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NATIONAL: NO OPINION ON FREE TRADE PACT

Obama rating ticks up slightly

West Long Branch, NJ – The American public has not been following news about the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement and most are unsure of its potential impact. Opinion is divided on the idea of free trade deals in general and few can point to any impact – either positive or negative – from the two-decade old NAFTA pact. The ***Monmouth University Poll*** also found that Pres. Barack Obama's job approval rating has grown slightly more positive while ratings for Congress continue to wallow in the cellar.

The public is simply not tuned in to the recently negotiated Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement. About 6-in-10 have heard about it, but only 12% say they have heard a lot while 47% have heard only a little. A large majority (60%) of the public is not sure what impact the pact will have on average Americans. The remainder are divided – 11% say the impact will be good, 19% say it will be bad, and 10% say it will not have much impact. Among the small group who have heard a lot about the deal, though, nearly half (47%) say the impact will be bad for most Americans and just 23% say it will be good.

Overall, 24% of the public feels that free trade agreements in general are good for the United States and a nearly identical 26% say they are bad. Another 46% are unsure. Republicans (33%) are only slightly more likely than independents (26%) or Democrats (24%) to feel that these deals are bad for the country.

As a benchmark, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been in effect for more than 20 years, but few people have an opinion of that historic deal either. Just 18% of the public feel this pact has been good for most Americans, but only 24% feel it has been bad. Another 16% say it has had not much impact on the public and a 43% plurality are unsure what the effect has been.

"Free trade agreements like the TPP can provoke a firestorm on Capitol Hill and Wall Street. But the potential impact on Main Street remain difficult for most Americans to picture," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

The poll also looked at Pres. Obama's overall standing with the public. His job rating has been see-sawing back and forth over the past few months. He currently has a positive 47% approve to 45% disapprove rating with the American public. That's higher than the ratings he held in September (45% - 49%) and August (45% - 50%), but it is similar to his job rating in July (47% - 46%). Congress continues to earn a negative 17% approve to 71% disapprove job rating – a number that barely budges from poll to poll. *[Note: the current poll was conducted before Paul Ryan's election as Speaker of the House.]* Two-thirds (66%) of the public say things in the country have gotten off on the wrong track and just 24% say they are going in the right direction, a finding which is virtually unchanged from prior polls.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from October 15 to 18, 2015 with 1,012 adults in the United States. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.1 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

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 Barack Obama is doing as president?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem
Approve	**47%**	44%	55%	17%	43%	82%
Disapprove	**45%**	48%	35%	81%	45%	10%
(VOL) No opinion	**9%**	8%	10%	2%	13%	7%

TREND:	October 2015	September 2015	August 2015	July 2015	June 2015	April 2015	January 2015	December 2014	July 2013
Approve	47%	45%	45%	47%	44%	42%	43%	41%	42%
Disapprove	45%	49%	50%	46%	46%	48%	48%	49%	51%
(VOL) No opinion	9%	6%	6%	7%	10%	10%	8%	10%	6%
Unwtd N	*1,012*	*1,009*	*1,203*	*1,001*	*1,002*	*1,005*	*1,003*	*1,008*	*1,012*

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the U.S. Congress is doing?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem
Approve	**17%**	13%	30%	15%	15%	19%
Disapprove	**71%**	77%	51%	74%	72%	72%
(VOL) No opinion	**12%**	10%	19%	11%	13%	8%

TREND:	October 2015	September 2015	August 2015	July 2015	June 2015	April 2015	January 2015	December 2014	July 2013
Approve	17%	19%	18%	18%	19%	21%	18%	17%	14%
Disapprove	71%	71%	72%	69%	71%	67%	70%	73%	76%
(VOL) No opinion	12%	11%	11%	12%	10%	12%	11%	11%	10%
Unwtd N	*1,012*	*1,009*	*1,203*	*1,001*	*1,002*	*1,005*	*1,003*	*1,008*	*1,012*

3. Would you say things in the country are going in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem
Right direction	**24%**	21%	32%	10%	21%	40%
Wrong track	**66%**	68%	59%	86%	69%	43%
(VOL) Depends	**6%**	7%	5%	2%	4%	13%
(VOL) Don't know	**4%**	4%	5%	2%	6%	4%

TREND:	October 2015	July 2015	June 2015	April 2015	December 2014	July 2013
Right direction	24%	28%	23%	27%	23%	28%
Wrong track	66%	63%	68%	66%	69%	63%
(VOL) Depends	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%
Unwtd N	*1,012*	*1,001*	*1,002*	*1,005*	*1,008*	*1,012*

4. In general, do you think that free trade agreements with different countries are good or bad for the United States, or are you not sure?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem
Good	**24%**	23%	26%	23%	24%	24%
Bad	**26%**	29%	18%	33%	26%	24%
Not sure	**46%**	45%	51%	41%	45%	50%
(VOL) Depends	**3%**	3%	5%	3%	5%	2%

5. Recently, the United States negotiated a free trade agreement with eleven other countries that border the Pacific Ocean, called the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Have you heard a lot, a little, or nothing at all about this?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem
A lot	**12%**	15%	4%	11%	10%	18%
A little	**47%**	48%	41%	52%	46%	48%
Nothing at all	**41%**	37%	55%	37%	44%	35%

6. Do you think this agreement will be good or bad for most Americans, will not have much impact on most Americans, or are you not sure?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem
Good	**11%**	10%	12%	5%	13%	12%
Bad	**19%**	21%	13%	20%	21%	19%
Will not have much impact	**10%**	9%	12%	12%	7%	11%
Not sure	**60%**	60%	63%	62%	58%	57%

7. Do you think NAFTA, the free trade agreement between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico that went into effect in 1994, has been good or bad for most Americans, has not had much impact on most Americans, or are you not sure?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem
Good	**18%**	17%	21%	12%	19%	23%
Bad	**24%**	28%	9%	31%	24%	20%
Has not had much impact	**16%**	15%	17%	19%	15%	14%
Not sure	**43%**	40%	53%	38%	42%	43%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from October 15 to 18, 2015 with a national random sample of 1,012 adults age 18 and older. This includes 712 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 300 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone, in English. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). 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)

28% Rep	*49% Male*	*32% 18-34*	*66% White*
42% Ind	*51% Female*	*37% 35-54*	*12% Black*
30% Dem		*32% 55+*	*15% Hispanic*
			7% Asian/Other

MARGIN OF ERROR

	TOTAL	*REGISTERED VOTER*		*PARTY ID*		
		Yes	*No*	*Rep*	*Ind*	*Dem*
Unweighted N	*1,012*	*836*	*176*	*292*	*378*	*303*
moe	*3.1%*	*3.4%*	*7.4%*	*5.7%*	*5.1%*	*5.6%*

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