

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested parties

FROM: Rick Shaftan, Neighborhood Research

RE: Survey, New Jersey: Sept 14-17, 2009

DATE: Sept. 18, 2009

The data below is from a survey of 347 registered voters who said their chances of voting in the November election were "definite" or "very likely." Surveys were completed between September 14th and 17th from live operators from our facility in Franklin, New Jersey. The data is compared with 319 responses completed between August 12th and 21st. The theoretical margin of error is +/- 5.3% at a 95% confidence level. 13 of these surveys were completed in Spanish.

SUMMARY

Chris Christie's lead has expanded from 37-35 with 6 for Daggett to 37-33 with 8 for Daggett. However, among definite voters, Christie's lead has gone from 3 to 7 points, moving up from 39-36 (6 for Daggett) to 40-33 (7 for Daggett).

Daggett seems to have peaked last week, and was getting weaker each day in the survey.

Christie's favorables are up significantly from last month, while his negatives have not moved at all. Corzine's favorable/unfavorable, on the other hand, has worsened slightly. Christie has gone from 19-26 net unfavorable to 28-26 net favorable while Corzine has moved from 21-46 to 21-48 net unfavorable. Those with a mixed opinion of Corzine are down, but only because they are either being converted to unfavorable or no opinion.

Despite the closeness of this race in the current ballot test, given Corzine's status as an incumbent, his high negatives and low favorables, undecided voters will shift heavily to Christie in the final days unless Corzine is able to change these numbers quickly.

Time is running out for the incumbent. Christie's boost in favorables is not related to any advertising on either side, but support based on Christie being Corzine's only major opponent. His #1 favorable now is "change" or "not Corzine" rather than his record as U.S. Attorney. This indicates that voters are already starting to tune out Corzine and the incumbent is rapidly getting to a point where his advertising will have a very limited effect on public opinion.

Corzine's ace in the hole is his ground operation and he holds a significant lead over Christie among those less likely to vote, who would be the natural targets of this operation. But if Christie is able to re-open a substantial lead with voters, and that appears very possible here, Democratic GOTV efforts will fail if it appears that Christie will win anyway. Workers don't want to go to the wall for a candidate who's going to lose anyway.

The only good news for Corzine in this survey is his liberal base coming home. But even here, he is losing 13% of those voters to Daggett. While Christie is not running any better with conservatives, these voters now represent 35% of the likely electorate versus 32% a month ago.

The generic ballot for legislature has remained consistent, shifting from 40-35 Republican to 42-38 Republican.

DATA

GOVERNOR BALLOT	ALL (AUG)	ALL (SEPT)	DEF (AUG)	DEF (SEPT)
Corzine (D)	35%	33% (-2%)	36%	33% (-3%)
Christie (R)	37%	37% (0%)	39%	40% (+1%)
Daggett (I)	6%	8% (+2%)	6%	7% (+1%)
Undecided/Other	22%	22% (0%)	19%	20% (+1%)
OBAMA NAME ID				
Favorable	47%	46% (-1%)	46%	44% (-2%)
Unfavorable	28%	33% (+5%)	29%	35% (+6%)
Mixed	9%	8% (-1%)	8%	8% (0%)
No Opinion	16%	13% (-3%)	17%	13% (-4%)
CORZINE NAME ID				
Favorable	21%	21% (0%)	23%	21% (-2%)
Unfavorable	46%	48% (+2%)	47%	50% (+3%)
Mixed	12%	6% (-6%)	12%	7% (-5%)
No Opinion	21%	25% (+4%)	18%	22% (+4%)

CHRISTIE NAME ID

Favorable	19%	28% (+9%)	20%	31% (+11%)
Unfavorable	26%	26% (0%)	27%	25% (-2%)
Mixed	9%	5% (-4%)	9%	5% (-4%)
No Opinion	43%	38% (-5%)	41%	36% (-5%)
Never Heard	3%	3% (0%)	3%	3% (0%)

DAGGETT NAME ID

Favorable	3%	8% (+5%)	2%	8% (+6%)
Unfavorable	1%	1% (0%)	1%	1% (0%)
Mixed	0%	1% (+1%)	0%	1% (+1%)
No Opinion	40%	50% (+10%)	42%	51% (+9%)
Never Heard	56%	40% (-16%)	55%	39% (-16%)

GENERIC BALLOT - ASSEMBLY

Democrat	35%	38% (+3%)	34%	37% (+3%)
Republican	40%	42% (+2%)	40%	44% (+4%)

ANALYSIS

While the numbers indicate little movement in the ballot test (although what movement exists is towards Christie), there is much more under the surface. Voters are starting to tune out Governor Corzine and with negatives close to 50%, the Christie message of "how can I do any worse" is starting to resonate with voters.

NORTHWEST NEW JERSEY

Christie is underperforming in Northwestern New Jersey where he has high negatives. In Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon, Morris and Somerset Counties -- 17% of the total sample, Christie leads by just 38-25 with 10 for Daggett. In these counties, Christie is 25-35 net negative while Corzine is 17-60. Daggett runs strongest here at 12-1 with 65% ID. Christie's underperformance is most noted in solidly Republican Districts 16, 23, 24 and 25 which make up 14% of the total statewide vote. There Christie is 18-38 net negative even while Corzine is 18-58 negative (Daggett is 12-2 in this region) and he leads the ballot test by only 34-28 (12 for Daggett). Obama is 44-32 in these four districts and 40-37 in the entire region.

Failure to maximize and energize the Northwest New Jersey vote could be fatal for the Christie candidacy.

METRO NEW YORK CITY

Corzine leads 58-20-5 in Essex and Hudson, which combined were 12% of the sample. Corzine is 35-35 here while Christie is 14-23 and Daggett an unknown 2-0. Obama is 58-21 favorable here.

The race is a 38-38 tie in Bergen and Passaic with 7 for Daggett. These counties make up 16% of the sample. Obama is 48-29 here while Corzine is 25-38 negative and Christie 27-29 negative. Daggett is 9-1 here while Democrats hold a narrow 42-41 generic ballot lead.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY

Union, Middlesex and Mercer Counties were 16% of the sample and there is a large undecided vote in this region. Christie led by a narrow 30-27 with 9 for Daggett and 34% undecided which is not good for Corzine in this Democratic region. Obama is just 45-30 here although Democrats hold a healthy 46-32 generic ballot lead. Corzine is a very unpopular 16-54 in these counties, Christie is 29-18 and Daggett 5-0. It is a sign of how Democratic this region is that Corzine is even competitive given his relative favorable/unfavorable ratings to Christie.

MONMOUTH/OCEAN

Monmouth and Ocean Counties represent 17% of those surveyed and Christie holds a big 50-25 lead in this area with 12% for Daggett (Daggett's strength at this time is like Ross Perot in 1992, centered in the outer suburban and more Republican regions.) Obama is a 38-48 net negative in this area while Corzine is upside down by 13-60. Christie has his strongest numbers in the state in this region (42-22) while Daggett is Republicans hold a massive 47-27 generic ballot edge here.

SOUTH JERSEY

With 21% of respondents, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, Atlantic and Cape May is the most conservative part of the state (44% conservative) and that electorate is leaning heavily Republican in the generic Assembly ballot (47-33). Despite that, Christie holds a narrow 39-35 edge in the ballot test with just 3 for Daggett, who has not advertised down here.

Despite the region's conservative streak, Obama still holds a 50-29 favorable rating here while Corzine is "just" 25-38 negative. Christie is 26-28 negative in South Jersey while Daggett is 4-0. Although sample numbers were very small, Republicans led the generic ballot in Democratic districts 1, 3 and 4 and were tied in 6, indicating possible GOP gains in that region.

IDEOLOGICAL PERCEPTION

52 percent of voters, down from 55 percent, think Corzine is a liberal while 23 percent, from 24 percent, say he is moderate and 5 percent, from 4 percent, say he is conservative.

Corzine loses 53-23 with those who say he is liberal and wins 68-14 with voters who say he is moderate. He ties 24-24 with voters who say Corzine is a conservative.

Personally, Corzine is 15-62 with voters who say he is liberal, 44-23 with those who say he is moderate and 18-47 with those who believe him to be a conservative. 21% of voters say Corzine's philosophy matches theirs. 44% of voters say Corzine is more liberal than they are while 9% say he is more conservative.

Chris Christie is viewed as a conservative by 44% of voters, down from 45% while 23%, from 25% say he is moderate and 4% continue to believe he is liberal. Christie leads 42-40 among those voters who say he is conservative and 64-12 with those who say he is moderate. Corzine leads 50-8 with voters who say Christie is a liberal, with 17% going to Daggett.

Christie is 29-35 negative among those who say he is conservative. He is 51-10 with those who say he is moderate and 25-58 with voters who believe him to be liberal. Overall, 21 percent say Christie's philosophy matches theirs -- the same as Corzine -- while 32 percent say he is more conservative than they are and 14 percent say he is more liberal.

89 percent of voters cannot identify Daggett's philosophy. Overall, 3 percent say he is liberal, 5 percent moderate and 4 percent conservative. He gets 44 percent among those who say he is liberal, 16 percent with those who say he is moderate and 33 percent with those who believe him to be conservative.

7 percent of voters say Daggett's philosophy matches theirs, 2 percent say he is more conservative and 2 percent say he is more liberal.

DEMOGRAPHIC SPLITS.

Christie holds a 41-32 lead with men while tied 34-34 with women. Daggett gets 8% of men and 7% of women. Women were 55% of those sampled.

Obama is 43-39 with men and 49-28 with women. Similarly, Corzine is 20-51 with men and 23-45 with women. Christie is a 32-25 net positive with men and a 25-27 negative with women. Daggett is 10-1 with men and 6-1 with women.

Christie is winning seniors 37-35. Those over 65 were 36% of the sample.

42% of respondents attend services weekly and those voters back Christie by 42-27. Those who go "occasionally" (21% of the total) support Corzine by 38-37 while those who never attend services (37%) support Corzine by 38-31. Daggett's strength is with less religious voters: 7% among those who go weekly versus 9% among those who never go.

25% of respondents are Irish. Irish voters are backing Christie by 40-30 with 11 for Daggett. Obama is 41-33 favorable with Irish, Corzine 15-54, Christie 29-27 and Daggett 9-0. Irish voters back the GOP by 43-31 in the generic Assembly ballot.

17% of respondents were Italian. Among Italians, Obama is 43-31, Corzine is 7-61, Christie is 31-20 and Daggett 7-2. Christie holds a massive 48-23 lead with Italians, with just 3 for Daggett. Italians back the GOP by 51-28 in the generic ballot.

14% were of English background and Christie leads here by 54-24 with 12 for Daggett. Obama is a 34-58 net negative with English voters and Corzine is 20-56. Christie is a 46-24 positive with English voters and Daggett is 10-0. The GOP leads 64-24 in the generic ballot with English voters.

8% of respondents were various Hispanic nationalities with about a third Puerto Rican, 22% Cuban, 11% Dominican and 11% Ecuadorian. Corzine holds a 50-19 lead with Latinos. Obama is 64-17 favorable with Latino voters, Corzine is 33-31, Christie

11-11 (39% of Latinos have never heard of Christie!) and Daggett is 3-0. Democrats hold a 61-25 in the generic ballot among Hispanic voters.

8% are Jewish and Corzine leads by an unimpressive 45-21 here with 7 for Daggett. Obama is 66-21 favorable with Jews but Corzine is only 41-41. Christie is a 28-35 net negative with Jews and Daggett 3-0. Jews back Democrats in the generic ballot, but by a less than normal 55-31. Christie does best with more religious Jews.

Non-Jewish Polish and Eastern European voters are 8% of the total and back Christie 44-33. Obama is 48-38 with these voters while Corzine is a hated 14-62. Christie is strong here (41-24) while Daggett is 7-0. Republicans hold a strong 55-28 lead in the generic ballot with Polish and Eastern European non-Jewish voters. This is not good news for the District 36 incumbents.

5% of respondents are of African descent and they are backing Corzine 67-6 with 11 for Daggett. Obama is 78-6 with blacks while Corzine is a relatively weak 33-11. Christie is 0-22 net negative with blacks and Daggett 0-6. Democrats lead 83-6 in the generic ballot among African-American voters.

BALLOT QUESTION WORDING

If this November's election for Governor were today, which candidate would you choose between Democrat Jon Corzine, Republican Chris Christie or Independent Christopher Daggett?

CONCLUSIONS

1. Corzine has a limited window to win back voters who are starting to harden in their feelings towards him. He has yet to tell voters what he has done as Governor and why he deserves another term in office.
2. Corzine's negative attacks on Christie have produced nothing.
3. Christie needs to firm up his support in Northwest New Jersey, just as Corzine needs to firm up his Central New Jersey base.

4. Strong generic ballot numbers for Republicans with white ethnic voters could become a real problem for Democrats if Christie opens up a lead and Democratic GOTV operations fall apart.
5. Obama is not the silver bullet that will put away the race for Corzine. While Corzine wins Obama favorables 60-10 (8 for Daggett), Christie holds a much more polarizing 75-3 edge among the growing pool of Obama unfavorables. Bringing Obama in at the end could energize anti-Obama voters more than pro-Obama ones.
6. Daggett's ads were cute and gave him a brief boost in the polls, but without a quick and effective follow-up, he will rapidly move towards becoming another asterisk in a book of election returns.

More details will be provided on Monday morning with an analysis of candidate open-ends.

###