



For immediate release ...**Friday, October 9, 2009**...4 pages

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Corzine Gains Among Obama Supporters

While public reaction to the award of the Nobel Peace Prize has yet to be gauged, Governor Jon Corzine's strategy of linking himself to President Barack Obama has already paid some dividends. According to the latest results from Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind Poll, Corzine is winning the support of an increasing number of Obama supporters in his bid for re-election against Republican Chris Christie, even as the president himself lost ground among New Jersey Democrats.

Corzine's share of voters who approve of Obama's job performance is now 72%, up from 66% a month ago, while 17% of Obama supporters prefer Christie, down from 22% a month ago. But as Corzine edges closer to Obama, some voters edged away from the president: Overall, Obama's approval numbers fell to 52%, down from 56% a month ago. And while the president's support among Republicans and independents is unchanged, his support among Democrats in New Jersey is down 7 points, to 81% from 88%.

"Corzine needs to get all of the Democrats behind him in order to beat a strong Republican challenger and to minimize the effects of the independent," said Dan Cassino, a professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson and a survey analyst for PublicMind. "He's been aggressively using billboards and other ads to link himself to Obama, and it seems to be working."

But, only 41% of New Jersey voters say that the country is going the right direction, down slightly from a month ago – mostly the result of a drop off among Democrats. 65% of Democrats say the country is on the right track, down from 73% a month ago; figures for Republicans and independents have remained roughly stable.

"Given the president's astronomical support at the beginning of his term, the numbers had to come down eventually. Winning a Nobel Prize may only raise voters' expectations of what should be accomplished," said Cassino, "and won't necessarily work in his favor."

Support for and opposition to the president's proposed healthcare reforms remain stable: 33% of Garden State voters say that they will personally be better off if the reforms pass, compared to 44% who say that they would be worse off. A substantially larger portion of the public – 43% of New Jersey voters – says that the country, on the whole, will be better off with the reforms. In both cases, support for reform is highest among the youngest voters, and lowest among seniors: 67% of voters under 30 say that they personally will be better off with reform, and 72% of voters under 30 say that the reforms will help the country. In contrast, only 28% of voters over the age of 60 say that they will be better off with reform, and only 38% say that reform will be good for the country.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 667 likely voters statewide was conducted by telephone from September 28, 2009, through October 4, 2009, and has a margin of error of +/- 4 percentage points.

Tables, questions, and methodology available on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>
Radio actuality line: (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 September 28, 2009 through October 4, 2009 using a randomly selected sample of 667 likely voters statewide. The margin of error for 667 randomly selected respondents is +/- 4 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 professionally trained interviewers use 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. Results are mathematically weighted to match known demographics.

US1: In your opinion, do you believe that the country is moving in the right direction or do you believe it has gotten off on the wrong track?								
	All	Men	Women	Aug	June	April	March	Jan
Right direction	41%	40	43	44	49	51	51	34
Wrong track	49%	51	47	46	41	37	37	52
Unsure/Refused	9%	9	10	10	11	11	12	13

US1: In your opinion, do you believe that the country is moving in the right direction or do you believe it has gotten off on the wrong track?									
	October			August			June		
	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.
Right direction	65	29	15	73	32	12	71	37	20
Wrong track	28	56	77	18	56	80	19	47	68
Unsure/Refused	7	15	8	9	12	8	9	15	11

US2: In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?									
	All	Party			Race		Ideology		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Non-white	Lib	Mod	Cons
Approve	52%	81	37	19	46	79	85	61	24
Disapprove	35%	11	42	66	41	11	7	28	63
Unsure	12%	8	20	15	13	10	9	11	13

US2: In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?									
	October	August	June	April	March	Jan.*	August Party		
							Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	52	56	61	66	66	72	88	40	20
Disapprove	35	36	29	22	21	10	8	48	70
Unsure/Refused	12	8	10	12	13	18	4	12	10

*January question asked how Obama was handling his transition to the presidency.

US3: Do you think you (and your family living there) will be better or worse off with the health care reforms that President Obama is currently proposing?										
	All	Age				Party			August	July
		18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	Dem	Ind	Rep		
Yes, better	33	67	34	34	28	56	25	6	33%	35%
No, worse	44	26	42	47	43	18	47	78	46%	34%
Don't know	23	7	24	18	29	26	28	16	21%	31%

US3: Do you think you (and your family living there) will be better or worse off with the health care reforms that President Obama is currently proposing?			
		Knowledge Scale	
	All	0	1 2
Yes, better	33	13	40 31
No, worse	44	58	39 44
Don't know	23	29	21 26

US4: Regardless of how it impacts you, do you think the country will be better or worse off with the health care reforms that President Obama is currently proposing?									
			Age				Party		
	All	Oct	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	Dem	Ind	Rep
Yes, better	43	44	72	45	44	38	67	34	13
No, worse	40	42	21	39	41	42	17	45	71
Don't know	16	14	7	15	15	20	16	21	16

US4: Regardless of how it impacts you, do you think the country will be better or worse off with the health care reforms that President Obama is currently proposing?			
		Knowledge Scale	
	All	0	1 2
Yes, better	43	21	49 46
No, worse	40	56	36 41
Don't know	16	23	15 13

US5: Would you advise your member of Congress to vote for or against a health care reform bill when they return to Washington in September, or do you not have an opinion?									
			Age				Party		
	All	Aug	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	Dem	Ind	Rep
For	37	37	54	41	37	32	60	30	8
Against	37	41	23	36	37	40	16	38	67
Unsure/Refused	26	22	23	23	26	28	25	32	25

US5. Would you advise your member of Congress to vote for or against a health care reform bill when they return to Washington in September, or do you not have an opinion?			
		Knowledge Scale	
	All	0	1 2
For	37	10	43 42
Against	37	56	33 32
Unsure/Refused	26	34	23 27

NJ3: Next November there will be an election for governor. I know it's early, but if the election were held today, who would you vote for in a race between....					
	All	Obama Approval - Oct		Obama Approval - Aug	
		Approve	Disapprove	Approve	Disapprove
Jon Corzine, the Democrat	44%	72	9	66	7
Chris Christie, the Republican	43%	17	81	22	85
Neither	2%	1	1	5	3
Chris Daggett	4%	3	2	0	1
Someone Else	3%	2	5	0	1
Don't Know	5%	4	2	6	3

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