Obama and Menendez Ahead in New Jersey

According to the most recent statewide poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™, New Jersey voters give President Barack Obama an approval rating of 47%-41%, off from 51%-40% in November, but similar to his measure of 47%-43% in October. His approvals are higher among women (53%) than men (41%) and among voters under 30 years old (60%) than over 30 (46%).

"Obama's approval, even if tepid, comes despite that many voters are unhappy with the health care bill, unhappy with the economy and unhappy with the direction of the country," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll.

The president is ahead on his ratings even though the centerpiece of his legislative accomplishments, health care, comes out behind. While a third (34%) of voters say they will be better off with the health care reform bill passed last year, many more (44%) say they think they'll be worse off. A majority of voters under 30 years of age (56%) think they'll be better off, but voters over 30 don't agree. And while a majority of voters in the president's party (57%) say they'll be better off with the health care bill, their 57% is not enough to offset more than three of four Republicans (77%) who say they'll be worse off. Voters are somewhat more willing to say that the country will be better off with the health care bill: They split, 42% saying the country will be better off and 43% saying it will be worse off.

A majority (52%) continue to say the country is on the wrong track, compared to just 35% who say it is headed in the right direction, a gap of 17 percentage points but an improvement from November's 27-point difference and October's 30-point gap. The improvement comes despite that 40% say the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan is going well, but 47% say it is not going well.

Sen. Robert Menendez, who is closely tied to the president and up for re-election at the same time as the president in 2012, polls comfortably ahead of six notable Republicans, ranging from 10 points over Tom Kean Jr. (44%-34%) and Tea Party favorite Michael Doherty (40%-30%), to 21 points over Kim Guadagno (47%-26%). Menendez runs ahead of Christie confidant Joe Kyrillos (41%-29%), biotech entrepreneur John Crowley (44%-30%), and state sen. Jennifer Beck (42%-29%). Tom Kean Jr. does best among Republican voters and "lean Republican" voters with 73% support. Kim Guadagno trails the field with just 59% support among Republicans and "lean Republican."

"The fortunes of the president and Menendez are bound together," said Woolley. "They rode an anti-Republican tide into office. Republicans are hoping an anti-Democratic tide takes them away. But in this state, Republicans will also need a candidate who can reach beyond Republican voters."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 802 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone using both landlines and cell phones from Jan. 3, 2011, through Jan. 9, 2011, and has a margin of error of +/-3.5 percentage points.

Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from Jan. 3, 2011, through Jan. 9, 2011, using a randomly selected sample of 802 registered voters statewide. The margin of error for a sample of 802 randomly selected respondents is +/- 3.5 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. 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.

Question: 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**	**Dem**	**Ind**	**Rep.**
Right direction	**35%**	36	35	52	33	16
Wrong track	**52%**	54	50	34	48	76
Unsure/ref.	**13%**	10	15	14	19	8

Right/wrong direction trend

	2010							**2009**							**2008**
	Nov	**Oct**	**Aug**	**My**	**Mar 30**	**Mar 3**	**Jan**	**Oct 30**	**Oct 9**	**Sep**	**July**	**Apr**	**Mar**	**Jan**	**Oct**
Right	31%	30	33	34	42	38	35	41	41	44	49	51	51	34	13
Wrong	58%	60	54	52	51	52	53	50	49	46	41	37	37	52	78
Unsure/ref.	11%	10	13	13	8	10	12	8	9	10	11	11	12	13	9

US2: In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?								
							age	
	All	Men	Women	Dem	Ind	Rep.	18-29	30+
Approve	**47%**	41	53	77	37	15	60	46
Disapprove	**41%**	47	35	14	36	76	18	44
Unsure/ref.	**12%**	12	12	9	27	9	22	10

Obama approval, previous measures

	2010							**2009**						
	Nov	Oct	Aug	May	Mar 30	Mar 3	Jan	Oct 30	Oct 6	Sep	Jun	Apr	Mar	Jan*
Approve	51%	47	49	49	54	53	48	52	52	56	61	66	66	72
Disapprove	40%	43	40	40	37	38	41	37	35	36	29	22	21	10
Unsure/Ref.	9%	10	11	11	9	9	11	10	12	8	10	12	13	18

*January 2009 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 bill that passed Congress last year?															
		Age				Party			Race		2010*		2009*		
	All	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Non-white	Mar	Jan	Oct	Aug	Jul
Better	**34%**	56	27	32	31	57	25	6	23	59	37	31	33	33	35
Worse	**44%**	26	51	46	43	19	39	77	54	18	42	45	44	46	34
unsure	**23%**	19	22	21	26	24	36	17	23	23	20	24	23	21	31

*Question wording was "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?"

US4 : Regardless of how it impacts you, do you think <u>the country</u> will be better or worse off with the health care bill that passed Congress last year?													
		Age				Party					2010*		2009*
	All	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	Dem	Ind	Rep	men	wom	Mar	Jan	Oct.
Better	**42%**	55	41	42	37	67	40	10	36	48	45	41	43
Worse	**43%**	33	47	45	44	18	41	77	49	38	40	45	40
Unsure	**15%**	12	12	13	19	15	19	13	15	14	15	14	16

*Question was "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?"

US5: Now, turning to Afghanistan… How well is the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan going…READ?				
	All	Dem	Ind	Rep
Very well	**6%**	7	8	4
Fairly well	**34%**	30	34	38
Not too well	**29%**	31	16	31
Not at all well	**18%**	19	22	16
Unsure/Ref.	**13%**	13	20	11

US6 a-f. Robert Menendez will be coming up for re-election to the United States Senate…

If the election were now, would you vote for… or … ? [ROTATE ORDER, NAMES] Robert Menendez, the Democrat… [ASK ANY THREE] Jennifer Beck, the Republican; Joe Kyrillos, the Republican; Tom Kean, Jr., the Republican; John Crowley, the Republican; Michael Doherty, the Republican; Kim Guadagno, the Republican.				
N=395	**All**	Dem*	Ind	Rep#
Robert Menendez, the Democrat	42%	77	26	8
Jennifer Beck, the Republican	29%	5	15	61
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	29%	19	59	31
N=395				
Robert Menendez, the Democrat	41%	74	36	10
Joe Kyrillos, the Republican	29%	5	9	63
unsure/neither/other	30%	21	55	27
N=411				
Robert Menendez, the Democrat	44%	80	16	5
Tom Kean, Jr, the Republican	34%	5	36	73
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	22%	15	48	22
N=405				
Robert Menendez, the Democrat	44%	77	27	8
John Crowley, the Republican	30%	7	18	64
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	27%	16	55	28
N=401				
Robert Menendez, the Democrat	40%	72	37	7
Michael Doherty, the Republican	30%	6	14	61
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	30%	22	49	31
N=401				
Robert Menendez, the Democrat	47%	74	39	11
Kim Guadagno, the Republican	26%	8	10	59
unsure/neither/other (vol.)	27%	19	51	30

*Including "lean Democrat"
#Including "lean Republican"
MoE =+/-5

# # #

Question Wording and Order

US1. In your opinion, do you believe that the country is moving in the right direction or has it gotten off on the wrong track?

> Right direction
> Wrong track
> DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]
> Ref. [DON'T READ]

US2. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

Approve
Disapprove
DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]
Ref. [DON'T READ]

US3 Do you think you (and your family living there) will be better or worse off with the health care bill that passed Congress last year?

Yes, better
No, worse
DK (vol)

US4. Regardless of how it impacts you, do you think the country will be better or worse off with the health care bill that passed Congress last year?

Yes, better
No, worse
DK (vol)

US5. Now, turning to Afghanistan... how well is the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan going... [READ]...?

Very well,
fairly well,
not too well,
not at all well
DK [VOL]
REF. [VOL]

US6 a-f. Robert Menendez will be coming up for re-election to the United States Senate...

If the election were now, would you vote for... or ...   [ROTATE ORDER, NAMES]

Robert Menendez, the Democrat

[ASK ANY THREE]

6a Jennifer Beck , the Republican
6b Joe Kyrillos, the Republican
6c Tom Kean, Jr., the Republican
6d John Crowley, the Republican
6e Michael Doherty, the Republican
6f Kim Guadagno, the Republican

Sample Characteristics (%)

Gender

Male	49
Female	51

Age

18-29	12
30-44	24
45-59	33
60+	27

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

White	69
Black	15
Hispanic or Latino	9
Asian	3
Other/ref.	3

Public Employee Household?

yes	24
no	73
not sure/ref.	2

Party ID

Dem. + lean Dem.	47
ind. + unsure + ref.	14
Rep. + lean Rep.	38