

Rutgers - Eagleton Poll

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**SENATE RACE: MENENDEZ HAS SMALL EARLY LEAD OVER KEAN, JR.
WHILE 12% CONFUSE KEAN WITH HIS FATHER**

STATE BUDGET: CORZINE HAS LONG WAY TO GO TO SELL TAX INCREASES

U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez leads State Sen. Tom Kean, Jr. 40 % to 35 % among registered voters in the race for the U.S. Senate, according to a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll conducted March 26-30 among 800 adults, including 676 registered voters.

The poll also found:

- 88 % of residents said the state's budget problems are "very serious" or "somewhat serious." But only 32 % said Corzine's budget proposal has the right mix of tax increases and spending cuts, while 38 % said the plan focuses too much on tax increases.
- 43 % of adults approve of the job Corzine is doing as governor, while 34 % disapprove.

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll • Eagleton Institute of Politics

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- 30 % of adults and 31 % of registered voters approve of the job George W. Bush is doing as president, the lowest job approval rating for Bush in New Jersey since he took office in January 2001.

Menendez holds a solid lead over Kean among Democratic voters, 68 % to 18 %. Kean leads Menendez by a similar margin among Republican voters. The candidates split the independent vote evenly, with 36 percent for Menedez and 34 percent for Kean. The candidates also run evenly among women, while Menedez holds a 43 % to 34 % lead over Kean among men.

There was a good deal of uncertainty about the two candidates for Senate. Twenty percent of voters said they were undecided about whom to support in the race. About one-third of voters said they could not venture a favorable or unfavorable opinion of either candidate and more than 20 percent of voters said they had not heard of either candidate.

“It is very early in the campaign and the candidates are not well known. The horse-race numbers don’t mean much at this point; more telling is what the voters know and don’t know about the candidates,” said Dr. Murray Edelman, Distinguished Visiting Scholar and Consultant of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

This poll asked voters 10 questions about the backgrounds of the Senate candidates: whether each had served in the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the New Jersey Legislature, or as governor of New Jersey or a member of the 9/11 Commission. Some of the patterns of responses suggest voters may be confusing Kean with his father, who served as governor of New Jersey from 1982 to 1990 and chaired the 9/11 Commission.

Twelve percent of voters said that Kean is or has been governor of New Jersey, while

3 % said the same of Menendez. Eleven percent said Kean was a member of the 9/11 Commission, while 6 % said the same of Menendez. Among the 125 voters who think Kean had served as governor or as a member of the 9/11 Commission, Kean leads Menendez 43 % to 33 %. Menendez leads Kean 42 % to 33 % among the remaining 551 voters in the sample.

Overall, roughly half of the sample answered three or fewer of the knowledge questions correctly, and half answered four or more correctly. Those who were more knowledgeable about politics showed a very different pattern of responses than those who were less knowledgeable.

Menendez's lead of 36 % to 34 % among independent voters grows to 42 % to 38 % among the more knowledgeable independent voters. Voters give Kean a three-point edge, 31 % to 28 %, over Menendez in terms of being the candidate who would make the best decisions to protect New Jersey against a terrorist attack. However, the more knowledgeable voters give the advantage to Menendez by a margin of 39 % to 33 %.

“This poll suggests Kean gains from the voters' lack of information and could be in trouble as voters become more familiar with the candidates,” Edelman said. “But it is very early in the campaign and the race is still very fluid. Voters will be making their choices on many other factors besides the candidates' past experience in office.”

The poll also found that voters associate Menendez more closely with Corzine than Kean with President Bush. Half of voters associated Menendez “very closely” or “somewhat closely” with Corzine, while 43 % said the same of Kean and Bush. In each case 29 % said they didn't know or refused to answer the question.

The large percentage of voters who said they didn't know or wouldn't answer the question suggests that each campaign's attempts to link its opponent to unpopular policies of Corzine or Bush can still alter the dynamics in the race, Edelman said.

The Kean campaign already has tried to link Menendez to Corzine's state budget proposal. Poll data show that the strategy has the potential to resonate with voters in New Jersey. Kean leads Menendez 40 % to 33 % among voters who say Corzine's proposed budget is unfair to people like them. Menendez leads Kean 50 % to 32 % among voters who say the budget is fair to people like them. While partisanship influences the figures, with Republicans more likely than Democrats to say the budget proposal is unfair, independent voters also are more likely than Democrats to say Corzine's budget is unfair to people like them.

"Bush and Corzine are not running for Senate, but their fates can have a big impact on the race. At the moment, it appears the Corzine budget could have the biggest drag on Menendez," Edelman said.

The data show that Corzine still has far to go in generating public support for his budget proposal. Only 30 % of adults in the sample said Corzine has convinced them that his proposed tax increases are necessary to balance the state budget. Thirty-eight percent of adults said the budget is focused too much on raising taxes, while 32 % said the proposal is the right mix between tax increases and spending cuts. Adults said they prefer spending cuts to tax increases to balance the budget by a margin of 57 % to 27 %.

"Tax increases are rarely popular, so the governor has a difficult job ahead and the data confirm that he has a long way to go," Edelman said.

While Corzine's attempts to build support have not swayed a majority of voters, data show opinion varies by level of knowledge about the budget. Forty-two percent of those who said they have heard or read a lot about the budget proposal say the proposal is fair to people like them, compared to 35 % of those who said they have heard or read some and 28 % of those who said they have heard or read very little.

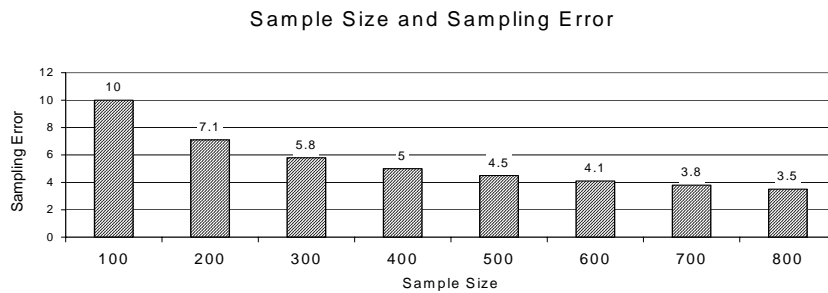
However, perceptions that the budget is unfair also rise with knowledge. Fifty-five percent of those who have heard or read a lot about the budget proposal say it is unfair to them, compared to 53 % of those who have heard or read some, and 46 % of those who said they have heard or read very little.

While Corzine still has more work to do to convince the public of the need for tax increases, residents do not hold him directly responsible for the state's current massive budget deficit. Forty-seven percent placed the blame on former governors, and 26 % blamed the New Jersey Legislature, with only 5 % blaming Corzine.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP 158-1) April 4, 2006

The latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted from March 26 to 30 with a scientifically selected random sample of 800 New Jersey adults. This sample yielded 676 adult residents registered to vote in New Jersey. Most of the figures in this release are based on the statewide sample of all adults.

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. The sampling error for 800 adults is ± 3.5 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults were found to have a favorable opinion of a senatorial candidate, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 47.5 and 53.5 percent (50 ± 3.5) had all New Jersey adults been interviewed, rather than just a sample. The sampling error for 676 registered voters is ± 3.8 percent. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. The following chart shows the relationship between sample size and sampling error.



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. The verbatim wording of all questions referred to in this release are as follows:

Please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the following people. If you haven't heard of them or don't have an opinion of them, just tell me and we'll move on.

[ROTATE] (PF1-PF4)

POLL 158 / March 2006	Favorable	Unfavorable	Not Heard of	No opinion	DK/RF	(n)
ROBERT MENENDEZ						
All Adults	22%	11%	29%	32%	7%	800
Party ID						
--Democrat	34%	5%	26%	30%	6%	275
--Republican	13%	20%	28%	35%	4%	186
--Independent	22%	11%	28%	32%	7%	253
Registered voters	23%	13%	25%	32%	7%	676
TOM KEAN JR.						
All Adults	23%	12%	25%	33%	7%	800
Party ID						
--Democrat	20%	17%	25%	34%	5%	275
--Republican	34%	8%	22%	31%	5%	186
--Independent	23%	12%	22%	36%	7%	253
Registered voters	26%	13%	21%	32%	8%	676
RICHARD CODEY						
All Adults	43%	12%	16%	24%	5%	800
Party ID						
--Democrat	54%	11%	15%	17%	3%	275
--Republican	38%	15%	15%	28%	4%	186
--Independent	44%	11%	13%	27%	4%	253
Registered voters	48%	13%	13%	22%	5%	676

POLL 158 / March 2006	Favorable	Unfavorable	Not Heard of	No opinion	DK/RF	(n)
JON CORZINE						
All Adults	39%	35%	3%	19%	4%	800
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	61%	19%	2%	16%	3%	275
--Republican	19%	62%	1%	14%	4%	186
--Independent	35%	37%	2%	21%	4%	253
Registered voters	42%	37%	2%	16%	4%	676

Menendez - Kean Jr.

If the election for the U.S. Senate were held today, for whom would you vote (ROTATE) Robert Menendez, the Democrat, Tom Kean Jr., the Republican, or some other candidate for Senate? (G1)

[Includes "Leaners" from G1a]

	<u>Menendez</u>	<u>Kean Jr.</u>	<u>Some other</u>	<u>Wouldn't Vote</u>	<u>DK/RF/Undecided</u>	<u>(n)</u>
POLL 158 / March 2006						
Registered Voters	40%	35%	2%	3%	20%	676
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	68%	18%	1%	1%	12%	241
--Republican	14%	69%	1%	2%	15%	162
--Independent	36%	34%	3%	4%	22%	210
<u>Gender</u>						
--Male	43%	34%	2%	3%	17%	328
--Female	37%	36%	1%	3%	23%	348
<u>Race</u>						
--White	36%	41%	1%	4%	19%	534
--Nonwhite	57%	18%	4%	1%	21%	113
<u>Age</u>						
--18-29	***	***	***	***	***	***
--30-49	37%	33%	3%	6%	22%	216
--50-64	44%	36%	1%	2%	17%	233
--65+	44%	40%	1%	1%	14%	158
<u>Education</u>						
--High school and below	40%	35%	0%	6%	19%	187
--Some college and above	41%	35%	2%	1%	20%	481
<u>Region of State</u>						
--North	38%	35%	2%	3%	21%	276
--Central	51%	29%	2%	3%	15%	197
--South	32%	40%	1%	4%	23%	183
All Adults	39%	33%	2%	5%	21%	800

***Subgroup contains fewer than 50.

It is very early in the campaign and the candidates are just beginning to introduce themselves to the voters. We would like to find out how much you have heard or read about the candidates so far.

I'm going to read you a list of public offices and as I read each one, please tell me if Robert Menendez now holds or has ever held this position? (G3) [ROTATE MENENDEZ WITH KEAN, AND ROTATE OFFICES.] [CORRECT ANSWERS ARE IN BOLD]

[ROTATE G3/3a WITH G4/4a]

POLL 158 / March 2006	<u>Yes now holds or has held this position</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	(n)
Registered Voters				
Representative in the House of Representatives	26%	19%	55%	676
United States Senator	26%	31%	43%	676
Member of the New Jersey State Legislature	31%	11%	58%	676
Governor of New Jersey	3%	74%	23%	676

I'm going to read you a list of public offices and as I read each one, please tell me if Tom Kean, Jr. now holds or has ever held this position? (G4)

POLL 158 / March 2006	<u>Yes now holds or has held this position</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	(n)
Registered Voters				
Representative in the House of Representatives	10%	31%	59%	676
United States Senator	8%	48%	44%	676
Member of the New Jersey State Legislature	26%	14%	60%	676
Governor of New Jersey	12%	64%	23%	676

From what you know, was Robert Menendez a member of the 9-11 Commission? (G3a)

From what you know, was Tom Kean, Jr. a member of the 9-11 Commission? (G4a)

[CORRECT ANSWERS ARE IN BOLD]

POLL 158 / March 2006	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	(n)
Registered Voters				
Robert Menendez	6%	34%	59%	676
Tom Kean Jr.	11%	36%	53%	676

How closely do you associate Republican Tom Kean, Jr. with the policies and actions of the administration of President George W. Bush? (G5)

[ROTATE G5 and G6]

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Somewhat closely</u>	<u>Not closely at all</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
POLL 156 / Oct 2005 Registered Voters	12%	31%	28%	29%	676
All Adults	12%	30%	27%	32%	800

How closely do you associate Democrat Robert Menendez with the policies and actions of the administration of Governor Jon Corzine? (G6)

[ROTATE G5 and G6]

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Somewhat closely</u>	<u>Not closely at all</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
POLL 156 / Oct 2005 Registered Voters	20%	30%	22%	29%	676
All Adults	17%	31%	21%	32%	800

Regardless of which candidate for Senate you support, which one of the candidates, (ROTATE) Robert Menendez or Tom Kean, Jr., do you think would make the best decisions to protect the state against a terrorist attack [IF SOME OTHER CANDIDATE, ASK:] If you had to choose between (READ OPTIONS #1-2)...? (IC1)

	<u>Menendez</u>	<u>Kean Jr.</u>	<u>None of the above</u>	<u>All the same equal</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
POLL 158 / March 2006 Registered Voters	28%	31%	6%	3%	32%	676
All Adults	27%	30%	6%	2%	34%	800

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? (B1)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
POLL 158 / March 2006				
Registered Voters	31%	63%	7%	676
<u>Party ID</u>				
--Democrat	11%	83%	7%	241
--Republican	69%	26%	5%	162
--Independent	27%	66%	7%	210
All Adults	30%	63%	7%	800
October 2005				
Registered Voters	34%	58%	8%	703
All Adults	33%	57%	9%	833
September 2005				
Registered voters	35%	58%	8%	700
All Adults	33%	58%	9%	865
PAST SURVEYS	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Registered Voters				
---February 2005	46%	50%	4%	678
---October 2004	46%	49%	6%	664
---January 2004	50%	45%	6%	679
---September 2003	56%	38%	6%	628
---May 2003	62%	31%	8%	773
---Jan/Feb 2003	58%	30%	12%	301
---September 2002	71%	24%	6%	596
---Feb/Mar 2002	82%	15%	4%	622
---April 2001	57%	34%	9%	606
---January 2001	43%	21%	37%	636

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Jon Corzine is handling his job as Governor? (J1)

POLL 158 / March 2006	Approve	Disapprove	DK/RF	(n)
All Adults	43%	34%	24%	800
<u>Party ID</u>				
--Democrat	62%	19%	20%	275
--Republican	25%	53%	22%	186
--Independent	41%	37%	22%	253
Registered Voters	41%	36%	23%	676

The state constitution requires that New Jersey have a balanced budget each year. To balance the state budget next year, if you had to choose, which would you prefer - raising taxes to keep state services at their current level, OR cutting state services to keep taxes at their current level? (BD1)

POLL 158 / March 2006	<u>Raise Taxes</u>	<u>Cut State Services</u>	<u>Both/Some of Each</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
All Adults	27%	57%	7%	9%	800
Registered Voters	25%	59%	8%	8%	676

Now, thinking about state government -- How serious do you think New Jersey's budget problems are - very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious? (BD2)

POLL 158 / March 2006	<u>Very Serious</u>	<u>Somewhat Serious</u>	<u>Not Very Serious</u>	<u>Not At All Serious</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
All Adults	60%	28%	5%	1%	6%	800
Registered Voters	62%	28%	5%	1%	4%	676
 <i>PAST SURVEYS</i>						
	<u>Very Serious</u>	<u>Somewhat Serious</u>	<u>Not Very Serious</u>	<u>Not At All Serious</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004	41 %	41 %	5 %	2 %	11 %	904
February 2003	55 %	36 %	2 %	1 %	5 %	401
May 2003	39 %	49 %	4 %	2 %	5 %	1002
September 2002	41 %	37 %	8 %	3 %	11 %	804
June 2002	37 %	48 %	7 %	2 %	7 %	801
March 2002	39 %	44 %	8 %	2 %	7 %	803
March 1982	26 %	46 %	15 %	3 %	10 %	1206

Who is most responsible for creating the state’s large budget deficit...is it Jon Corzine, the current governor; or previous governors; or the State Legislature? (BD3)

POLL 158 / March 2006	<u>Jon Corzine</u>	<u>Previous Governors</u>	<u>State Legislature</u>	<u>All of the Above</u>	<u>None of the Above</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
All Adults	5%	47%	26%	9%	2%	11%	800
Registered Voters	5%	49%	26%	10%	2%	8%	676

How much have you heard or read about Governor Jon Corzine’s proposed state budget? (BD4)

POLL 158 / March 2006	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Very little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
All Adults	19%	36%	31%	13%	1%	(800)

Just from what you’ve heard, is Governor Jon Corzine’s budget proposal [ROTATE] focused too much on increasing taxes, or focused too much on spending cuts, or is it just the right mix between the two? (BD5)

[Only asked of those who responded that had heard or read a lot, some, or very little about Governor Corzine’s budget proposal]

POLL 158 / March 2006	<u>Increasing Taxes</u>	<u>Spending Cuts</u>	<u>Right Mix between the two</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
All Adults	44%	6%	36%	15%	715
Registered Voters	45%	6%	36%	13%	621

Do you think the budget proposal is fair or unfair to people like yourself? (BD6)

[Only asked of those who responded that had heard or read a lot, some, or very little about Governor Corzine's budget proposal]

POLL 158 / March 2006	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Unfair</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
All Adults	33%	50%	16%	715
Registered Voters	34%	50%	15%	621

Has Governor Jon Corzine convinced you that his proposed increase in taxes is necessary to balance the budget or not? (BD7)

[Only asked of those who responded that had heard or read a lot, some, or very little about Governor Corzine's budget proposal]

POLL 158 / March 2006	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
All Adults	30%	61%	9%	715
Registered Voters	31%	61%	8%	621

As proposed, how much would the increased taxes and spending cuts affect you – a great deal, some, very little, or not at all? (BD8)

[Only asked of those who responded that had heard or read a lot, some, or very little about Governor Corzine's budget proposal]

POLL 158 / March 2006	<u>A Great Deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Very Little</u>	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>DK/RF</u>	<u>(n)</u>
All Adults	36%	45%	9%	4%	6%	715
Registered Voters	37%	44%	9%	5%	5%	621