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## **LAUTENBERG WIDENS LEAD**

*Majority of state voters have no opinion of Republican Zimmer*

The latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* finds Democratic incumbent Frank Lautenberg widening his lead over Republican challenger Dick Zimmer. He currently leads among registered voters by 51% to 32%, and among likely voters by 52% to 36%. In September, the Democrat held a 46% to 36% edge among likely voters.

Each candidate maintains widespread support among his partisan base – 84% of Democrats back Lautenberg and 77% of Republicans support Zimmer. Independent voters give Lautenberg a 42% to 33% edge.

Currently, Lautenberg's job performance rating stands at 48% approve to 28% disapprove, which is up from 45% to 33% in July. His personal favorability ratings have also improved – 45% of voters now have a favorable opinion of Lautenberg compared to 24% who feel unfavorably toward the incumbent. Another 30% have no opinion.

Dick Zimmer's personal rating is 28% favorable to 16% unfavorable, which is basically unchanged since September. However, this also means that 56% of voters still don't know enough about the GOP nominee to give him a rating.

Few Garden State voters – just 12% – have been paying close attention to the senate election, compared with a whopping 66% who have been closely following the presidential campaign. That's not surprising, since the candidates have yet to make a joint appearance. Their first of the campaign will be held today at 2:00 pm, when they will field questions from the Gannett New Jersey newspaper group's editors. The event will be shown live on the newspapers' websites.

“With just two weeks to go, the incumbent’s stealth campaign appears to be succeeding. Of course, it certainly helps that his challenger has yet to introduce himself to most of the state’s voters,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “Given the lack of visible campaign activity, Lautenberg seems to be coasting along on Obama’s coattails.”

The poll also found that Lautenberg continues to have a slight edge over Zimmer on being better able to help the state. The incumbent leads the challenger 43% to 32% for understanding the problems of average New Jerseyans and 49% to 30% for his ability to ensure that New Jersey gets its fair share of federal funding. These results are basically unchanged from prior polls.

Lautenberg’s age continues to be a non-issue for voters. Just 29% of registered voters feel he is too old to be an effective senator, similar to the September poll results. Only slightly more (36%) believe he is too old to serve out another six year term. It should be noted that the September poll also found that most New Jersey voters *underestimate* the 84 year old incumbent’s age by nine years on average.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 900 New Jersey registered voters October 15-18, 2008. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.3 percent. This report also includes analysis on a smaller group of 723 “likely voters” with a ± 3.7 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.)

1. There will be an election for U.S. Senator from New Jersey in November. 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	46%	53%	46%	41%	54%	47%	44%	33%	48%	55%
Some	28%	26%	30%	30%	25%	28%	29%	33%	26%	26%
A little	16%	13%	18%	19%	10%	16%	16%	18%	17%	13%
None at all	9%	7%	6%	10%	11%	8%	10%	16%	8%	6%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Unwtd N	900	723	343	331	204	432	468	158	395	331

TREND:	October 2008	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008
A lot	46%	45%	47%	31%
Some	28%	31%	30%	31%
A little	16%	16%	13%	26%
None at all	9%	7%	10%	11%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%
Unwtd N	900	689	874	720

2. 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	18-34	35-54	55+
Zimmer	<b>32%</b>	<b>36%</b>	5%	33%	77%	36%	28%	17%	35%	39%
Lautenberg	<b>51%</b>	<b>52%</b>	84%	42%	15%	51%	52%	62%	47%	50%
Other candidate	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	1%	5%	1%	1%	4%	1%	3%	3%
(VOL) Will not vote	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	3%	4%	3%	5%	2%	6%	3%	1%
(VOL) Undecided	<b>11%</b>	<b>8%</b>	8%	15%	4%	7%	14%	13%	11%	8%
Unwtd N	<b>900</b>	<b>723</b>	343	331	204	432	468	158	395	331

TREND:	October 2008		September 2008		July 2008	
	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
Zimmer	32%	36%	33%	36%	34%	37%
Lautenberg	51%	52%	46%	46%	44%	45%
Other candidate	2%	2%	5%	5%	7%	6%
(VOL) Will not vote	4%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%
(VOL) Undecided	11%	8%	16%	14%	13%	11%
Unwtd N	900	723	689	589	874	698

**Composite Table: Strength of Vote Choice**

2. 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?  
 3. At this moment do you lean more towards Zimmer or more towards Lautenberg?  
 4. Are you very sure about voting for [Name]; or might you change your mind before Election Day?

	October 2008		September 2008		July 2008	
	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Likely Voters
Sure Zimmer	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>	22%	25%	21%	24%
Weak Zimmer	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>	6%	6%	7%	7%
Lean Zimmer	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>	5%	5%	6%	6%
Undecided-Other	<b>14%</b>	<b>10%</b>	21%	18%	21%	17%
Lean Lautenberg	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>	5%	4%	5%	4%
Weak Lautenberg	<b>10%</b>	<b>8%</b>	10%	9%	11%	11%
Sure Lautenberg	<b>38%</b>	<b>41%</b>	31%	33%	29%	31%
Unwtd N	<b>879</b>	<b>709</b>	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	18-34	35-54	55+
Favorable	<b>45%</b>	<b>48%</b>	68%	39%	21%	44%	46%	39%	48%	47%
Unfavorable	<b>24%</b>	<b>26%</b>	6%	25%	55%	28%	21%	16%	23%	32%
No opinion	<b>30%</b>	<b>26%</b>	26%	36%	24%	28%	33%	45%	30%	21%
Unwtd N	<b>900</b>	<b>723</b>	343	331	204	432	468	158	395	331

TREND:	October 2008	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008
Favorable	<b>45%</b>	42%	34%	43%
Unfavorable	<b>24%</b>	28%	27%	30%
No opinion	<b>30%</b>	30%	39%	27%
Unwtd N	<b>900</b>	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	18-34	35-54	55+
Favorable	<b>28%</b>	<b>31%</b>	12%	27%	58%	32%	24%	21%	29%	31%
Unfavorable	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	24%	13%	8%	17%	15%	15%	17%	17%
No opinion	<b>56%</b>	<b>53%</b>	63%	60%	35%	52%	61%	65%	54%	52%
Unwtd N	<b>900</b>	<b>723</b>	343	331	204	432	468	158	395	331

TREND:	October 2008	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008
Favorable	28%	27%	18%	9%
Unfavorable	16%	18%	11%	10%
No opinion	56%	55%	71%	80%
Unwtd N	900	689	874	720

7. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Frank Lautenberg is doing as United States Senator?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Approve	<b>48%</b>	<b>49%</b>	66%	44%	24%	46%	50%	47%	46%	51%
Disapprove	<b>28%</b>	<b>32%</b>	10%	31%	57%	32%	25%	18%	31%	34%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>24%</b>	<b>19%</b>	23%	24%	19%	22%	25%	35%	23%	16%
Unwtd N	<b>900</b>	<b>723</b>	343	331	204	432	468	158	395	331

TREND: Registered voters only	October 2008	July 2008	April 2008	January 2008
Approve	48%	45%	48%	43%
Disapprove	28%	33%	31%	28%
(VOL) Don't know	24%	22%	21%	30%
Unwtd N	900	874	720	698

[QUESTIONS 8 & 9 WERE ROTATED]

8. Which candidate – Lautenberg, Zimmer, both, or neither one – understands the problems of average New Jerseyans?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Lautenberg	<b>27%</b>	<b>29%</b>	50%	18%	4%	25%	28%	24%	25%	31%
Zimmer	<b>16%</b>	<b>17%</b>	2%	16%	40%	19%	13%	13%	16%	19%
Both	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	15%	18%	14%	13%	18%	18%	15%	15%
Neither	<b>24%</b>	<b>23%</b>	17%	33%	22%	26%	23%	20%	29%	22%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>17%</b>	<b>15%</b>	16%	15%	20%	16%	17%	25%	16%	12%
Unwtd N	<b>900</b>	<b>723</b>	343	331	204	432	468	158	395	331

TREND:	October 2008	September 2008	July 2008
Lautenberg	27%	29%	24%
Zimmer	16%	20%	12%
Both	16%	9%	15%
Neither	24%	21%	29%
(VOL) Don't know	17%	20%	21%
Unwtd N	900	689	874

9. Which candidate – Lautenberg, Zimmer, both, or neither one – 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	18-34	35-54	55+
Lautenberg	33%	36%	58%	21%	13%	32%	34%	30%	32%	38%
Zimmer	14%	14%	4%	12%	33%	14%	13%	13%	12%	17%
Both	16%	16%	12%	21%	17%	17%	16%	18%	16%	15%
Neither	18%	16%	12%	26%	12%	21%	15%	13%	21%	17%
(VOL) Don't know	19%	18%	15%	19%	24%	15%	22%	26%	19%	14%
Unwtd N	900	723	343	331	204	432	468	158	395	331

TREND:	October 2008	September 2008	July 2008
Lautenberg	33%	35%	29%
Zimmer	14%	15%	12%
Both	16%	11%	11%
Neither	18%	18%	24%
(VOL) Don't know	19%	20%	24%
Unwtd N	900	689	874

[Question 10 was asked of a random half-sample: moe= ± 4.6%]

10. 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	18-34	35-54	55+
Agree	29%	33%	21%	27%	42%	34%	25%	22%	30%	34%
Disagree	61%	59%	68%	63%	51%	59%	63%	60%	64%	57%
(VOL) Don't know	10%	8%	11%	10%	7%	7%	12%	18%	6%	8%
Unwtd N	451	359	169	161	111	226	225	79	204	160

TREND:	October 2008	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008	January 2008
Agree	29%	31%	31%	41%	34%
Disagree	61%	57%	54%	46%	51%
(VOL) Don't know	10%	12%	15%	13%	15%
Unwtd N	451	689	435	639	698

[Question 11 was asked of a random half-sample: moe= ± 4.6%]

11. Do you agree or disagree that Frank Lautenberg is too old to effectively serve another six year term as senator?

	Registered Voters	Likely Voters	PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE		
			Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Agree	36%	35%	27%	38%	51%	38%	34%	28%	39%	36%
Disagree	52%	56%	59%	52%	39%	54%	50%	53%	48%	57%
(VOL) Don't know	13%	9%	14%	10%	10%	8%	16%	19%	13%	7%
Unwtd N	449	364	174	170	93	206	243	79	191	171

12. 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	18-34	35-54	55+
Very closely	12%	14%	13%	9%	14%	11%	13%	6%	13%	15%
Somewhat closely	38%	40%	38%	36%	41%	39%	37%	37%	33%	44%
Not very closely	49%	46%	48%	54%	45%	50%	49%	56%	53%	41%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%	0%
Unwtd N	900	723	343	331	204	432	468	158	395	331

TREND:	October 2008	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008
Very closely	12%	6%	11%	6%
Somewhat closely	38%	35%	38%	25%
Not very closely	49%	59%	50%	68%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%
Unwtd N	900	689	874	720

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 October 15-18, 2008 with a statewide random sample of 900 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 3.3 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</i>			
<i>Registered Voter Sample (weighted)</i>			
<i>40% Dem</i>	<i>47% Male</i>	<i>26% 18-34</i>	<i>68% White</i>
<i>37% Ind</i>	<i>53% Female</i>	<i>43% 35-54</i>	<i>13% Black</i>
<i>23% Rep</i>		<i>31% 55+</i>	<i>11% Hispanic</i>
			<i>8% Asian/Other</i>
<i>Likely Voter Sample (weighted)</i>			
<i>42% Dem</i>	<i>48% Male</i>	<i>22% 18-34</i>	<i>70% White</i>
<i>32% Ind</i>	<i>52% Female</i>	<i>46% 35-54</i>	<i>13% Black</i>
<i>26% Rep</i>		<i>32% 55+</i>	<i>11% Hispanic</i>
			<i>6% Asian/Other</i>

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