

Flabby support for Menendez: Kyrillos remains a blank slate

U.S. Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) comfortably leads his Republican opponent, Joe Kyrillos, in a head-to-head matchup up by nine percentage points, according to the latest poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™. Although a quarter of New Jerseyans (24%) say they're undecided, four-in-ten (42%) say they'd support Menendez if the election were held today, while a third (33%) would vote for Kyrillos.

However, support for Menendez does not run deep. The poll also asked New Jerseyans if they'd support Menendez or "someone else," and among these voters support for the senator drops off considerably to 30% from 42%, and the hypothetical "someone else" wins, garnering 37% for him or herself.

In fact, faced with the choice of Menendez and Kyrillos, 74% of Democrats choose the Hudson County Democrat. But offered the choice of Menendez or "someone else," just half of Democrats (50%) choose the incumbent senator.

Another group uncommitted to the candidates is the all-important independents. Among independents, support for Menendez drops by 20 points when the question offers "someone else" as the opponent rather than the Republican state senator Kyrillos (to 17% from 37%).

"Menendez is not a name brand in New Jersey, even among Democrats," said poll director Peter Woolley. "He has spent considerable time raising money for his colleagues in the US Senate, but he has kept a relatively low profile in New Jersey."

More than one-in-five voters (22%) and one-in-five Democrats (22%) say they haven't heard of Menendez. Among all voters, 32% have a favorable view of Menendez, 24% have an unfavorable view.

Meanwhile, Kyrillos is a veritable blank slate to the vast majority of New Jerseyans. Two-thirds (68%) say they've never heard of him, and few express any opinion when asked if they have a favorable (10%) or unfavorable view (6%) of him. Still, more today know who he is than before: last September 82% said they'd never heard of him.

"The optimistic view for Kyrillos is that he has a unique opportunity to define himself before the campaign begins in earnest," said Woolley.

The FDU poll of 797 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone using both landlines and cell phones from April 30 through May 6, 2012, and has a margin of error of +/-3.5 percentage points. At random, half of those voters were asked their preference between Menendez and Kyrillos, and half between Menendez and "someone else." The sampling error for the split half of respondents is +/-5.

Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>

Radio actualities at 201.692.2846

For more information, please call 201.692.7032

Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from April 30 through May 6, 2012 using a randomly selected sample of 797 registered voters statewide. All voters were asked whether they had a favorable or unfavorable view of the candidates for Senate. The margin of error for a sample of 797 randomly selected respondents is +/- 3.5 percentage points. At random, voters were asked *either* their preference between Menendez and Kyrillos, or their preference between Menendez and "someone else." For those 400 randomly selected respondents, the sampling error is +/- 5 percentage points. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a land-line phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected. Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone-only-households, interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

In November, there will be an election for US Senate. I know it's early, but if the election were today would you vote for ...or...? [IF "don't know," ASK "which way do you lean?"]

N=397	All	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Mar. 2012	Jan. 2012	Sept. 2011
Robert Menendez, the Democrat	42	74	37	8	43	43	49
Joe Kyrillos, the Republican	33	7	27	73	33	31	28
Unsure/Neither/Other	24	19	36	20	23	26	22

N=400	All	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Mar. 2012
Robert Menendez, the incumbent	30	50	17	11	30
Someone else	37	21	47	57	37
Unsure/Neither/Other (vol.)	33	29	36	32	33

	Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/ no opinion	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Robert Menendez	22%	13%	19%	23%	12%	12%
<i>Republicans only</i>	23	2	9	25	16	26
<i>Independents only</i>	21	8	19	26	17	10
<i>Democrats only</i>	22	23	27	19	7	1
<i>Previous measures</i>						
<i>September 2011</i>	20	11	19	27	11	12
<i>May 2011</i>	22	10	20	28	8	12
<i>April 2011</i>	21	8	20	31	9	10
<i>Feb. 2011</i>	21	10	19	28	11	10
<i>Nov 2010</i>	15	11	20	29	12	13
<i>March 2010</i>	17	8	21	28	13	12
<i>Jan 2010</i>	17	7	21	27	15	13
<i>Jan 2009</i>	17	9	20	30	13	11

	Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/ no opinion	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Joe Kyrillos	68%	2%	8%	16%	5%	1%
<i>Republicans only</i>	63	4	14	16	2	1
<i>Independents only</i>	68	0	11	16	4	1
<i>Democrats only</i>	71	2	3	15	8	2
<i>Previous measures</i>						
<i>Sept. 2011</i>	82	1	3	10	3	1
<i>Sept. 2008</i>	85	1	2	8	2	1

Exact question wording and order

US1-3 released 05.09.2012

No US4

US5a-b. In November, there will be an election for US Senate. I know it's early, but if the election were today would you vote for... or....?

PROGRAMMER AT RANDOM ASK ½ SAMPLE 5A AND ½ SAMPLE 5B. ROTATE NAMES

Bob Menendez, the Democrat

Joe Kyrillos, the Republican

DK [ASK "which way to you lean?"]

DO NOT ROTATE

Bob Menendez, the incumbent

Someone else

DK [ASK "which way to you lean?"]

NJ1 released 05.08.2012

NJ2. Now I'm going ask about some people. If you haven't heard of one of them, just say so. Have you heard of ... [ROTATE LIST]? Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of... [MATCH ROTATION]? Would that be very or somewhat?

- a. Chris Christie [released 05.08.2012]
- b. Joe Kyrillos
- c. Robert Menendez
- d. Cory Booker [withheld for release]

Sample Characteristics (%)**Gender**

Male	49
Female	51

Age

18-29	13
30-44	23
45-59	31
60+	29
Refused	4

In addition to being American, would you say you are...?

White	67
Black	14
Hispanic or Latino	11
Asian	3
Other/Refused	5

Public Employee Household?

Yes	22
No	75
Not sure/Refused	2

Party ID

Democrat/Lean Democrat	45
Independent/Unsure/Refused	23
Republican/Lean Republican	32

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