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Release available at: <http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu/Menendez-Booker-Nov2017>. Find all releases at <http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu>. Follow the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/RutgersEagletonPoll> and Twitter [@EagletonPoll](https://twitter.com/EagletonPoll).

NEW JERSEYANS' VERDICT ON MENENDEZ? DOWN BUT NOT OUT

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez has emerged from a hung jury in his federal corruption case seriously damaged but by no means done in, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. The senior senator is now at a low point in his ratings: more New Jersey residents disapprove than approve of his job performance (36 percent to 29 percent), and more have an unfavorable than favorable impression of him (33 percent to 20 percent), following the trial. Half (49 percent) feel Menendez should resign, and about the same number (51 percent) think he does not deserve to be reelected in 2018 should he decide to run again; four in ten (40 percent) believe Menendez should continue serving his term, and just a quarter of New Jerseyans (26 percent) feel Menendez deserves to be reelected next year.

Yet the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, conducted just after the verdict was announced, finds as much indecision as negativity about Menendez: large numbers give no opinion on how they feel about him or the job he is doing, reflecting both a lack of knowledge and ambivalence, and a notable portion of residents are unsure whether or not Menendez should keep his seat. This is nothing new when it comes to Menendez's ratings: a sizeable number has always been uncertain when it comes to Menendez's likeability and success as a senator.

He remains popular with his Democratic base, however. Among those Democrats and independents who lean Democratic and who report having voted in the recent gubernatorial election, more approve than disapprove of Menendez by a margin of 42 percent to 28 percent, and more have a favorable than an

unfavorable opinion of him (29 percent to 22 percent).

“Menendez will still be a formidable candidate for reelection for a number of reasons,” said Dr. Ashley Koning, assistant research professor and director of the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. “New Jersey remains a very blue state, and since the mistrial, Menendez has already received Governor-elect Phil Murphy’s blessing, as well as support from others in his party – including rumored primary challengers. He may still have some bumps in the road ahead, but as of now, he is well funded, has ample constituent experience, and there is no well-known Republican opponent in sight.”

What may be troubling for Menendez, however, is the degree to which he is vulnerable once potential opponents make the corruption charges more widely known. The Poll tested the order in which it asked the two questions about Menendez’s reelection and trial. One random half of the sample was asked about his reelection first and the trial second, while the other half was asked the reverse. Those asked about the trial first – in which they were told about Menendez’s federal corruption charges – are markedly more likely to believe the senator does not deserve to be reelected (63 percent) compared to those asked first about reelection before any mention of the trial (39 percent). Much of this change is driven by undecideds: telling New Jerseyans first about Menendez’s charges, trial, and hung jury cuts the number of those unsure about his reelection in half, compared to those given the questions in the opposite order (32 percent versus 14 percent).

“Making Menendez’s corruption charges and current trouble salient clearly takes a toll on his reelection prospects with New Jerseyans,” said Koning. “Menendez can still face a new trial and will face an ethics investigation in the Senate, so this issue for him will not go away anytime soon and has the potential to become a key part of any opponent’s campaign, to Menendez’s detriment.”

New Jersey’s junior senator, Cory Booker, continues to shine brightly in the Garden State. Forty-four percent have a favorable impression of him, compared to just 19 percent who have an unfavorable one; another 32 percent have no opinion, and 4 percent do not know who he is. Likewise, 49 percent approve

of the job he is doing, versus 20 percent who disapprove; 31 percent are unsure.

Results are from a statewide poll of 1,203 adults contacted by live callers on both landlines and cell phones from Nov. 15-27, 2017, including the 600 New Jersey residents reported on in this release. The sample has a margin of error of +/-4.3 percentage points. Interviews were done in English and, when requested, Spanish.

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QUESTIONS AND TABLES START ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release for November 30, 2017 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey adults; all percentages are of weighted results.

Q. First, is your general impression of Cory Booker favorable or unfavorable, or do you not have an opinion about him?

Favorable	44%
Unfavorable	19%
No opinion	32%
Don't know person	4%
Unweighted N=	596

	Party ID			Party ID w/ leaners			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Favorable	63%	35%	26%	64%	27%	21%	37%	51%	40%	51%	42%	40%	49%	44%
Unfavorable	9%	22%	36%	8%	18%	41%	28%	11%	25%	8%	12%	16%	24%	26%
No opinion	27%	36%	36%	25%	45%	35%	30%	34%	31%	36%	39%	41%	23%	28%
DK person	2%	7%	1%	2%	9%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	7%	3%	3%	3%
Unwt N=	216	259	110	289	130	168	309	287	412	173	140	145	187	124

Q. And overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Cory Booker is handling his job as U.S. Senator?

Approve	49%
Disapprove	20%
Don't know	31%
Unweighted N=	590

	Party ID			Party ID w/ leaners			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Approve	67%	41%	30%	69%	33%	26%	44%	54%	45%	55%	46%	46%	55%	47%
Disapprove	9%	20%	43%	7%	19%	44%	28%	12%	25%	10%	14%	16%	23%	28%
Don't know	25%	38%	27%	24%	48%	30%	28%	35%	29%	35%	40%	38%	23%	24%
Unwt N=	216	258	107	289	129	165	305	285	407	172	139	145	186	120

Q. And is your general impression of Robert Menendez favorable or unfavorable, or do you not have an opinion about him?

**Menendez Ratings November 2017
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Favorable	20%
Unfavorable	33%
No opinion	41%
Don't know person	7%
Unweighted N=	596

	Party ID			Party ID w/ leaners			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Favorable	28%	18%	7%	29%	14%	7%	17%	22%	18%	23%	15%	17%	21%	26%
Unfavorable	17%	38%	51%	20%	36%	53%	41%	25%	40%	18%	17%	32%	46%	35%
No opinion	49%	34%	39%	44%	39%	36%	35%	46%	36%	48%	53%	46%	31%	31%
DK person	6%	10%	2%	7%	11%	4%	8%	7%	5%	10%	15%	4%	2%	8%
Unwt N=	216	260	110	289	131	167	308	288	411	174	140	145	187	124

Q. And overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Robert Menendez is handling his job as U.S. Senator?

Approve	29%
Disapprove	36%
Don't know	36%
Unweighted N=	585

	Party ID			Party ID w/ leaners			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Approve	40%	22%	21%	39%	17%	20%	23%	34%	27%	33%	24%	28%	29%	35%
Disapprove	22%	41%	53%	25%	38%	54%	44%	28%	43%	22%	20%	35%	48%	40%
Don't know	38%	37%	26%	36%	45%	26%	33%	38%	30%	45%	56%	38%	23%	25%
Unwt N=	214	255	107	287	126	164	303	282	404	170	136	143	185	121

Q. Senator Menendez is up for reelection in 2018. If he decides to run again, does he deserve to be reelected, or not?

	Versions A and B combined	A:	B:
		Reelection asked first	Trial/resign asked first
Yes, deserves to be reelected	26%	29%	24%
No, does not deserve to be reelected	51%	39%	63%
Don't know	23%	32%	14%
Unweighted N=	583	284	299

**Menendez Ratings November 2017
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

[A+B Combined]

	Party ID			Party ID w/ leaners			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Does	34%	23%	17%	34%	21%	17%	23%	30%	25%	29%	20%	23%	28%	36%
Does not	41%	53%	67%	42%	52%	68%	57%	45%	56%	41%	42%	54%	58%	48%
Don't know	25%	24%	16%	24%	27%	16%	20%	26%	19%	29%	38%	23%	14%	17%
Unwt N=	213	255	109	283	130	165	305	278	403	171	134	144	184	121

Q. Senator Menendez was recently on trial for federal criminal corruption charges, but the jury was unable to reach a verdict, and the case ended in a mistrial. Given this, do you think Senator Menendez should [ROTATE: resign] or [continue to serve his term]?

	Versions A and B combined		A: Reelection asked first	B: Trial/resign asked first
	Resign	49%		48%
Continue to serve his term	40%		40%	40%
Don't know	12%		12%	11%
Unweighted N=	587		288	299

[A+B Combined]

	Party ID			Party ID w/ leaners			Gender		Race		Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	White	Non-wht.	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Resign	44%	47%	65%	43%	46%	62%	56%	42%	51%	44%	52%	57%	44%	41%
Serve term	43%	41%	30%	45%	38%	31%	37%	42%	40%	39%	29%	34%	47%	50%
Don't know	13%	13%	5%	12%	17%	7%	8%	15%	9%	17%	19%	10%	9%	9%
Unwt N=	214	257	110	287	128	167	304	283	407	170	138	142	186	121

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone using live callers Nov. 15-27, 2017 with a scientifically selected random sample of 1,203 New Jersey adults, 18 or older. The sample contains a subsample of 600 New Jersey adults, as reported on in this release. 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 516 landline and 687 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:	26%
Dual Use, Reached on LL:	41%
Landline Only:	2%

**Menendez Ratings November 2017
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

The data were weighted to be representative of New Jersey adults. The weighting balanced sample demographics to population parameters. The sample is balanced, by form¹, to match parameters for sex, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and phone use. The sex, age, education and race/ethnicity parameters were derived from 2015 American Community Survey PUMS data. The region parameter was derived from 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates based on total population. The phone use parameter derived from estimates provided by the National Health Interview Survey Early Release Program.²³⁴ Weighting was done in two stages. The first stage of weighting corrected for different probabilities of selection associated with the number of adults in each household and each respondent’s telephone usage patterns. This weighting also adjusts for the overlapping landline and cell sample frames and the relative sizes of each frame and each sample. The second stage of weighting balanced sample demographics to match target population parameters. Weights were trimmed at the 3rd and 97th percentile to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on the final results. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the target population.

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 600 New Jersey adults is +/-4.0 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The design effect is 1.14, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 4.3 percentage points. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 45.7 and 54.3 percent (50 +/- 4.3) if all New Jersey adults 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). Dr. Cliff Zukin, Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Public Policy and Senior Survey Advisor to ECPIP, assisted with this questionnaire and analysis. 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
600 New Jersey Adults**

Male	49%	Democrat	39%	18-34	27%	HS or Less	32%	White	60%
Female	51%	Independent	43%	35-49	24%	Some College	31%	Black	12%
		Republican	18%	50-64	30%	College Grad	22%	Hispanic	19%
				65+	20%	Grad Work	15%	Other	9%

¹ Most of the survey had a split sample design, randomly assigning half of respondents to Form A (N=603) and half to Form B (N=600). Certain sets of questions are only asked to one half of the sample or the other.

² NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2011–2015; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010–2014; and infoUSA.com consumer database, 2011–2015.

³ Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, July–December 2014. National Center for Health Statistics. June 2015.

⁴ Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, July–December 2016. National Center for Health Statistics. May 2017.