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Release available at: http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu/rutgers-eagleton-NJ-ratings-Christie-Menendez-Booker-Guadagno-Murphy-Aug2017. Find all releases at http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. Follow the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/RutgersEagletonPoll and Twitter @EagletonPoll.

THREE-QUARTERS SAY GARDEN STATE OFF ON THE WRONG TRACK; NEW LOWS FOR CHRISTIE, MIXED VIEWS ON MENENDEZ, AND GOV CANDIDATES REMAIN UNKNOWN

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – New Jersey is one unhappy state, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. Fewer than one in five registered voters think their state is going in the right direction, while almost three-quarters think it is off on the wrong track; another one in 10 is unsure.

Part of that dissatisfaction is based upon state and national leadership. Just 16 percent have a favorable opinion of Gov. Chris Christie; the same number approves of the job he is doing as governor. Both ratings mark new all-time lows for the governor.

"Views on the state's direction have marched in lockstep with the governor's spiraling ratings since the Bridgegate scandal broke in 2014, " said Ashley Koning, assistant research professor and director of the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) at Rutgers University. "Dissatisfaction with state affairs is now at its highest point since 1992, as voters increasingly seem to feel Christie will be leaving New Jersey worse off than when he first took office."

President Donald Trump fares little better among New Jersey voters. Thirty percent have a favorable opinion of the president, compared to 61 percent who have an unfavorable one. Likewise, by a 65 to 30 percent margin, more disapprove than approve of the job he is doing as president.

And with Labor Day, the traditional kickoff of the campaign season, just around the bend, voters do not

yet see any solutions. Faced with two largely unfamiliar candidates in Republican Lieutenant Gov. Kim Guadagno and Democrat Phil Murphy, about four in 10 voters claim not to know them, though Murphy has a slight edge over Guadagno among those who express an opinion.

Sen. Robert Menendez receives decidedly mixed reviews on the eve of his federal trial for corruption – 28 percent favorable to 25 percent unfavorable. Sen. Cory Booker, by comparison, is the best-regarded statewide public official at this point, with far more voters offering favorable (54 percent) than unfavorable (23 percent) opinions about the former Newark mayor.

Results are from a statewide poll of 714 adults contacted by live callers on both landlines and cell phones from Aug. 24-28, 2017, including 660 registered voters reported on in this release. The sample has a margin of error of +/-4.0 percentage points. Interviews were done in English and, when requested, Spanish.

NJ and Christie hit new all-time lows; Trump unpopular but holds GOP support

As Christie nears the end of his eight years in office, dismay over conditions in the Garden State is nearly universal, reaching lows not seen since the early 1990s. Now, 73 percent say the state is off on the wrong track. This number has been increasing steadily since Christie's reelection in 2013 when just one-third of state residents felt that way, and is now higher than it was at the peak of the Great Recession in 2009.

Christie continues to be the least popular New Jersey governor since the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll first began asking this question in the 1970s, dipping below the previous record lows of former Govs. Brendan Byrne and Jim Florio (each at 17 percent). His job approval has likewise been on a steady decline since April 2016 and is now less than half of what it was upon his return home from his 2016 presidential run. Moreover, Republicans have finally soured on the governor long after Democrats and independents did in the immediate aftermath of Bridgegate, after a year of Sandy-induced bipartisan support. Thirty-five percent of Christie's base now has a favorable opinion of him, while 50 percent are unfavorable. Likewise, 36 percent of Republicans approve of the job he is doing, compared to 59

percent who disapprove.

President Trump does a little better than the governor but remains wildly unpopular in the largely Democratic Garden State. Yet unlike Christie, Trump maintains three-quarters of his base when it comes to favorability and job approval; virtually all Democrats and more than half of independents, on the other hand, hold negative views about the president.

"Republicans' negativity toward Christie, yet positivity toward Trump, may prove to be a challenge for Republican gubernatorial candidate Guadagno, who has tried to avoid aligning herself with either figure," said Koning. "Her approach is largely in contrast to Trump, yet Trump has most Republicans in the state on his side. Guadagno may thus have to walk a fine line in courting her base's vote, and only time will tell if she can motivate enough of them to turn out come Election Day this November."

An election of unknowns

Neither of the major party gubernatorial candidates vying to follow Christie is well-known. Just over one-third of voters offer an opinion of either Murphy or Guadagno, although opinions on Guadagno are more split (17 percent favorable to 18 percent unfavorable), while Murphy is better regarded at the outset of the campaign (23 percent favorable to 13 percent unfavorable). Twenty-five percent offer no opinion of Murphy, and 39 percent have not heard of him; similarly, 24 percent have no opinion of Guadagno, and 41 percent do not know of her.

Each candidate's party base is more likely to recognize and feel favorably toward its own nominee. Thirty-nine percent of Democrats have a favorable view of Murphy, while just 6 percent hold an unfavorable one; 21 percent hold no opinion, and 35 percent have not heard of him. Likewise, 37 percent of Republicans are favorable toward Guadagno, while just 8 percent are unfavorable; 23 percent of her base currently has no opinion, and 31 percent still have not heard of her.

Mixed views on Menendez as he heads to trial; Booker continues to shine

This September, Menendez will go on trial in federal court, but while the senator's ratings are mixed,

they are little different from what they have been throughout the last two years. In fact, it is the percentage of voters who are uncertain or who have not heard of Menendez that has risen the most in recent months – now up seven points since last September to 47 percent. Among partisans, Democrats are the most favorable, though they do not reach a majority: 42 percent of the senator's base is favorable toward him, while 12 percent are unfavorable. Just 20 percent of independents and 15 percent of Republicans have a favorable view of Menendez, but this does not automatically translate into majority opposition, either; 29 percent of independents are unfavorable, as are 44 percent of Republicans.

"One thing Menendez has going for him right now is that New Jersey voters are not in a rush to wholly condemn him in the court of public opinion," said Koning. "This could be his key to avoiding expulsion from the Senate for now or keeping his seat longer, at least until a Democratic administration comes into the statehouse if Phil Murphy wins. The outcomes of this trial and his seat have huge implications not just for New Jersey but also for the country, given how closely the Senate is divided and what this could mean for future votes on issues like healthcare."

Sen. Cory Booker is the one clear star in New Jersey politics right now. Booker's favorability among New Jersey voters has remained steady since he was mayor of Newark, typically hovering just over the 50-percent mark. Positivity toward Booker is divided along partisan lines, however. The vast majority of Democrats – 76 percent – are in Booker's corner; just 4 percent have a negative view of the junior senator. Similarly, almost half of independents (47 percent) have a favorable opinion of Booker, while 26 percent have an unfavorable one. Republicans are just the opposite: 55 percent are unfavorable toward Booker, while 22 percent are favorable.

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QUESTIONS AND TABLES START ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

![Rutgers Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling logo]

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Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release for August 31, 2017 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey registered voters; all percentages are of weighted results.

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Q. **First, I'd like to ask you about some people and groups. Please tell me if your general impression of each one is favorable or unfavorable, or if you do not have an opinion. If you do not know the name, just say so. [ORDER RANDOMIZED]**

	CHRIS CHRISTIE	DONALD TRUMP	ROBERT MENENDEZ	CORY BOOKER	PHIL MURPHY	KIM GUADAGNO
Favorable	16%	30%	28%	54%	23%	17%
Unfavorable	73%	61%	25%	23%	13%	18%
No opinion	10%	10%	26%	12%	25%	24%
Don't know person	0%	0%	21%	11%	39%	41%
Unweighted N=	659	656	658	659	658	656

CHRIS CHRISTIE (click here for trend graph)

Trend	5/17 RV	11/16 RV	9/16 RV	4/16 RV	2/16 RV	2/16 RV	12/15 RV	10/15 RV	8/15 RV	4/15 RV	2/15 RV	12/14 RV	10/14 RV	8/14 RV	4/14 RV	2/14 RV
Fav	15%	19%	23%	26%	31%	29%	33%	35%	30%	38%	37%	44%	42%	49%	50%	49%
Unfav	76%	73%	67%	64%	60%	59%	59%	55%	59%	48%	53%	46%	45%	40%	42%	40%
DK	10%	8%	9%	10%	9%	12%	8%	10%	11%	14%	10%	11%	12%	10%	9%	11%
N=	604	692	732	735	708	752	698	779	756	716	694	644	730	747	727	726

Trend	1/14 RV	11/13 RV	10/13 RV	9/13 RV	6/13 RV	4/13 RV	2/13 RV	11/12 RV	9/12 RV	8/12 RV	6/12 RV	3/12 RV	2/12 RV	11/11 RV	10/11 RV	8/11 RV	4/11 RV	2/11 RV
Fav	46%	65%	61%	60%	64%	64%	70%	67%	48%	49%	50%	46%		47%	49%	49%	45%	44%	46%
Unfav	43%	27%	28%	32%	26%	26%	20%	25%	42%	40%	39%	42%		42%	37%	39%	47%	42%	44%
DK	11%	8%	11%	8%	11%	10%	10%	9%	11%	11%	11%	12%		11%	14%	12%	8%	14%	10%
N=	754	800	798	812	761	816	695	1105	787	911	1,064	514		910	752	803	613	769	810

	Party ID			Gender		Race		Age				Region				
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/South	Shore
Favorable	6%	17%	35%	20%	12%	19%	10%	12%	14%	16%	22%	10%	17%	19%	13%	23%
Unfavorable	87%	72%	50%	70%	77%	72%	76%	73%	77%	75%	66%	77%	75%	72%	77%	65%
No opinion	7%	10%	15%	10%	10%	10%	13%	15%	9%	8%	12%	13%	9%	9%	10%	12%
DK person	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unwt N=	270	251	123	310	349	411	234	125	172	215	147	103	225	92	121	118

DONALD TRUMP

	Party ID			Gender		Race		Age				Region				
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/South	Shore
Favorable	5%	30%	76%	39%	21%	37%	12%	20%	27%	31%	39%	16%	25%	37%	33%	42%
Unfavorable	88%	55%	19%	51%	69%	54%	76%	71%	61%	59%	54%	74%	63%	57%	57%	51%
No opinion	7%	14%	5%	10%	9%	8%	13%	8%	12%	9%	7%	10%	12%	6%	9%	7%
DK person	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unwt N=	270	249	123	309	347	408	234	123	172	214	147	101	224	92	121	118

ROBERT MENENDEZ (click here for trend graph)

	Party ID			Gender		Race		Age				Region				
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/South	Shore
Favorable	42%	20%	15%	29%	27%	24%	36%	21%	25%	33%	29%	42%	31%	20%	22%	23%
Unfavorable	12%	29%	44%	33%	18%	30%	13%	13%	20%	35%	27%	15%	28%	33%	18%	28%
No opinion	26%	28%	25%	20%	31%	26%	28%	25%	32%	17%	32%	24%	25%	23%	33%	26%
DK person	21%	23%	16%	17%	24%	20%	23%	40%	22%	15%	12%	20%	16%	24%	27%	23%
Unwt N=	270	250	123	310	348	410	234	125	172	214	147	103	225	92	121	117

CORY BOOKER (click here for trend graph)

| | Party ID | | | Gender | | Race | | Age | | | | Region | | | | |
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/South	Shore
Favorable	76%	47%	22%	46%	60%	51%	62%	50%	56%	55%	52%	66%	57%	51%	46%	47%
Unfavorable	4%	26%	55%	32%	15%	29%	8%	16%	17%	29%	29%	15%	22%	25%	26%	28%
No opinion	10%	15%	11%	11%	13%	9%	17%	13%	14%	10%	11%	14%	13%	13%	9%	10%
DK person	10%	13%	12%	11%	12%	11%	13%	21%	12%	7%	9%	5%	9%	11%	20%	15%
Unwt N=	270	251	123	310	349	411	234	125	172	215	147	103	225	92	121	118

PHIL MURPHY

| | Party ID | | | Gender | | Race | | Age | | | | Region | | | | |
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/South	Shore
Favorable	39%	16%	5%	23%	23%	23%	23%	18%	24%	24%	24%	28%	26%	18%	12%	28%
Unfavorable	6%	16%	24%	19%	8%	14%	10%	9%	10%	14%	19%	12%	14%	23%	6%	9%
No opinion	21%	27%	27%	24%	25%	24%	26%	24%	26%	22%	26%	25%	23%	27%	28%	22%
DK person	35%	41%	44%	34%	45%	38%	42%	49%	40%	39%	31%	34%	37%	32%	53%	41%
Unwt N=	269	250	124	309	349	411	233	123	173	215	147	102	225	91	121	119

KIM GUADAGNO

| | Party ID | | | Gender | | Race | | Age | | | | Region | | | | |
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/South	Shore
Favorable	10%	16%	37%	21%	14%	21%	9%	9%	15%	20%	25%	12%	16%	17%	20%	22%
Unfavorable	24%	19%	8%	21%	16%	20%	15%	14%	18%	23%	16%	22%	20%	20%	17%	13%
No opinion	23%	25%	23%	22%	25%	24%	23%	20%	28%	21%	25%	24%	21%	29%	23%	26%
DK person	44%	41%	31%	36%	45%	35%	53%	57%	40%	36%	35%	42%	43%	34%	41%	40%
Unwt N=	268	250	123	309	347	410	233	124	172	214	146	102	225	91	121	117

Q.   Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president?

Approve	30%
Disapprove	65%
Don't know	5%
Unwgt N=	654

	Party ID			Gender		Race		Age				Region				
							Non-								Phil/	
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	wht.	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	South	Shore
Approve	4%	32%	76%	39%	21%	37%	13%	18%	27%	31%	41%	13%	27%	35%	34%	41%
Disapprove	94%	60%	21%	55%	74%	59%	80%	74%	66%	64%	58%	80%	69%	60%	61%	54%
Don't know	2%	8%	3%	6%	5%	4%	7%	8%	7%	5%	1%	7%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Unwt N=	270	247	124	306	348	406	234	123	171	213	147	101	224	91	120	118

Q.   Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Chris Christie is handling his job as governor?

Approve	16%
Disapprove	79%
Don't know	5%
Unwgt N=	655

CHRIS CHRISTIE (click here for trend graph)

Trend	11/16 RV	9/16 RV	4/16 RV	2/16 RV	2/16 RV	12/15 RV	10/15 RV	8/15 RV	4/15 RV	2/15 RV	12/14 RV	10/14 RV
Approve	20%	26%	31%	37%	33%	33%	39%	37%	41%	42%	48%	49%
Disapprove	75%	69%	63%	60%	61%	62%	56%	59%	54%	52%	47%	46%
Don't know	5%	5%	6%	4%	6%	4%	6%	4%	5%	6%	5%	5%
Unwgt N=	685	730	732	709	747	689	773	749	713	690	637	730

Trend	8/14 RV	4/14 RV	2/14 RV	1/14 RV	11/13 RV	10/13 RV	9/13 RV	6/13 RV	4/13 RV	2/13 RV	11/12 RV
Approve	52%	55%	55%	53%	68%	67%	66%	70%	68%	73%	67%
Disapprove	41%	41%	39%	41%	26%	29%	31%	25%	26%	23%	26%
Don't know	7%	4%	6%	6%	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%	7%
Unwgt N=	749	724	725	747	795	794	809	756	810	696	533

	Party ID			Gender		Race		Age				Region				
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/South	Shore
Approve	6%	15%	36%	18%	15%	19%	10%	16%	14%	15%	21%	10%	15%	18%	17%	21%
Disapprove	90%	80%	59%	76%	81%	78%	82%	78%	79%	81%	76%	84%	81%	78%	79%	72%
Don't know	4%	5%	5%	6%	4%	4%	8%	6%	7%	3%	3%	6%	4%	4%	4%	8%
Unwt N=	269	251	121	307	348	410	231	124	172	214	145	103	224	92	120	116

Q.   Would you say the state of New Jersey is currently going in the right direction or has it gone off on the wrong track?

[(Click here for trend graph)](#)

	ALL VOTERS	Christie Favorability	
		Favorable	Unfavorable
Going in the right direction	16%	45%	8%
Off on the wrong track	73%	45%	82%
Don't know	12%	10%	10%
Unwgt N=	654	97	486

	Party ID			Gender		Race		Age				Region				
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/South	Shore
Going in the right direction	11%	16%	26%	18%	14%	16%	14%	18%	20%	9%	17%	14%	19%	6%	14%	21%
Off on the wrong track	77%	73%	65%	71%	74%	73%	74%	69%	66%	83%	70%	71%	72%	82%	77%	64%
Don't know	12%	12%	9%	11%	12%	11%	12%	12%	15%	8%	13%	15%	10%	12%	9%	15%
Unwt N=	269	247	124	307	347	408	232	122	172	213	147	102	224	91	120	117

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone using live callers Aug. 24-28, 2017 with a scientifically selected random sample of 714 New Jersey adults, 18 or older. The sample contains a subsample of 660 registered voters. Respondents within a household are selected by asking randomly for the youngest adult male or female currently available. If the named gender is not available, the youngest adult of the other gender is interviewed. The poll was available in Spanish for respondents who requested it. This telephone poll included 314 landline and 400 cell phone adults, all acquired through random digit dialing. Distribution of household phone use in this sample is:

Cell Only:	31%
Dual Use, Reached on Cell:	25%
Dual Use, Reached on LL:	43%
Landline Only:	1%

Data were weighted to the demographics of registered voters in New Jersey. Weights account for the probability of being selected within the sample frame and the probability of being sampled within a household, based on the number of individuals living in the household and the phone composition (cell, landline) of the household. The samples were weighted using a raking algorithm to several demographic variables reflecting the registered voter parameters of the state of New Jersey: gender, race, age, Hispanic ethnicity, county, and education. The final weight, which combined all of the parameters mentioned, was trimmed at the 5th and 95th percentile so as to not accord too much weight to any one case or subset of cases. All results are reported with these weighted data.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. Sampling error should be adjusted to recognize the effect of weighting the data to better match the population. In this poll, the simple sampling error for 660 registered voters is +/-3.8 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The registered voter subsample weighting design effect is 1.12, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 4.0 percentage points for the registered voter subsample. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey registered voters in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 46 and 54 percent (50 +/- 4.0) if all New Jersey registered voters had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by Braun Research, Inc. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP). The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University

of New Jersey, a non-partisan academic center for the study of politics and the political process. Full questionnaires are available on request, and can also be accessed through our archives at eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. For more information, please contact poll@eagleton.rutgers.edu.

Weighted Sample Characteristics			
660 New Jersey Registered Voters			
41% Democrat	47% Male	17% 18-29	69% White
39% Independent	53% Female	31% 30-49	12% Black
20% Republican		31% 50-64	12% Hispanic
		21% 65+	7% Asian/Other/Multi