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## **A SUMMER OF CAMPAIGNS: CHRISTIE AND BOOKER BEGIN THE SEASON WITH GOOD FEELINGS AMONG VOTERS**

The coming months will bring an unusual amount of campaigning in New Jersey. A new statewide poll of registered voters from Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind finds that when it comes to the upcoming U.S. Senate election, Democrat Cory Booker enters the race with a sizable lead over his opponents in name recognition and favorability, something that will benefit him as he courts voters during the lazy summer months.

The same poll finds that Governor Christie maintains his solid lead over his Democratic opponent, State Senator Barbara Buono, and an enviable approval rating in a Democratic state.

### ***The Senate Race***

Of the four candidates running in the special primary election on August 13<sup>th</sup>, Booker has the highest name recognition (78%), as compared with U.S. Representatives Frank Pallone (49%) and Rush Holt (42%), and Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver (20%). The same is true for a candidate's favorability rating: Booker is appealing to 52 percent of registered voters, a number which puts him significantly ahead of his competitors. Fourteen percent say they feel favorably toward Pallone, 12 percent say the same for Holt, and Oliver garners a five percent favorability rating.

"The primary election poses a unique set of challenges. It's occurring during a time when most people aren't paying attention to politics, the window of time to campaign is compressed, and the state is in the midst of a gubernatorial election at the same time," said Krista Jenkins, director of PublicMind and professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University. "He (or she) who enters the race with the best name recognition and favorability rating has a big advantage over other candidates, even though the field is comprised of longtime public servants including U.S. House Representatives and the current State Assembly Speaker."

Booker also beats the former Mayor of Bogota and current political activist, Republican Steve Lonagan in name recognition. Around four-in-ten registered voters are familiar with Lonagan (39%), with 11 percent favorable and nine percent unfavorable. Three-fifths of voters say they remain unfamiliar with Lonagan (61%).

### ***The Governor's Race***

Turning to the upcoming gubernatorial election, Governor Christie maintains a solid lead over his Democratic opponent, State Senator Barbara Buono. A significant thirty percentage-point gap separates him from Buono, with Governor Christie attracting the support of 57 percent of registered voters. Twenty-seven percent say they would vote for Senator Buono were the election to be held today. This gap remains virtually unchanged from when the same question was asked in March, before the primary election which legitimately named Buono as the chosen Democratic candidate. Back then, 58 percent said they favored Christie, with 28 percent supportive of Buono.

Governor Christie continues to draw a good amount of support from Democrats, a group he will need to pay close attention to in blue New Jersey. A third (33%) of Democrats prefer Christie over Buono (50%). The last time this question was asked (March 2013), Christie attracted the support of 36 percent of Democrats with another two-fifths (40%) favoring Buono. It is also important to note that those who identify with neither party, the independents, are breaking more than two-to-one for Christie (53%) over Buono (18%).

A gender gap continues to divide women and men in their gubernatorial preference. Although the majority of both sexes say they plan to support the governor, women are more mixed in their preferences as compared to men. Among women, half (50%) support Christie while another third (34%) support Buono; the governor commands a greater lead with male voters (65 versus 21%, respectively).

“Senator Buono fought hard for the right to challenge the governor who continues his transcendent partisan appeal,” said Jenkins. “These numbers merely underscore the challenges that await her as the campaign enters the all important general election period.”

Buono’s name recognition has increased as well, something that would be expected given the primary election results and increased focus on the gubernatorial election. In January, the last time this question was asked regarding Buono, 28 percent had heard of her, whereas today that number has increased to 73 percent. However, her favorable-to-unfavorable ratio is about even, with a quarter who remain unsure about their feelings toward her. Twenty-one percent say they feel favorably toward her, with another 24 percent who express an unfavorable opinion toward the senator.

### ***Christie’s Approval***

The same survey also checked in with voters about Governor Christie’s job performance and their feelings regarding the direction of the state. His job performance numbers are down slightly from where they were in March, although he remains in the 60s and continues to appeal to Democrats and Republicans alike. Today, 61 percent say they approve of his job performance, with another quarter (26%) who disapprove and ten percent who say they are unsure how to judge the governor. Two-thirds (66%) rated him favorably in March and one-fifth (20%) gave him a disapproving job rating. Solid majorities of groups who are not usually considered suspects for saying positive things about a Republican governor continue to offer their approval. For example, 44 percent of Democrats, 56 percent of women, and 52 percent of those who reside in public employee households approve of the governor’s job performance.

However, opinion is mixed over his decision to hold two special elections to replace the recently deceased US Senator Frank Lautenberg. About a third say they agree (35%), disagree (34%), and are unsure (34%) about the governor’s decision.

“Even in the face of a controversial decision to hold a special election for the U.S. Senate closely before the gubernatorial election in November, Governor Christie continues to be received warmly by New Jersey voters,” said Jenkins. “Should his appeal continue through the campaign season, he stands poised to potentially help his party in the legislature in November.”

A majority of voters also continue to express a positive attitude toward the direction of the state. More than half (57%) believe the state is headed in the right direction, whereas another 28 percent of voters fear it is now on the wrong track. Democrats (46%), women

(51%), non-whites (49%), and those from public employee households (50%) are the groups least likely to give a rosy appraisal of the state's trajectory.

***President Obama and the Nation***

Finally, and in contrast to what Garden State voters have to say about leadership and the health of New Jersey, Democratic President Barack Obama receives a 51 percent approval rating for his job performance and two-fifths of voters (41%) say the country is headed in the right direction. A plurality are concerned about the direction the country is headed (47%).

“Although New Jersey continues to be affected by economic trends at the national level, and is comprised of more Democrats than Republicans, the president is evaluated less positively by Garden Staters and the state is believed to be in a healthier state as compared to the nation as a whole,” said Jenkins. “Clearly there is more to a voter's appraisal of leaders and overall conditions than their partisan predispositions.”

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 705 registered voters in New Jersey was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from June 10 through June 16, 2013, and has a margin of error of +/-3.7 percentage points.

*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

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from June 10 through June 16, 2013 using a randomly selected sample of 705 registered voters who reside in New Jersey. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/- 3.7 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 landline 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 respondents interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

The following tables are based on all registered voters in the sample.

### Christie Approval

<b>Turning to New Jersey, do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor?</b>										
	<b>All</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Gender</b>		<b>Age</b>			
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>18-29</b>	<b>30-44</b>	<b>45-59</b>	<b>60+</b>
Approve	<b>61</b>	44	64	84	66	56	53	56	68	62
Disapprove	<b>26</b>	38	24	7	22	29	32	34	20	23
Neither (vol)	<b>10</b>	12	10	7	10	9	12	7	9	12
Unsure (vol)	<b>3</b>	6	2	1	2	5	3	3	4	4

  

	<b>Education</b>			<b>Public Employee Household</b>		<b>Race</b>	
	<b>HS or less</b>	<b>Some college</b>	<b>College grad</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Non-white</b>
Approve	60	59	62	52	64	65	50
Disapprove	25	28	25	36	23	24	32
Neither (vol)	11	10	9	9	10	9	12
Unsure (vol)	4	3	3	3	3	2	6

**Direction of the State**

**In your opinion, do you think things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction or are they on the wrong track?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Right direction	57	46	50	76	63	51	58	52	63	56
Wrong track	28	38	31	14	26	30	33	37	21	25
Unsure (vol)	14	15	19	10	10	19	9	11	15	18
Refused (vol)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

	Education			Public Employee Household		Race	
	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
Right direction	63	52	57	50	59	61	49
Wrong track	23	32	28	36	26	26	33
Unsure (vol)	13	16	14	14	15	13	17

**Gubernatorial Race**

**If the election for governor was held today, and the choice was Republican Chris Christie or Democrat Barbara Buono, from whom would you vote?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Chris Christie	57	33	53	93	65	50	44	50	65	61
Barbara Buono	27	50	18	3	21	34	38	30	23	25
Someone else (vol)	2	1	6	0	3	2	2	6	0	2
Unsure (vol)	12	14	22	4	11	14	16	13	11	12
Refused (vol)	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	2	1	1

	Education			Public Employee Household		Race	
	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
Chris Christie	54	58	58	51	59	64	40
Barbara Buono	32	26	27	33	26	23	39
Someone else (vol)	3	1	3	6	1	2	3
Unsure (vol)	11	14	12	8	13	10	17
Refused (vol)	0	1	0	2	1	1	1

**Name Identification**

	Have heard of	Haven't heard of	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure (vol)
Barbara Buono	73	27	21	24	28
Cory Booker	78	22	52	10	17
Rush Holt	42	58	12	9	21
Frank Pallone	49	51	14	9	26
Sheila Oliver	20	80	5	9	7
Steve Lonegan	39	61	11	9	18

**Attitudes toward special elections**

**Do you agree or disagree with the governor's recent decision to hold a special primary and general election to replace Senator Lautenberg, or do you not have an opinion?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Agree	<b>35</b>	29	34	45	38	33	18	34	39	39
Disagree	<b>31</b>	35	29	27	31	30	10	24	35	42
Unsure (vol)	<b>34</b>	36	36	27	30	37	70	42	25	19
Refused (vol)	<b>0</b>	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	0

	Education			Public Employee Household		Race	
	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
Agree	30	34	38	27	38	39	24
Disagree	25	28	34	54	24	35	19
Unsure (vol)	45	36	28	19	38	24	57
Refused (vol)	0	1	0	0	1	1	0

**Presidential Approval**

**Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Approve	<b>51</b>	79	45	18	46	57	55	59	49	46
Disapprove	<b>37</b>	11	34	77	44	31	25	32	40	43
Neither (vol)	<b>11</b>	11	18	5	10	12	20	7	10	11
Unsure (vol)	<b>1</b>	0	3	0	0	1	0	2	1	0

	Education			Public Employee		Race	
	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
Approve	63	46	50	41	40	42	77
Disapprove	28	43	38	48	47	47	14
Neither (vol)	8	10	12	10	12	12	8
Unsure (vol)	1	1	0	0	0	0	1

**Direction of the Country**

**In your opinion, do you think the country is moving in the right direction or is it on the wrong track?**

	All	Party			Gender		Age			
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Right direction	<b>41</b>	66	37	10	36	45	44	42	43	36
Wrong track	<b>47</b>	20	51	83	53	41	42	45	48	50
Unsure (vol)	<b>12</b>	14	12	6	11	13	14	13	10	13
Refused (vol)	<b>0</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

	Education			Public Employee		Race	
	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Yes	No	White	Non-white
Right direction	49	41	38	51	51	33	61
Wrong track	41	51	47	38	38	55	26
Unsure (vol)	11	8	14	9	11	12	13
Refused (vol)	0	0	0	1	1	0	0

### Exact Question Wording and Order

US1. *First, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?*

- 1 Approve
- 2 Disapprove
- 8 DK/Unsure/mixed [DON'T READ]
- 9 Refused [DON'T READ]

US2. *In your opinion, do you believe the country is moving in the right direction or is it on the wrong track?*

- 1 Right direction
- 2 Wrong track
- 8 DK/Unsure [DON'T READ]
- 9 Refused. [DON'T READ]

NJ1. *And turning to New Jersey, do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor? [Randomize approve/disapprove]*

- 1 Approve
- 2 Disapprove
- 3 Neither [vol] or Neutral [vol]
- 8 DK [vol] or both [vol]

NJ2. *In your opinion, do you think things in New Jersey are moving in the right direction or are they on the wrong track? [Randomize right direction/wrong track]*

- 1 Right direction
- 2 Wrong track
- 8 DK/Unsure (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

NJ3 *If the election for governor was held today, and the choice was Republican Chris Christie or Democrat Barbara Buono, for whom would you vote? [Randomize names]*

- 1 Republican Chris Christie
- 2 Democrat Barbara Buono
- 3 Someone else
- 8 Don't Know (vol)
- 9 Refused (vol)

NJ4 *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]?*

- NJ4a Barbara Buono
- NJ4b Cory Booker
- NJ4c Rush Holt
- NJ4d Frank Pallone

- NJ4e Steve Lonagan
- NJ4f Kim Guadagno
- NJ4g David Samson
- NJ4h Sheila Oliver

*N4a Have you heard of [INSERT]?*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No (Skip to next name)

*NJ4b. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of [INSERT]?*

- 1 Favorable
- 2 Unfavorable
- 8 Don't Know (vol) (skip to next name)

*NJ5 Do you agree or disagree with the governor's recent decision to hold a special primary and general election to replace Senator Lautenberg, or do you not have an opinion? [Randomize agree/disagree]*

- 1 Agree
- 2 Disagree
- 8 DK
- 9 Refused (VOL)



**Sample characteristics – Registered voters****Gender**

Male	49
Female	51

**Age**

18-29	12
30-44	29
45-59	31
60+	26
Refused	2

**Race/Ethnicity**

White	68
Black/African-American	12
Latino or Hispanic	10
Asian	6
Other/refused	5

**Public employee household**

Yes	21
No	76
Unsure/refused	2

**Party identification**

Democrat/Lean Democrat	45
Independent/DK/refused	22
Republican/Lean Republican	33