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NEW JERSEY'S CAVALCADE OF GOVERNORS

Kean and Codey top list, McGreevey places last

In New Jersey, it seems as if you can't turn around without tripping over a governor. The state is home to eight individuals who can statutorily lay claim to the title, all having served in the past 25 years. So, the *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* thought it would be interesting to find out how the public views their surfeit of chief executives. The poll found that the Garden State generally views four positively, two negatively, and has mixed feelings on the remaining two.

| NJ Gubernatorial Leader Board | Favorable | Unfavorable | <i>Fav-Unfav</i> |
|--|-----------|-------------|------------------|
| Tom Kean (R) | 55% | 11% | +44 |
| Dick Codey (D) | 50% | 16% | +34 |
| Brendan Byrne (D) | 31% | 13% | +18 |
| Jon Corzine (D) | 45% | 29% | +16 |
| Donald DiFrancesco (R) | 18% | 17% | +1 |
| Christie Whitman (R) | 42% | 44% | -2 |
| Jim Florio (D) | 29% | 37% | -8 |
| James McGreevey (D) | 31% | 53% | -22 |

Topping the list is 9/11 Commission chairman and hopeful father, Tom Kean (1982-90). More than half (55%) of the state has a favorable view of him, compared to only 11% with an unfavorable view – an overwhelmingly positive 44 point differential. Current state Senate President, Dick Codey (2004-06), who stepped in when James McGreevey resigned, is also well-regarded. He enjoys a 34 point positive advantage with the public – 50% favorable to 16% unfavorable.

While most New Jerseyans don't remember Brendan Byrne (1974-82) well enough to rate him, those that do recall our most senior ex-governor are more likely to view him favorably – 31% favorable to 13% unfavorable, for an 18 point positive differential. Current chief executive, Jon Corzine (2006-?), rounds out the top four at 45% favorable to 29% unfavorable.

In the middle of the leader board is Donald DiFrancesco (2001-02), who scuttled his own election plans after filling out the remaining months of Christie Whitman's second term when she resigned to head the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Only one-third of New Jerseyans remember the shortest serving ex-governor, and those that recall the then "SPAG" (Senate President/Acting Governor) are divided – 18% favorable to 17% unfavorable.

Christie Whitman (1994-2001), the person DiFrancesco replaced and the only woman on the list, also receives mixed reviews. With recent questions about her tenure at the EPA during 9/11 making headlines, 42% in her home state have a favorable view of her, compared to a similar 44% who are unfavorable.

On the negative side of public opinion is Jim Florio (1990-94), who narrowly lost his re-election bid after raising taxes and consequently the public's ire. He gets favorable ratings from 29% of the public and unfavorables from 37% – an 8 point negative difference. However, Florio is ahead of best-selling author James McGreevey (2002-04) in the public's view. The governor who resigned two years ago after revealing his "truth" garners favorable views from 31% of New Jersey and unfavorable ratings from a majority of 53%, for a negative 22 point differential.

"After years of taking a beating as the perennial 'least popular' governor, Jim Florio can take heart that there's a new contender for this dubious title," remarked Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

The poll also examined which governor scores best among the state's partisans. Not surprisingly, Tom Kean is the Republicans' favorite, garnering a 65% favorable to 10% unfavorable rating from his party's faithful. The current occupant of the governor's office does best among Democrats. Jon Corzine earns a 60% favorable to 20% unfavorable rating among his own partisan base.

However, when it comes to political independents, Dick Codey is king. Among the politically unaffiliated, Codey has a 61% favorable to 14% unfavorable advantage. Murray commented, "Considering the tightness of this year's U.S. Senate race, it kind of makes you wonder what if."

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 800 New Jersey adults from September 18 to 21, 2006. Ratings for the state’s former governors were asked of a random half-sample, which has a margin of error of ± 5 percent. 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.)

We’d like to get your overall impression of the individuals who have served as governor over the past few years. As I read each name, please tell me if your opinion is favorable or unfavorable, or you don’t really have an opinion.

| | | <u>Favorable</u> | <u>Unfavorable</u> | <u>No Opinion</u> | <u>Unwtd N</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Jon Corzine | All Adults | 45% | 29% | 27% | 800 |
| | Registered Voters | 46% | 30% | 24% | 630 |
| Richard Codey | All Adults | 50% | 16% | 34% | 389 |
| | Registered Voters | 53% | 17% | 30% | 330 |
| James McGreevey | All Adults | 31% | 53% | 15% | 411 |
| | Registered Voters | 29% | 56% | 15% | 333 |
| Donald DiFrancesco | All Adults | 18% | 17% | 65% | 411 |
| | Registered Voters | 20% | 20% | 60% | 333 |
| Christie Whitman | All Adults | 42% | 44% | 14% | 389 |
| | Registered Voters | 41% | 47% | 11% | 330 |
| Jim Florio | All Adults | 29% | 37% | 34% | 389 |
| | Registered Voters | 28% | 40% | 31% | 330 |
| Tom Kean, Senior | All Adults | 55% | 11% | 34% | 411 |
| | Registered Voters | 58% | 12% | 30% | 333 |
| Brendan Byrne | All Adults | 31% | 13% | 56% | 411 |
| | Registered Voters | 33% | 15% | 52% | 333 |

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 800 adult residents. 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. Figures for half the sample have a 5 point margin of error. 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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