MENENDEZ HAS GROUND TO COVER WITH VOTERS BEFORE NOVEMBER

Fairleigh Dickinson University, May 25, 2018 – Senior New Jersey Senator Robert Menendez is facing considerable headwinds as he heads into the general election campaign against his likely Republican challenger, Bob Hugin. The most recent statewide survey of registered voters in the Garden State from the Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll finds the two men tied for support, with almost half claiming indecision if the election were held today. Around a quarter say they would vote for Menendez (28%) over Hugin (24%), but 46 percent say they remain undecided.

"Senator Menendez's recent federal trial and bipartisan admonishment by his Senate colleagues are clearly taking their toll. It's not uncommon for incumbents to cruise to reelection, but these numbers suggest he's going to have to woo voters like he hasn't had to in a long time," said Krista Jenkins, director of the poll and professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Although a bare majority of Democrats say they support Menendez (53%), 42 percent remain undecided, with slightly more Republicans supportive of their presumptive nominee (60%). Most of the all-important self-identified independents (68%) would not know for whom to vote if the election were held today.

"It probably works to the Senator's benefit that if he was going to be admonished by the Senate ethics committee, they got it over with sooner rather than later. He has time before November to reclaim a more favorable place in the heart of his constituents," said Jenkins. "Both men will pick up considerably more support as the race progresses as the undecideds begin to break for the candidate who shares their partisan leanings. With New Jersey a more Democratic state, Menendez is likely to pick up more of this group than Hugin."

Senator Menendez is also slightly upside down in his favorable ratings. Thirty-nine percent rate him unfavorably, as compared with 32 percent who have a favorable opinion of him. Most say they hadn't heard of Bob Hugin before being asked about him during the survey (57%), with about a fifth holding a favorable opinion and ten percent an unfavorable opinion of the Republican healthcare executive. This is the first time the poll has asked about Hugin. However, the numbers observed today for Menendez are an improvement over 2017, when 57 percent had an unfavorable view of him.

"The difficult numbers that Menendez faces in the head-to-heads among those with a preference at this early stage are compounded by his favorable ratings. Around a fifth of all Democrats hold an unfavorable view of him, with almost half of independents saying the same thing," said Jenkins.

Menendez's counterpart in the Senate, Democrat Cory Booker, has favorable/unfavorable opinions that are virtually unchanged from 2017 and considerably better than those for Menendez. Right now, 55 percent view

him favorably – as they did in 2017 – with 27 percent who say they hold an unfavorable opinion of the junior senator. Democrats are decidedly happier with Booker than with Menendez, as the difference between their favorable to unfavorable ratings is stark (29 percent difference for Menendez; 72 percent difference for Booker).

Methodology - The Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone May 16-May 21, 2018 using a random sample of adults in New Jersey aged 18 and older (N = 856). Results have a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.5 percentage points, including the design effect.

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.

Interviews are conducted by Key Research Solutions of Provo Utah, 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 landline phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, sex, and race. 353 interviews were conducted on landlines and 503 were conducted on cellular telephones.

The sample was purchased from Marketing Systems Group and the research was funded by Fairleigh Dickinson University.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll received an "A" rating from statistician Nate Silver's FiveThirtyEight blog. The ratings measure both accuracy and bias for all major polling services in the United States, providing an update to similar research the poll watchers conducted in 2014. The Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll's "A" rating puts it in the top 14 of the more than 380 polling institutes reviewed and graded from A+ through F. The Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll was found to have a 94 percent accuracy rate for predicting election results, and is one of only two A-rated polling institutes with zero bias to their rankings.

Tables

I'm going to read you some names. Can you tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable [rotate] opinion of each person, or if you've never heard of them before tonight? [rotate names]

	Favorable			Unfavorable			Haven't heard of		
Robert Menendez	33			39			14		
	Dem	*Ind*	*Repub*	*Dem*	*Ind*	*Repub*	*Dem*	*Ind*	*Repub*
	51	19	13	22	48	65	14	18	11

	Favorable			Unfavorable			Haven't heard of		
Bob Hugin	19			10			57		
	Dem	*Ind*	*Repub*	*Dem*	*Ind*	*Repub*	*Dem*	*Ind*	*Repub*
	8	17	39	15	9	5	69	59	42

Cory Booker	Favorable			Unfavorable			Haven't heard of		
	55			27			12		
	Dem	Ind	Repub	Dem	Ind	Repub	Dem	Ind	Repub
	79	49	21	7	28	60	11	17	9

I know it's early, but if the election for US Senate were held today, would you support Robert Menendez, the Democrat, or Bob Hugin, the Republican, or are you undecided? [rotate names]

		PID			Gender		Race		Education		Age		
	All	**Dem**	**Ind**	**Repub**	**Male**	**Female**	**White**	**Non-white**	**HS/Some college**	**College+**	**18-34**	**35-54**	**55+**
Menendez	**28%**	53	10	3	27	29	27	30	24	32	22	30	32
Hugin	**24%**	3	20	60	26	21	31	8	24	24	11	25	32
Undecided	**46%**	42	68	35	43	48	39	59	49	43	63	44	33
Other	**1%**	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	0	1
DK (vol)	**1%**	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Refused (vol)	**1%**	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	1

Exact question wording and order

US1 and US2 withheld for future release
NJ1 through NJ3 withheld for future release
W1 through W3 withheld for future release
CITY1 through CITY6 withheld for future release
N4 through N10 withheld for future release

NJ11   I know it's early, but if the election for US Senate were held today, would you support Robert Menendez, the Democrat, or Bob Hugin, the Republican, or are you undecided [rotate]?
1   Menendez
2   Hugin   [HUGH-gun]
3   Undecided
4   Other
8   DK (vol)
9   Refused (vol)

I'm going to read you a few names. Please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of each, or if you have not heard of them before tonight. [Rotate names]
NJ12   Cory Booker
NJ13   Robert Menendez
NJ14   Bob Hugin   [HUGH-gun]
1   Favorable
2   Unfavorable
3   Never heard
8   DK
9   Refused (vol)

Menendez: Trend	Haven't heard	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
5/18	14%	33%	39%	13%
10/17*	6%	26%	57%	11%
5/16	19%	31%	36%	14%
11/15	14%	31%	38%	17%
4/15	18%	23%	39%	20%
3/14	17%	30%	33%	19%

8/12	20%	36%	23%	22%
5/12	22%	32%	24%	23%

Booker: Trend	Haven't heard	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure
5/18	12%	55%	27%	6%
10/17*	3%	55%	35%	6%
5/16	12%	54%	24%	10%
11/15	10%	57%	24%	9%
4/15	14%	47%	22%	18%
3/14	13%	47%	23%	18%
6/13	22%	52%	10%	17%
1/13	25%	50%	13%	16%
8/12	31%	48%	10%	14%
5/12	33%	47%	6%	14%
1/12	38%	39%	8%	16%
10/11	33%	35%	13%	19
10/10	34%	42%	6%	18
5/10	34%	42%	6%	18
1/10	41%	38%	6%	15

*Sample drawn from list of registered voters with known history of voting in past elections

Sample characteristics

Male	49%
Female	51%

Democrat (with leaners)	48%
Republican (with leaners)	31%
Independent	16%

18-34	26%
35-59	36%
60+	36%

White	66%
African-American	10%
Latino	15%
Asian	7%
Other/refused	3%