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NEW JERSEY: PUBLIC REACTS TO ‘CORY 2020’

Reviews are more positive than for ‘Christie 2016’

West Long Branch, NJ – Sen. Cory Booker’s nascent presidential bid may get mixed reviews in his home state, but he starts off on much better footing than New Jersey’s last major contender, former governor Chris Christie. The **Monmouth University Poll** finds that Booker continues to earn a net positive job rating from Garden State residents, although his disapproval numbers have climbed. Most feel he will not be able to keep up with his senatorial duties while he is running for president but don’t think he needs to resign. However, if Booker is able to win the Democratic nomination, most New Jerseyans say he should forego a simultaneous run to retain his U.S. Senate seat in 2020.

Booker earns a 48% approve to 36% disapprove rating from Garden State residents for his performance as the state’s junior U.S. senator. Another 16% have no opinion. His standing among registered voters is 48% approve to 38% disapprove. In April 2018, he earned a 54% approve to 31% disapprove rating from the state’s voters. Booker’s current approval rating is similar to where he stood in the first year of his term, but his disapproval rating is the highest it has been since he took office in 2013.

Booker’s rating among independents (37% approve to 42% disapprove) has flipped since last year (52% approve to 33% disapprove). His rating among Republicans (13% approve to 75% disapprove) has become slightly more negative than last April (21% approve to 64% disapprove). Opinions of Democrats (81% approve to 8% disapprove) are similar to last year (77% approve to 9% disapprove).

“Booker has become better known to his constituents over the past two years, but his presidential bid and elevated national profile may have worn off some of the sheen. Part of the problem could be that New Jerseyans haven’t fully recovered from Christie’s run four years ago,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute.

New Jerseyans are divided on whether Booker would actually make a good president – 37% say he would and 42% say he would not. However, when Christie launched his bid for the Oval Office in 2015, just 27% of state residents thought he would make a good president while an overwhelming 7-in-10

(69%) said he would not. One-in-five (21%) are unsure if Booker would make a good president, but only 4% had no opinion about Christie's fitness for the job four years ago. [Note: Christie held a 36% approve and 58% disapprove job rating as governor in July 2015 shortly after announcing his campaign.]

One-third of Garden State residents (34%) feel Booker will be able to serve effectively as New Jersey's senator while he is on the presidential campaign trail, while 58% say he will not be able to do both effectively. In 2015, just 26% of the public felt Christie would be able to serve effectively as governor during his run while 71% said he would not.

Slightly over 4-in-10 (43%) say Booker should resign his seat now that he has thrown his hat into the presidential ring, but 50% say he should not resign. Four years ago, a majority of New Jerseyans (57%) said Christie should step down from the governorship and 37% said he should remain in that office while running for president.

Nearly 4-in-10 New Jerseyans believe that Booker has a decent shot at either becoming president (15%) or at least winning his party's nomination (22%). Another 28% say Booker is a long shot to become the Democratic standard bearer and 26% say there is no way he will be the party's nominee. The public was more doubtful of Christie's chances in 2015, when 1-in-4 felt the then-governor had a good shot to either become president (7%) or win the Republican nomination (18%). Another 31% said he was a long shot for the GOP nomination and 40% said he didn't stand a chance.

The fact that Booker's presidential campaign is better received than Christie's is underscored by the greater support the senator has among his partisan base. Among Garden State Democrats, 65% feel Booker would make a good president while just 14% say he would not. In 2015, 57% of New Jersey Republicans thought Christie would make a good president but fully 40% said he would not. Nearly half of state Democrats (49%) feel that Booker has a decent shot to win his party's nomination and only 9% say he has no chance. In 2015, just 24% of state Republicans said Christie had a decent shot at the GOP nomination while 39% thought it was a pipe dream.

"The home state sentiment isn't quite 'Run Cory, Run.' But when you take into account how the last big presidential campaign rubbed many New Jerseyans the wrong way, it's a decent endorsement for Booker," said Murray.

One thing New Jerseyans of all political stripes agree on is that Booker should forego seeking re-election to his current office if he happens to win his party's presidential nomination. Just 21% say he should run for president and Senate simultaneously in 2020 if the possibility presents itself, while 66% say he should give up his Senate seat if he is the Democratic presidential nominee. Fully 73% of Republicans and 71% of independents, as well as 57% of Democrats, say that he should run only for president if he wins that nomination. New Jersey election law was recently amended to clarify that someone could run for both offices at the same time.

"Despite whatever reservations New Jerseyans may have about his presidential aspirations, Booker continues to earn stronger ratings than any other statewide office holder," said Murray.

New Jersey's senior U.S. senator, Bob Menendez, fresh off an 11 point re-election victory in November, earns a slightly negative 40% approve to 43% disapprove rating among all residents and a 40% approve to 45% disapprove rating among registered voters. He had a more evenly divided 37% approve to 38% disapprove voter rating in April 2018. [Note: On Tuesday, Monmouth released a poll on Gov. Phil Murphy, who has a 43% approve to 40% disapprove rating among all residents and a 42% approve to 43% disapprove rating among voters.]

The poll also finds that President Donald Trump continues to be unpopular in the state where his summer retreat is located. Just 37% of New Jerseyans approve of the job Trump is doing while 58% disapprove. This result is similar to the 34% approve and 61% disapprove rating he received last year.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from February 8 to 10, 2019 with 604 New Jersey adults. The question results in this release have a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percentage points. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

[Q1 held for future release.]

[Q2-3 previously released.]

4. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Donald Trump is doing as president?

TREND:	Feb.	April	July
	2019	2018	2017
Approve	37%	34%	35%
Disapprove	58%	61%	58%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	4%	6%
(n)	(604)	(703)	(800)

[QUESTIONS 5 & 6 WERE ROTATED]

5. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Bob Menendez is doing as United States Senator?

<i>All adults</i>	Feb.
	2019
Approve	40%
Disapprove	43%
(VOL) Don't know	18%
(n)	(604)

TREND: <i>Registered voters</i>	Feb.	April	July	May	July	May	Feb.	Sept.	June	April	Feb.	Dec.	April	Feb.
	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2015	2015	2014	2014	2014	2014	2013	2013	2013
Approve	40%	37%	41%	41%	38%	42%	49%	45%	47%	51%	49%	47%	44%	41%
Disapprove	45%	38%	35%	31%	38%	38%	27%	30%	34%	31%	30%	27%	38%	31%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	25%	23%	28%	23%	20%	24%	26%	19%	18%	21%	26%	18%	28%
(n)	(549)	(632)	(758)	(703)	(453)	(441)	(712)	(680)	(717)	(690)	(690)	(698)	(694)	(697)

TREND: <i>Registered voters continued</i>	April	Feb.	Oct.	Aug.	May	July	Oct.	April	Jan.
	2012	2012	2011	2011	2011	2010	2008	2008	2008
Approve	40%	41%	43%	38%	46%	38%	34%	41%	37%
Disapprove	25%	26%	29%	33%	28%	33%	25%	31%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	35%	33%	28%	29%	26%	29%	41%	28%	37%
(n)	(692)	(709)	(693)	(730)	(725)	(747)	(900)	(720)	(698)

6. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Cory Booker is doing as United States Senator?

<i>All adults</i>	Feb.
	2019
Approve	48%
Disapprove	36%
(VOL) Don't know	16%

(n) (604)

TREND: Registered voters	Feb. 2019	April 2018	July 2017	May 2016	July 2015	May 2015	Feb. 2015	Sept. 2014	June 2014	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Dec. 2013
Approve	48%	54%	50%	53%	45%	51%	51%	42%	48%	47%	47%	37%
Disapprove	38%	31%	31%	21%	24%	21%	21%	23%	25%	23%	20%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	14%	15%	20%	27%	31%	27%	27%	35%	27%	30%	32%	43%
(n)	(549)	(632)	(758)	(703)	(453)	(441)	(712)	(680)	(717)	(690)	(690)	(698)

[Q7-12 and 18-19B previously released.]

[Q13-17 held for future release.]

20. As you may know, Cory Booker officially announced that he is running for president. Do you think he would or would not make a good president?

	BOOKER Feb. 2019	CHRISTIE July 2015
Would	37%	27%
Would not	42%	69%
(VOL) Don't know	21%	4%
(n)	(604)	(503)

[QUESTIONS 21 & 22 WERE ROTATED]

21. Do you think Cory Booker is able to run for president and serve effectively as New Jersey's senator at the same time, or is he not able to do both effectively?

	BOOKER Feb. 2019	CHRISTIE July 2015*
Is able to	34%	26%
Is not able to	58%	71%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	3%
(n)	(604)	(503)

*Question for Christie in 2015 was "able to run for president and govern New Jersey effectively at the same time."

22. Do you think Cory Booker should or should not resign as senator now that he is running for president?

	BOOKER Feb. 2019	CHRISTIE July 2015*
Should resign	43%	57%
Should not resign	50%	37%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	6%
(n)	(604)	(503)

*Question for Christie in 2015 was "should or should not resign as governor"

23. How would you rate Booker's chances in 2020? Would you say that (1) he has a decent shot to become President, (2) he has a decent shot to win the Democratic nomination but not the general election, (3) he is a long shot to win the Democratic nomination but he could still pull it off, or (4) there is no way he will win the Democratic nomination?

	BOOKER Feb. 2019	CHRISTIE May 2015*
Decent shot to become President	15%	7%

Decent shot to win the Democratic nomination but not the general election	22%	18%
Long shot to win the Democratic nomination but he could still pull it off	28%	31%
There is no way he will win the Democratic nomination	26%	40%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	5%
(n)	(604)	(500)

*Question for Christie in 2015 asked about the Republican nomination for the 2016 presidential election.

24. Booker is up for re-election to the Senate in 2020. If he wins the Democratic nomination for president, do you think he should run for Senate as well or just run for president?

	Feb. 2019
Run for Senate as well	21%
Just run for president	66%
(VOL) Don't know	13%
(n)	(604)

[Q25-37 held for future release.]

METHODOLOGY

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from February 8 to 10, 2019 with a random sample of 604 New Jersey adults age 18 and older, in English. This includes 301 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 303 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone. Telephone numbers were selected through random digit dialing and landline respondents were selected with a modified Trol Dahl-Carter youngest adult household screen. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 4.0 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

<i>DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>	
<i>Self-Reported</i>	
20% Republican	
45% Independent	
34% Democrat	
48% Male	
52% Female	
29% 18-34	
37% 35-54	
34% 55+	
58% White	
13% Black	
18% Hispanic	
10% Asian/Other	
64% No college degree	
36% College graduate	

MARGIN OF ERROR		<i>unweighted sample</i>	<i>moe (+/-)</i>
TOTAL		604	4.0%
REGISTERED	Yes	549	4.2%
VOTER	No	55	13.2%
SELF-REPORTED	Republican	135	8.4%
PARTY ID	Independent	257	6.1%
	Democrat	196	7.0%
GENDER	Male	300	5.7%
	Female	304	5.6%
AGE	18-34	152	8.0%
	35-54	225	6.5%
	55+	226	6.5%
RACE	White non-Hispanic	386	5.0%
	Other	190	7.1%
COLLEGE	No degree	264	6.0%
GRADUATE	4 year degree	335	5.4%
INCOME	<\$50K	110	9.4%
	\$50 to <100K	194	7.0%
	\$100K+	240	6.3%
REGION	North	270	6.0%
	Central	163	7.7%
	South	154	7.9%

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