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*This poll was conducted by the
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NEW JERSEY SENATE RACE DOWN TO THE WIRE

Menendez leads Kean by 3 as independents split their vote

In the ping pong match that has been this year's U.S. Senate race, the last pre-election *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* shows Democratic incumbent Bob Menendez with a slim 3 point lead. He is ahead of Republican challenger Tom Kean, Jr. by just 45% to 42% among likely voters. Another 3% of voters say they will vote for another candidate and 10% are still undecided. Just two weeks ago, Menendez enjoyed a 9 point lead in this poll.

"There are two key reasons for the narrowing gap in these final days," observed Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. "Independents are still unsettled on their choice and New Jersey Democrats may have problems energizing their base on Tuesday."

Likely independent voters in the current poll are split in their vote choice, with 41% preferring Kean to 39% for Menendez. However, fully 1-in-3 independent voters (33%) are either undecided or indicate they could still change their mind before election day.

As expected, the candidates do well among likely voters who identify themselves as partisans – Kean takes 89% of the Republican vote and Menendez garners 87% from Democrats. However, there are also indications that a number of Democrats may not be satisfied with their party's nominee and could choose to sit this one out. Specifically, 21% of Democrats have no interest in this election compared to only 14% of Republicans.

“Kean has to be congratulated for staying on message, as it may just pay off. For Menendez to win this race, he will have to get reluctant Democrats to the polls, which is fairly amazing given the national climate that strongly favors his party,” commented Murray.

The poll found that the narrowing gap in this contest coincides with an increase in Tom Kean’s favorability ratings and a growing advantage on the ethics issue. The Republican nominee went from generally favorable ratings in late September to split ratings in late October as he suffered a backlash from the negative ads run by his campaign. However, with new positive ads on the air and his popular father by his side on the campaign trail, the Republican seems to have rebounded from that image. Currently, his personal rating among voters stands at 40% favorable to 28% unfavorable.

By contrast, Bob Menendez has had split favorability ratings throughout the fall campaign. They currently stand at 35% favorable to 37% unfavorable.

While 67% of voters view this race as negative and more blame Kean (25%) than Menendez (15%) for its tone, it seems that the Republican’s ads may have had the intended impact of focusing voters on the issue of ethics. Currently, Tom Kean enjoys his strongest advantage of the campaign season on that issue. By a 19 point margin, more voters say that Kean is the candidate of high ethical standards rather than Menendez – 32% to 13%.

On the other hand, the Democrat continues to have an advantage on the issue of Iraq, but the gap is narrower – 37% of likely voters say Menendez shares their views on the war in Iraq compared to 27% who say that Kean is closer to them on this issue.

“If undecided voters walk into the booth on Tuesday with Iraq as the number one issue on their minds, they choose Menendez. If it is ethics, they push the button for Kean,” said Murray.

Menendez has also had a difficult time convincing voters of his key campaign theme – that he is the candidate who will fight for New Jerseyans. While 30% say he is the better candidate on understanding the problems of average New Jerseyans, 22% give that advantage to Kean.

“By almost any measure, this has been a horrible campaign in terms of engaging voters about issues important to them. So it’s really no surprise that voters, especially independents, are swinging back and forth. They have little real information on which to base their vote choice,” remarked Murray.

The poll found that nearly half (47%) of likely voters feel that the two campaigns have done a bad job of addressing the issues important to them. Only 39% say the candidates have

done a good job. The number who feel the candidates have failed on this key responsibility has increased from 32% in September to 43% in October to 47% today.

Murray added, “It’s important to remember that this is the first time an ethnic or racial minority has run as a major party nominee for statewide office in New Jersey. Experience from other states indicates that this can confound the pre-election poll numbers. Couple this with the national parties spending money on what may be the only potential Republican pickup in the country, and all eyes will be on New Jersey Tuesday night.”

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone November 1-3, 2006 with 1,086 New Jersey voters considered likely to vote in Tuesday’s election. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3 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.)

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?

	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	42%	7%	41%	89%	44%	40%	50%	18%	N/A	45%	40%	38%	50%	38%	
Menendez	45%	87%	39%	6%	43%	47%	38%	69%	N/A	45%	46%	51%	36%	48%	
Other	3%	2%	6%	1%	4%	2%	3%	3%	N/A	3%	3%	2%	5%	1%	
Undecided	10%	5%	13%	4%	9%	11%	9%	10%	N/A	7%	11%	9%	9%	13%	
Unwtd N	1086	331	415	311	544	542	894	137	30	347	690	347	173	206	

TREND	November 2006	October 2006	September 2006
	Likely Voters	Likely Voters	Likely Voters
Kean	42%	39%	44%
Menendez	45%	48%	38%
Other	3%	3%	3%
Undecided	10%	10%	14%
Unwtd N	1086	396	391

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?

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Sure Kean	34%	4%	29%	80%
Weak Kean	4%	1%	6%	4%
Lean Kean	4%	2%	6%	5%
Undecided- Other	13%	7%	19%	5%
Lean Menendez	3%	5%	4%	1%
Weak Menendez	4%	6%	4%	1%
Sure Menendez	38%	76%	31%	4%
Unwtd N	1086	331	415	311

TREND	November 2006	October 2006	September 2006
	Likely Voters	Likely Voters	Likely Voters
Sure Kean	34%	28%	28%
Weak Kean	4%	8%	9%
Lean Kean	4%	3%	7%
Undecided- Other	13%	13%	17%
Lean Menendez	3%	4%	4%
Weak Menendez	4%	7%	8%
Sure Menendez	38%	37%	26%
Unwtd N	1086	396	391

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

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Favorable	40%	14%	38%	78%
Unfavorable	28%	46%	30%	5%
No opinion	32%	40%	32%	16%
Unwtd N	1086	331	415	311

TREND	November 2006 Likely Voters	October 2006 Likely Voters	September 2006 Likely Voters
Favorable	40%	36%	42%
Unfavorable	28%	33%	17%
No opinion	32%	31%	41%
Unwtd N	1086	396	391

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

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Favorable	35%	67%	30%	7%
Unfavorable	37%	8%	40%	70%
No opinion	29%	25%	30%	23%
Unwtd N	1086	331	415	311

TREND	November 2006 Likely Voters	October 2006 Likely Voters	September 2006 Likely Voters
Favorable	35%	39%	33%
Unfavorable	37%	33%	30%
No opinion	29%	27%	37%
Unwtd N	1086	396	391

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

	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
		Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Good job	39%	42%	46%	22%	51%	28%	43%
Bad job	47%	46%	42%	56%	37%	62%	41%
(VOL) Don't Know	14%	12%	11%	22%	12%	10%	16%
Unwtd N	1086	427	449	152	331	415	311

TREND	November 2006 Likely Voters	October 2006 Likely Voters	September 2006 Likely Voters
Good job	39%	41%	41%
Bad job	47%	43%	32%
(VOL) Don't Know	14%	16%	26%
Unwtd N	1086	396	391

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

	Likely Voters	PARTY ID		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Positive	22%	28%	15%	24%
Negative	67%	62%	77%	63%
(VOL) Some of both	6%	5%	3%	7%
(VOL) Neither	2%	1%	2%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	3%	2%	4%
Unwtd N	1086	331	415	311

TREND	November 2006 Likely Voters	October 2006 Likely Voters	September 2006 Likely Voters
Positive	22%	26%	55%
Negative	67%	65%	32%
(VOL) Some of both	6%	4%	3%
(VOL) Neither	2%	2%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	3%	8%
Unwtd N	1086	396	391

[IF RACE HAS BEEN NEGATIVE, ASK:]

9A. Who has been more negative – Kean, Menendez or both equally?

	November 2006 Likely Voters	October 2006 Likely Voters
Kean	25%	28%
Menendez	15%	16%
Both equally	56%	55%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	2%
Unwtd N	842	288

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

Understands the problems of average New Jerseyans:

	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
		Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Kean	22%	51%	3%	6%	6%	18%	50%
Menendez	30%	2%	63%	12%	57%	26%	5%
Both	14%	16%	11%	20%	11%	12%	17%
Neither	25%	26%	15%	34%	16%	36%	21%
(VOL) Don't Know	9%	5%	8%	27%	10%	8%	7%
Unwtd N	1086	427	449	152	331	415	311

TREND	November 2006 Likely Voters	October 2006 Likely Voters	September 2006 Likely Voters
Kean	22%	19%	22%
Menendez	30%	37%	28%
Both	14%	13%	13%
Neither	25%	24%	24%
(VOL) Don't Know	9%	5%	13%
Unwtd N	1086	396	391

Has high ethical standards:

	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
		Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Kean	32%	70%	5%	18%	7%	32%	66%
Menendez	13%	1%	26%	6%	27%	8%	3%
Both	14%	9%	19%	11%	18%	12%	11%
Neither	27%	13%	35%	31%	31%	35%	13%
(VOL) Don't Know	14%	6%	15%	34%	18%	13%	8%
Unwtd N	1086	427	449	152	331	415	311

TREND	November 2006 Likely Voters	October 2006 Likely Voters	September 2006 Likely Voters
Kean	32%	26%	29%
Menendez	13%	16%	13%
Both	14%	21%	23%
Neither	27%	25%	19%
(VOL) Don't Know	14%	12%	17%
Unwtd N	1086	396	391

Shares your views on the war in Iraq:

	Likely Voters	VOTE INTENTION			PARTY ID		
		Kean	Menendez	Undecided	Dem	Ind	Rep
Kean	27%	61%	3%	13%	4%	22%	62%
Menendez	37%	7%	72%	23%	66%	37%	7%
Both	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	3%
Neither	20%	21%	12%	25%	14%	27%	20%
(VOL) Don't Know	12%	7%	10%	33%	12%	11%	8%
Unwtd N	1086	427	449	152	331	415	311

TREND	November 2006 Likely Voters	October 2006 Likely Voters	September 2006 Likely Voters
Kean	27%	30%	24%
Menendez	37%	38%	23%
Both	4%	4%	4%
Neither	20%	17%	25%
(VOL) Don't Know	12%	12%	23%
Unwtd N	1086	396	391

Results for this *Monmouth University/Gannett NJ Poll* are based on telephone interviews conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on November 1-3, 2006 with a statewide random sample of 2,167 adults. From this group, 1086 likely voters were identified. For results based on the sample of likely voters, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.0 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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