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CHRIS CHRISTIE JOB APPROVAL UP

Presidential talk boosts rating

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's flirtation with a presidential bid has paid dividends. Not only did he raise money for his own cause and increase his stature among national Republicans, but he now enjoys the highest job approval rating of his tenure, according to the latest ***Monmouth University/NJ Press Media Poll***. However, there are signs that the governor may be facing a more polarized partisan constituency back home.

Currently, Governor Christie earns a 54% approve to 38% disapprove job rating among all Garden State residents. Among registered voters, his rating stands at 55% approve to 37% disapprove. This is the highest rating he has ever received in the ***Monmouth University/NJ Press Media Poll***, topping the 50% he received among registered voters in early August.

The governor's job rating stands at 84% approve to 12% disapprove among Republicans and 32% approve to 59% disapprove among Democrats. These partisan results are basically unchanged. However, Christie's standing among independents has jumped by 14 points, now standing at 58% approve to 34% disapprove.

The governor also appears to have closed the gender gap in his ratings, at least for the time being. He stands at 54% approve to 36% disapprove among men, similar to the 52% to 37% rating he received two months ago. His rating among New Jersey women is also positive at 53% to 40%, which is a marked improvement from the 45% approve to 48% disapprove rating he received in August.

"The buzz around Chris Christie's fundraising trip and speech at the Reagan Library has reaped dividends for the governor, not only in elevating his national stature but in improving opinion among his constituents back here in New Jersey," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Nearly every New Jersey resident was following the news swirling around a potential presidential run for their governor – 66% say they heard a lot about this and another 27% heard a little. Half (50%) agree that Christie was sincerely reconsidering his earlier “No” statements, while 37% doubt whether he was really pondering a presidential candidacy. Majorities of Republicans (57%) and independents (52%) agree that Christie was sincere when he said he was reconsidering, while Democrats are split (44% agree to 43% disagree). It’s worth noting, though, that sizable minorities of Republicans (31%) and independents (35%) feel that the governor may not have been entirely straightforward about whether he was truly considering a run.

Regardless of his intentions, 2-in-3 (66%) New Jerseyans say that all the talk surrounding Christie’s possible presidential ambitions have not had an impact on his effectiveness as governor. Another 16% say it has made him more effective while 13% say it has made him less effective. Interestingly, these results are very similar to a poll taken six months ago, when murmurs of a potential Christie run were at a much lower pitch.

It’s unclear, though, whether all the national attention will help Chris Christie generate more public support for his gubernatorial agenda. In particular, there are signs that the Garden State bipartisanship he heralded in his national speeches may be fraying. A majority of New Jerseyans (54%) say that Christie and the Democratic leaders of the legislature have not been working well together, compared to 32% who say they have.

The 32% positive result is actually up from 18% to 22% in prior polls. However, this is due primarily to a change in opinion among the governor’s own partisan supporters. As recently as August, a majority of Republicans said that their governor and the Democrats in the legislature have not worked well together. Now, that sentiment is reversed – 56% of Republican residents say the two sides are in fact working well together and just 34% say they are not. Majorities of Democrats (65%) and independents (54%), on the other hand, continue to feel that bipartisan cooperation in Trenton needs some work, as they have in polls going back to September of last year.

Among those who feel the two sides are not working well together, 29% blame Christie more, 19% blame the Democrats more, and 50% blame both sides equally. The number of residents who put more blame on Christie is up by 10 points from August, while the number who blame Democratic legislators more is up by 3 points. Blame for the lack of cooperation has not changed much among Republicans and independents, but there has been a decided shift among Democrats. Democrats who feel that their executive and legislative leaderships are not working together are much more likely to put the blame mainly on Governor Christie now (51%) than they were just two months ago (26%).

“During his travels, the governor talked a lot about the sense of bipartisanship he’s fostered in New Jersey. The significant shifts in these particular poll questions suggest, now that Chris Christie has

gone national, Republicans want to support their governor's claim, whereas Democrats want to shoot it down," said Murray.

The poll also found that New Jerseyans feel the national focus on Christie may have been a boon for the state's reputation but probably won't generate many tangible returns. More New Jerseyans say that the national attention generated by Christie has been good (47%) rather than bad (16%) for the state's reputation. Another 33% say it has had no effect.

Only 37% say that their governor's national standing will make the GOP candidates for president pay more attention to New Jersey issues, while 9% say it will actually cause them to pay less attention. Fully half (50%) say it will have no impact. Even among New Jersey Republicans, just 44% say the governor's new found stature will cause their party's presidential candidates to pay more attention to New Jersey issues.

While the governor was on his national tour, Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno signed a bill that moved New Jersey's presidential primary back to June after a one-time run in February during the 2008 campaign. Few state residents (23%) feel that the later schedule will cause the GOP field to pay more attention to the state, and even fewer (14%) say it will make them pay less attention. Most (55%) say the move will have no impact on whether the candidates focus on New Jersey. Interestingly, when the state's presidential primary was moved earlier in the season four years ago, most residents (51%) felt that the move then would have no impact, compared to 37% who said it would make New Jersey more important to the candidates and 4% who said it would make the state less important.

Finally, the recent talk about Chris Christie's presidential aspirations also led to punditry chatter about his weight as a potential campaign issue. The voters of New Jersey say this should be a non-starter. If a presidential candidate was overweight, more than 3-in-4 (78%) Garden State residents feel it would not be appropriate to consider that candidate's weight in their vote decision.

The *Monmouth University/NJ Press Media Poll* was conducted by telephone with 817 New Jersey adults from October 5 to 9, 2011. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.4 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the New Jersey Press Media 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.)

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor? [*PROBE: Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?*]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Strongly approve	27%	29%	17%	7%	30%	56%	30%	24%	23%	28%
Somewhat approve	27%	26%	30%	25%	28%	28%	24%	29%	16%	30%
Somewhat disapprove	13%	12%	13%	18%	13%	4%	15%	11%	14%	12%
Strongly disapprove	25%	25%	24%	41%	21%	8%	21%	29%	40%	20%
(VOL) Don't know	9%	8%	16%	9%	7%	5%	10%	8%	7%	10%

TREND: <i>All adults</i>	October 2011	August 2011	May 2011	February 2011	September 2010	July 2010	April 2010	February 2010
Approve	54%	48%	47%	47%	45%	44%	41%	33%
Disapprove	38%	42%	49%	40%	38%	44%	44%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	9%	9%	5%	12%	17%	12%	15%	52%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	817	802	807	801	801	801	804	803

TREND: <i>Registered voters</i>	October 2011	August 2011	May 2011	February 2011	September 2010	July 2010	April 2010	February 2010
Approve	55%	50%	46%	49%	44%	45%	42%	31%
Disapprove	37%	41%	49%	41%	40%	43%	44%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	8%	5%	9%	16%	12%	13%	53%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	693	730	725	718	726	747	719	716

2. In general, have Governor Christie and Democratic leaders in the legislature been working together well or not so well?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Well	32%	31%	34%	21%	29%	56%	36%	28%	20%	36%
Not so well	54%	54%	49%	65%	54%	34%	52%	55%	67%	49%
(VOL) Mixed/Depends	3%	4%	2%	2%	5%	1%	4%	3%	3%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	11%	10%	15%	12%	11%	9%	8%	14%	9%	12%

	October 2011	August 2011	May 2011	September 2010
Well	32%	18%	22%	21%
Not so well	54%	63%	66%	61%
(VOL) Mixed/Depends	3%	9%	3%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	11%	9%	9%	14%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	817	802	807	801

[The following question was asked only of those who said "Not so well" to Q2, moe= ±4.5%]

3. Who is more to blame for this – Christie, the Democrats, or both equally?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Christie	29%	29%	31%	51%	18%	7%	25%	33%	35%	27%
Democrats	19%	20%	16%	7%	25%	43%	24%	15%	15%	21%
Both equally	50%	50%	50%	41%	56%	50%	50%	49%	46%	51%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	0%	1%	3%	4%	1%

	October 2011	August 2011	May 2011	September 2010
Christie	29%	19%	25%	26%
Democrats	19%	16%	20%	17%
Both equally	50%	61%	54%	54%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	3%	1%	3%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	467	590	563	510

4. Governor Christie has recently been talked about as a potential presidential candidate. How much have you heard about this – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
A lot	66%	71%	45%	64%	66%	74%	67%	66%	74%	64%
A little	27%	25%	38%	28%	28%	20%	27%	27%	21%	29%
Not at all	6%	3%	17%	7%	5%	5%	6%	6%	3%	7%
(VOL) Don't know	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%

	October 2011	February 2011*
A lot	66%	26%
A little	27%	41%
Not at all	6%	33%
(VOL) Don't know	0%	0%
Unwtd N	817	801

* Question wording in February 2011: "Recently, Governor Christie has been suggested as a potential presidential candidate..."

5. Do you agree or disagree that Governor Christie was sincerely reconsidering whether to run for president over the past couple of weeks?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Agree	50%	53%	36%	44%	52%	57%	51%	48%	59%	47%
Disagree	37%	37%	37%	43%	35%	31%	37%	37%	30%	39%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	7%	10%	5%	8%	7%	6%	8%	7%	7%
Unaware of it (from Q4)	6%	4%	17%	8%	5%	6%	6%	6%	4%	7%

6. Do you think talk of a potential presidential run has made Chris Christie more effective or less effective as governor, or has it had no impact on his performance as governor?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
More effective	16%	15%	16%	12%	15%	23%	19%	13%	11%	17%
Less effective	13%	13%	12%	19%	12%	5%	16%	10%	14%	13%
No impact	66%	66%	64%	63%	68%	67%	61%	71%	73%	64%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	5%	7%	6%	5%	5%	4%	7%	3%	7%

	October 2011	February 2011
More effective	16%	11%
Less effective	13%	17%
No impact	66%	63%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	9%
Unwtd N	817	801

7. Do you think the national attention paid to Chris Christie has been good or bad for New Jersey's reputation, or has it had no impact?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Good	47%	48%	41%	30%	52%	67%	51%	43%	41%	49%
Bad	16%	16%	18%	26%	13%	5%	13%	19%	19%	15%
No impact	33%	32%	37%	38%	32%	27%	34%	32%	36%	32%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%	1%	2%	6%	3%	4%

8. As you may know, New Jersey has moved its presidential primary back to June after holding it in February in 2008. Do you think having a later primary will make the Republican presidential candidates pay more attention to issues that concern New Jersey, less attention, or will it have no impact?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
More attention to NJ issues	23%	22%	23%	25%	22%	23%	22%	23%	22%	23%
Less attention to NJ issues	14%	14%	17%	15%	14%	13%	19%	10%	14%	14%
No impact	55%	55%	52%	52%	57%	55%	53%	57%	56%	54%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%	9%	6%	10%	8%	8%

TREND: Registered voters only	October 2011	April 2007*
More attention	22%	37%
Less attention	14%	4%
No impact	55%	51%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	8%
Unwtd N	693	1069

* Prior question wording: "As you may know, New Jersey moved up its presidential primary from June to February. Do you think having an earlier primary will make the presidential candidates pay more attention to issues that concern New Jersey, less attention, or has it had no impact?"

9. Do you think Chris Christie's national standing will make the Republican presidential candidates pay more attention to issues that concern New Jersey, less attention, or does it have no impact?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
More attention to NJ issues	37%	37%	36%	34%	36%	44%	38%	36%	33%	38%
Less attention to NJ issues	9%	8%	12%	12%	10%	3%	9%	8%	6%	10%
No impact	50%	51%	43%	50%	51%	48%	50%	50%	56%	47%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	4%	8%	3%	3%	6%	3%	6%	4%	5%

10. If a candidate for president is overweight, do you think it is appropriate or not appropriate for voters to consider the candidate's weight when deciding whether to vote for him?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Appropriate	18%	20%	14%	23%	19%	11%	19%	18%	25%	16%
Not appropriate	78%	76%	83%	74%	78%	83%	77%	78%	73%	79%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	5%	4%	4%	3%	4%

The Monmouth University/NJ Press Media Poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on October 5 to 9, 2011 with a statewide random sample of 817 adult residents, including 714 contacted on a landline telephone and 103 on a cell phone. Sampling and interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. 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 3.4 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)			
34% Dem	49% Male	28% 18-34	64% White
20% Rep	51% Female	39% 35-54	12% Black
46% Ind		32% 55+	16% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other
Registered Voter Sample (weighted)			
34% Dem	47% Male	21% 18-34	67% White
20% Rep	53% Female	42% 35-54	11% Black
46% Ind		37% 55+	15% Hispanic
			7% Asian/Other

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		MARGIN OF ERROR			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Unweighted N	817	693	124	255	365	168	395	422	227	582
moe	3.4%	3.7%	8.8%	6.1%	5.1%	7.6%	4.9%	4.8%	6.5%	4.1%

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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