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## **OBAMA, MENENDEZ LEADS WIDEN IN NEW JERSEY**

*Romney's negatives go up; Kyrillos still largely unknown*

New Jersey has moved even more solidly into “blue” territory since the last *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* two months ago. Among likely voters in the Garden State, Pres. Barack Obama has widened his lead over Mitt Romney from 8 to 15 points and Sen. Bob Menendez has increased his advantage over Joe Kyrillos from 9 to 15 points.

In the presidential race, Democratic incumbent Obama claims the support of 52% of likely New Jersey voters, compared to 37% for GOP challenger Romney. This compares to a 50% to 42% lead in July. The largest swing came from independent voters. This group now supports the president by a 50% to 30% margin, up from a divided 44% to 42% result two months ago.

“It’s not so much that Barack Obama has gained support in New Jersey, but that Mitt Romney has lost it,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Gov. Romney’s personal ratings among likely voters in the Garden State went from an evenly divided 41% favorable and 39% unfavorable in July to a decidedly negative 37% favorable and 46% unfavorable in the current poll. Pres. Obama’s personal ratings among likely voters grew slightly more positive during the same period, going from 53% favorable and 38% unfavorable two months ago to 56% favorable and 35% unfavorable now.

New Jersey voters were asked whether the two major party nominees have clear plans for solving the country’s problems. While neither candidate receives an overwhelming endorsement, the incumbent scores significantly better on this perception than his challenger. Just over half of New Jersey’s likely voters (51%) agree that Barack Obama has a plan for the future, compared to 44% who disagree. In contrast, only 1-in-3 (34%) feel that Mitt Romney has such a plan, compared to a sizeable majority (60%) who say he does not.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* also asked about the race for U.S. Senate and found incumbent Bob Menendez with a 49% to 34% likely voter advantage over his challenger, State Senator Joe Kyrillos. Two months ago, Menendez's lead was slimmer, at 44% to 35%. Menendez has picked up support among independent voters. He now enjoys a 42% to 26% edge with this important voting bloc, up from a dead even 32% to 32% in July.

"There do not appear to be any defining issues in this Senate race and the challenger remains largely unknown. In these circumstances, voters tend to move to the default position, which is to give the incumbent another term," said Murray.

Just 1-in-3 likely voters say it would make a lot of difference to either the state of New Jersey (34%) or the way the country is governed (33%) if Republican Kyrillos replaces Democrat Menendez in Washington. About 1-in-5 say it would make a little difference – 18% for New Jersey and 22% for the country. Another 1-in-4 say it would not make much difference and 1-in-5 have no opinion.

Among likely voters in New Jersey, only 4-in-10 know enough about challenger Joe Kyrillos to offer a personal rating of him. Moreover, the GOP nominee's 27% favorable to 12% unfavorable rating is basically unchanged from July. Incumbent Bob Menendez earns a 42% favorable to 26% unfavorable rating, which is also very similar to his July numbers.

We should expect to see lower turnout in this year's election compared to 2008. Among all registered voters in New Jersey, 75% say they have a lot of interest in the presidential race. This is lower than the 83% who felt this way at the same point four years ago. On the Senate side, 50% of registered voters have a lot of interest, which is up from 45% who said the same about 2008's low-key Lautenberg-Zimmer race. However, since the top of the ticket drives turnout, a smaller total vote is likely this November.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by telephone with 715 New Jersey registered voters from September 19 to 23, 2012. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.7$  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.)

- As you may know, there will be an election for President in 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			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
A lot	<b>75%</b>	<b>84%</b>	83%	69%	77%	73%	76%	60%	78%	80%
Some	<b>15%</b>	<b>12%</b>	12%	13%	19%	15%	15%	24%	12%	14%
A little	<b>6%</b>	<b>3%</b>	2%	12%	3%	7%	5%	7%	6%	5%
None at all	<b>4%</b>	<b>0%</b>	3%	7%	0%	5%	2%	8%	4%	1%

TREND: Reg. Voters	September 2012	July 2012	September 2008
A lot	75%	72%	83%
Some	15%	20%	11%
A little	6%	5%	3%
None at all	4%	3%	3%
Unwtd N	715	678	689

- There will also 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	18-34	35-54	55+
A lot	<b>50%</b>	<b>57%</b>	54%	48%	49%	53%	48%	32%	54%	59%
Some	<b>27%</b>	<b>26%</b>	29%	23%	31%	23%	31%	28%	28%	25%
A little	<b>13%</b>	<b>11%</b>	8%	18%	14%	15%	12%	20%	12%	11%
None at all	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>	9%	11%	5%	10%	9%	20%	7%	5%

TREND: Reg. Voters	September 2012	July 2012	September 2008
A lot	50%	49%	45%
Some	27%	30%	31%
A little	13%	14%	16%
None at all	9%	7%	8%
Unwtd N	715	678	689

- If the election for President were today, would you vote for Mitt Romney the Republican, or Barack Obama the Democrat, or some other candidate? [IF UNDECIDED: At this moment, do you lean more towards Romney or more towards Obama?] [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

(with leaners)	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Romney	<b>34%</b>	<b>37%</b>	5%	30%	85%	41%	28%	15%	39%	41%
Obama	<b>53%</b>	<b>52%</b>	91%	50%	9%	49%	57%	77%	47%	45%
Other candidate	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	0%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%
(VOL) Undecided	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>	3%	17%	4%	9%	12%	6%	12%	14%

TREND: Reg. Voters	September 2012	July 2012
Romney	34%	38%
Obama	53%	51%
Other candidate	2%	3%
(VOL) Undecided	11%	8%
Unwtd N	715	678

TREND: <i>Likely Voters</i>	September 2012	July 2012
Romney	37%	42%
Obama	52%	50%
Other candidate	1%	1%
(VOL) Undecided	10%	6%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	613	535

4. If the election for Senator were today, would you vote for Joe Kyrillos the Republican, or Bob Menendez the Democrat, or some other candidate? [*IF UNDECIDED: At this moment, do you lean more towards Kyrillos or more towards Menendez?*] [*NAMES WERE ROTATED*]

<i>(with leaners)</i>	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Kyrillos	31%	34%	5%	26%	80%	36%	26%	15%	32%	39%
Menendez	49%	49%	87%	42%	8%	48%	50%	64%	44%	44%
Other candidate	4%	2%	1%	8%	3%	3%	4%	5%	4%	3%
(VOL) Undecided	17%	14%	7%	24%	9%	13%	20%	16%	20%	14%

TREND: <i>Reg. Voters</i>	September 2012	July 2012
Kyrillos	31%	32%
Menendez	49%	42%
Other candidate	4%	5%
(VOL) Undecided	17%	21%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	715	678

TREND: <i>Likely Voters</i>	September 2012	July 2012
Kyrillos	34%	35%
Menendez	49%	44%
Other candidate	2%	4%
(VOL) Undecided	14%	17%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	613	535

5. I'm going to read you a few names. Please tell me if your general impression of each is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion. [*NAMES WERE ROTATED*]

Barack Obama

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Favorable	57%	56%	91%	54%	15%	51%	61%	81%	50%	49%
Unfavorable	33%	35%	4%	33%	76%	41%	26%	13%	38%	39%
No opinion	10%	8%	5%	12%	8%	8%	12%	7%	11%	11%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%

TREND: <i>Reg. Voter</i>	September 2012	July 2012
Favorable	57%	53%
Unfavorable	33%	34%
No opinion	10%	13%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	1%	0%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	715	678

TREND: <i>Likely Voter</i>	September 2012	July 2012
Favorable	56%	53%
Unfavorable	35%	38%
No opinion	8%	9%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	1%	0%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	613	535

Mitt Romney

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Favorable	<b>35%</b>	<b>37%</b>	6%	34%	83%	42%	29%	16%	41%	40%
Unfavorable	<b>47%</b>	<b>46%</b>	76%	46%	8%	44%	49%	67%	42%	40%
No opinion	<b>17%</b>	<b>15%</b>	18%	19%	8%	12%	21%	16%	17%	18%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%

TREND: <i>Reg. Voter</i>	September 2012	July 2012
Favorable	35%	36%
Unfavorable	47%	38%
No opinion	17%	26%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	1%	0%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	715	678

TREND: <i>Likely Voter</i>	September 2012	July 2012
Favorable	37%	41%
Unfavorable	46%	39%
No opinion	15%	19%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	1%	0%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	613	535

Bob Menendez

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Favorable	<b>41%</b>	<b>42%</b>	67%	35%	15%	38%	43%	40%	41%	39%
Unfavorable	<b>23%</b>	<b>26%</b>	5%	24%	51%	31%	17%	14%	22%	31%
No opinion	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	25%	34%	29%	24%	36%	37%	31%	26%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	<b>5%</b>	<b>3%</b>	2%	6%	5%	5%	5%	9%	6%	3%

TREND: <i>Reg. Voter</i>	September 2012	July 2012
Favorable	41%	36%
Unfavorable	23%	20%
No opinion	30%	40%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	5%	4%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	715	678

TREND: <i>Likely Voter</i>	September 2012	July 2012
Favorable	42%	41%
Unfavorable	26%	22%
No opinion	30%	35%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	3%	2%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	613	535

Joe Kyrillos

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Favorable	<b>24%</b>	<b>27%</b>	8%	22%	56%	33%	17%	12%	25%	31%
Unfavorable	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>	21%	11%	2%	13%	11%	17%	12%	10%
No opinion	<b>48%</b>	<b>48%</b>	56%	49%	34%	38%	57%	53%	48%	46%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	<b>15%</b>	<b>12%</b>	14%	18%	8%	15%	14%	18%	16%	13%

TREND: <i>Reg. Voter</i>	September 2012	July 2012
Favorable	24%	22%
Unfavorable	12%	11%
No opinion	48%	56%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	15%	12%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	715	678

TREND: <i>Likely Voter</i>	September	July
	2012	2012
Favorable	27%	25%
Unfavorable	12%	12%
No opinion	48%	54%
(VOL) Don't recognize/Refused	12%	10%
Unwtd N	613	535

6. How much difference would it make to New Jersey if the state was represented by Joe Kyrillos rather than Bob Menendez in the U.S. Senate – a lot, a little, or not much at all?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
A lot	<b>31%</b>	<b>34%</b>	38%	22%	37%	33%	29%	17%	31%	39%
A little	<b>19%</b>	<b>18%</b>	18%	17%	28%	21%	18%	26%	17%	18%
Not much at all	<b>26%</b>	<b>25%</b>	24%	33%	23%	27%	26%	32%	29%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>23%</b>	<b>23%</b>	20%	28%	13%	19%	27%	25%	24%	23%

7. And how much difference would it make to the way the country is governed if New Jersey was represented by Joe Kyrillos rather than Bob Menendez in the U.S. Senate – a lot, a little, or not much at all?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
A lot	<b>29%</b>	<b>33%</b>	34%	22%	36%	32%	27%	13%	30%	38%
A little	<b>24%</b>	<b>22%</b>	21%	22%	31%	26%	22%	26%	22%	23%
Not much at all	<b>27%</b>	<b>25%</b>	28%	30%	21%	27%	26%	38%	27%	19%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	16%	25%	12%	15%	25%	23%	20%	19%

[QUESTIONS 8 AND 9 WERE ROTATED]

8. Do you agree or disagree that Barack Obama has a clear plan for solving the country's problems? [*PROBE: Do you agree/disagree strongly or somewhat?*]

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Strongly agree	<b>28%</b>	<b>29%</b>	53%	19%	7%	27%	29%	39%	24%	24%
Somewhat agree	<b>22%</b>	<b>22%</b>	30%	27%	4%	19%	25%	31%	20%	20%
Somewhat disagree	<b>14%</b>	<b>11%</b>	8%	18%	16%	14%	14%	16%	15%	11%
Strongly disagree	<b>31%</b>	<b>33%</b>	5%	31%	71%	36%	26%	11%	36%	38%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>	4%	5%	3%	3%	6%	3%	5%	7%

9. Do you agree or disagree that Mitt Romney has a clear plan for solving the country's problems? [*PROBE: Do you agree/disagree strongly or somewhat?*]

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Strongly agree	<b>17%</b>	<b>20%</b>	4%	14%	41%	20%	14%	5%	18%	22%
Somewhat agree	<b>15%</b>	<b>14%</b>	5%	12%	31%	16%	14%	12%	15%	16%
Somewhat disagree	<b>17%</b>	<b>16%</b>	11%	24%	17%	17%	18%	22%	17%	15%
Strongly disagree	<b>43%</b>	<b>44%</b>	77%	40%	6%	43%	43%	54%	41%	38%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>	4%	10%	5%	4%	11%	7%	9%	8%

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on September 19 to 23, 2012 with a statewide random sample of 715 registered voters, including 597 contacted on a landline telephone and 118 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 3.7 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.

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>			
<i>Registered Voter Sample (weighted)</i>			
35% Dem	46% Male	23% 18-34	69% White
41% Ind	54% Female	40% 35-54	10% Black
24% Rep		37% 55+	14% Hispanic
			7% Asian/Other

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>			
<i>Likely Voter Sample (weighted)</i>			
36% Dem	45% Male	20% 18-34	72% White
38% Ind	55% Female	42% 35-54	10% Black
26% Rep		38% 55+	13% Hispanic
			5% Asian/Other

	<i>MARGIN OF ERROR</i>									
	<i>Registered Voters</i>	<i>Likely Voters</i>	<i>PARTY ID</i>			<i>GENDER</i>		<i>AGE</i>		
			<i>Dem</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Rep</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>18-34</i>	<i>35-54</i>	<i>55+</i>
<i>Unweighted N</i>	715	613	268	260	161	321	394	107	288	309
<i>moe</i>	3.7%	4.0%	6.0%	6.1%	7.7%	5.5%	4.9%	9.5%	5.8%	5.6%

*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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