40%	13%	7%
Both	6%	4%	5%	6%	6%	4%	9%	3%
Neither	23%	25%	25%	20%	20%	22%	27%	18%
(VOL) Don't Know	29%	23%	18%	22%	55%	25%	31%	29%
Unwtd N	630	391	246	186	156	172	265	173

12. The election is still a couple of months away. How closely have you personally been following the campaign for U.S. Senate so far—very closely, somewhat closely, or not very closely so far?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
			Dem	Ind	Rep
Very closely	13%	17%	20%	10%	10%
Somewhat closely	45%	52%	39%	48%	47%
Not very closely	42%	32%	41%	42%	43%
Unwtd N	630	391	172	265	173

TREND	September 2006		July 2006	
	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
Very closely	13%	17%	10%	N/A
Somewhat closely	45%	52%	34%	N/A
Not very closely	42%	32%	56%	N/A
Unwtd N	630	391	670	N/A

Results for this *Monmouth University/Gannett NJ Poll* are based on telephone interviews conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on September 18-21, 2006 with a statewide random sample of 630 registered voters. 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 3.9 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.

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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