

THE SENATE RACE IN NEW JERSEY
October 20-25, 2006

It's a horse race in the contest for U.S. Senate in New Jersey. Democrat Robert Menendez is among the most vulnerable Senate Democrats, and his defeat could keep Democrats from having any chance of taking control of the Senate. Although New Jersey voters' negative opinions of the war in Iraq and their dislike for President George W. Bush should favor Democratic Senator Robert Menendez, he is being hurt by a negative assessment of him personally and concerns about corruption and taxes.

In this poll, Republican challenger Thomas Kean Jr. is running just about even with Menendez among likely voters. 39% of likely voters say they will vote for Kean, while 40% plan to vote for Menendez. The race is a dead heat when those who "lean" one way or the other are included: 43% would vote for Kean, and 43% would vote for Menendez.

NEW JERSEY SENATE VOTE

(Among Likely Voters)

Menendez	40%
Kean	39
Depends (vol.)	6
Don't know	10

This has been a very negative campaign, and with less than two weeks until Election Day, 16% of New Jersey likely voters are still undecided. And while most of those with a choice - 65% - say they've made up their mind about who their Senate candidate will be, 35% say it is still too early to say for sure. Six in 10 of each candidate's supporters say their mind is made up.

IS YOUR MIND MADE UP?...

(Among Likely Voters with a choice)

	All	Menendez	Kean
	Voters	Voters	Voters
Yes	65%	63%	65%
No	35	36	34

Allegations levied against Menendez that he is corrupt, in a campaign that voters describe as mostly negative, appear to be sticking. When asked to name the first thing that comes to mind when they hear the name Robert Menendez, the top answer given is "corruption" or "crooked," volunteered by 21% of likely voters. This is followed by the mention of "He's a Democrat" with 10%, and "Generally like him"

with 8%. Thomas Kean, Jr. is most often associated with his father, former Governor Thomas Kean, Sr. 34% of likely voters in New Jersey think of his connection to his father first when they hear his name.

1st THING THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU HEAR THE NAME...?

(Among Likely Voters)

<u>Robert Menendez</u>		<u>Thomas Kean, Jr.</u>	
Corruption	21%	Son of Former Governor	34%
He's a Democrat	10%	He's a Republican	9%
Generally like him	8%	Generally like him	6%

Menendez remains competitive because of his party. More than half of Menendez backers say they are supporting him because he's a Democrat, 39% say it's because of his stands on the issues, while just 2% choose Menendez' personal qualities. Kean supporters are more likely to say they are backing him because of his stands on the issues: 48% say they are. 31% are voting for him because he's a Republican, while 14% say it's due to Kean's personal qualities.

WHY ARE YOU SUPPORTING ... FOR U.S. SENATE?

(Among Likely Voters)

	Menendez Voters	Kean Voters
Personal qualities	2%	14%
Issues	39	48
Party ID	55	31

Still, neither candidate's backers say they "strongly favor" their candidate. Many - both Menendez voters and Kean voters - have reservations about their choice.

U.S. SENATE: CANDIDATE SUPPORT

(Among Likely Voters)

	Menendez Voters	Kean Voters
Strongly favor	27%	29%
Support with reservations	45	42
Dislike other candidate	17	23

34% say their vote for Senate is specifically one to help put Democrats in control of the U.S. Senate, while 17% think of it as a vote to keep Republicans in control. Democratic voters are more likely than Republican voters to think of their Senate vote as helping to put their party in control of the U.S. Senate. By more than two to one, Independents think of their vote as one to help put Democrats in control of the Senate but most of them - 58% - say their vote is not about control of the Senate. Among those voters who say their vote is not about Senate control, Kean leads Menendez by 45% to 23%.

SENATE VOTE WILL BE TO:

(Among Likely Voters)

	All	Reps	Dems	Inds
Put Democrats in control	34%	3%	65%	27%
Keep Republicans in control	17	50	1	11
Neither	45	46	32	58

While this poll indicates that President George W. Bush is a negative factor in the election for U.S. Senate in New Jersey, most likely voters say their vote for Senate will not be about the President. Just 13% of likely voters say they think of their Senate vote as one in support of the President, while twice as many - 30% - say theirs will be a vote against him. Most - 53% - say their vote will not be about President Bush.

SENATE VOTE WILL BE:

(Among Likely Voters)

For Bush	13%
Against Bush	30
Not about Bush	53

President George W. Bush's job approval ratings are about the same in New Jersey as they are nationwide: 33% of New Jerseyans approve, and the rating is similar among registered voters. Bush has a 34% approval rating among all Americans in the most recent nationwide CBS News/New York Times poll.

The President's New Jersey supporters are solidly in Kean's corner. Menendez, meanwhile, has the backing of most likely voters who disapprove of President Bush - though nearly one in five of them is voting for Kean.

THE ISSUES: IRAQ, CORRUPTION AND TAXES

In this close Senate race, New Jersey voters are divided as to whether national or local issues will have the greater impact on their vote -- and that choice seems to influence their vote preference. The war in Iraq is the most influential national issue, and Menendez leads among those voters. But many voters say taxes will be the most important statewide issue in their vote, and Kean takes those voters.

National issues are dominated by the war in Iraq. When voters are asked which one national issue will matter most in their Senate vote, 31% mention the war. Far fewer name the economy and jobs (10%) or terrorism (9%).

WHICH NATIONAL ISSUE WILL MATTER MOST IN YOUR SENATE VOTE?

(Among Likely Voters)

Iraq	31%
Economy and jobs	10
Terrorism	9

IRAQ

The war in Iraq is working for Menendez; most voters who name it as the most important national issue in their Senate vote say they will support Menendez. However, voters whose priority is the economy and jobs or terrorism are supporting Kean.

IRAQ IS NATIONAL ISSUE THAT WILL MATTER MOST IN SENATE VOTE

(Among Likely Voters)

Vote for Menendez	60%
Vote for Kean	25

Most New Jersey voters (and most New Jerseyans overall) think the U.S. should have stayed out of Iraq.

WAR IN IRAQ

(Among Registered Voters)

Right thing	36%
Stayed out	61

Six in 10 voters would like to see some or even all U.S. troops brought back from Iraq, and far more voters see Menendez as the candidate who will do that. 61% think Menendez would decrease or remove all U.S. troops from Iraq, while just 17% think Kean would do the same. Half think Kean would increase or maintain the same number of U.S. troops there. Three in 10 aren't sure what each candidate would do.

U.S. TROOPS IN IRAQ

(Among Registered Voters)

	Would Like	Menendez would	Kean would
Increase	14%	3%	16%
Keep same	18	6	38
Decrease	29	25	13
Remove all	31	36	4
Don't know	8	30	30

Only 26% of New Jerseyans approve of how President Bush is handling the Iraq war, lower than the 30% Bush gets among Americans nationwide. Menendez gets a majority of likely voters who disapprove of Bush's handling of Iraq.

BUSH HANDLING IRAQ AND NJ SENATE VOTE

(Among Likely Voters)

	<u>Senate vote</u>	
	Menendez	Kean
Approve of Bush handling Iraq	6%	77
Disapprove of Bush handling Iraq	55%	22

TAXES

By a wide margin, taxes are the most important statewide issue. Almost half of likely voters say taxes will be the local issue that matters most in their vote for Senate.

WHICH STATE ISSUE WILL MATTER MOST IN YOUR SENATE VOTE?

(Among Likely Voters)

Taxes	48%
Economy and jobs	12
Education	5

And the Republican candidate holds the advantage among these voters. Those who cite taxes as the most important state issue in their vote choose Kean over Menendez by 44% to 35%.

TAXES ARE STATEWIDE ISSUE THAT WILL MATTER MOST IN SENATE VOTE

(Among Likely Voters)

Vote for Kean	44%
Vote for Menendez	35

Three quarters of registered voters think that the local property taxes they pay are too high, including 58% who think they are much too high.

LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES ARE:

(Among Registered Voters)

Much too high	58%
A little too high	18
About right	22

But few voters expect that party control of Congress will affect their taxes; 42% think that if Democrats control Congress taxes will increase, and 43% expect that to happen if Republicans control Congress.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO TAXES IF EACH CONTROLS CONGRESS?

(Among Registered Voters)

	Dems	Reps
Increase	42%	43%
Decrease	10	6
Same	43	47

CORRUPTION

Although few voters volunteer corruption as an important issue in their Senate vote, most think it pervades New Jersey politics. 69% of likely voters think it is widespread in New Jersey (even more than said the same in a CBS News/New York Times Poll conducted this month in Ohio). Voters who see corruption as widespread support Kean over Menendez by 43% to 34%.

HOW COMMON IS POLITICAL CORRUPTION IN NEW JERSEY?

(Among Likely Voters)

	All	Vote for Menendez	Vote for Kean
Widespread	69%	34%	43
Limited	25	52%	32

Views of corruption as widespread are most common among Independent voters; fully 77% see it that way -- and they are supporting Kean over Menendez by a wide margin.

HOW COMMON IS POLITICAL CORRUPTION IN NEW JERSEY?

(Among Likely Voters)

	All	Reps	Dems	Inds
Widespread	66%	76%	56%	77%
Limited	28	20	36	17

Although perceptions of corruption are hurting Menendez - it's the first thing voters say when they think of him - it's a problem that's not limited to his party. 40% of likely voters think it affects politicians from both parties equally. 17% think the Republicans are more corrupt, while 26% think the Democrats are more corrupt. 48% of Independents think both parties are equally corrupt.

But that's not the way it has to be, according to these voters. 63% of likely voters think local government in New Jersey can be run without corruption, while a third sees it as part of the way things work there.

Not surprisingly, corruption may be causing some pessimism among voters in New Jersey. More than six in 10 likely voters think New Jersey is headed off on the wrong track -- and three quarters of them think corruption in New Jersey politics is widespread.

OTHER ISSUES

Ratings of the national economy are fairly rosy among New Jersey voters -- 60% think it's very or fairly good, the same as views nationally. But New Jersey's registered voters have mixed feelings about their own state's economy; 49% think it is good, and 49% think it is bad.

NEW JERSEY ECONOMY VS. NATIONAL ECONOMY

(Among Registered Voters)

	New Jersey	U.S.
Good	49%	60%
Bad	49	37

Views of the state economy are related to vote preference; among those voters who see it as good, 44% are supporting Kean, while 38% favor Menendez. Voters who think the economy is bad prefer Menendez over Kean by 41% to 35%.

Terrorism comes in third on the list of national issues voters say will matter in their vote for Senate; just 28% say they are personally very concerned about an attack where they live, while 71% are not concerned. Two thirds say the government has not done all it could to improve port and airport security in New Jersey since September 11, 2001, but neither Menendez nor Kean holds an advantage on the issue. About one in three voters think each would do a better job improving port and airport security. However, Kean holds a large advantage among the one in 10 voters who say terrorism is the most important national issue in their vote; he receives 56% of those voters, compared to Menendez's 24%.

WHO'S VOTING FOR WHOM?

In this poll, Kean is ahead among men, while Menendez captures the women's vote. Each candidate does well with his base: Majorities of Democrats and liberals back Menendez, while conservatives and Republicans support Kean.

Kean, however, does have an advantage among the coveted voting group of Independents. Among Independents, Kean beats Menendez 40% to 31%. Moderates, however, are split: 39% for Kean and 38% for Menendez. Menendez gets the support of 51% of union households, while Kean gets 29%. A majority of young voters say they'll vote for Menendez, and he narrowly wins the support of seniors. Kean has the support of voters between ages 30-64.

NEW JERSEY SENATE VOTE - DEMOGRAPHICS

(Among Likely Voters)

	Menendez	Kean
Men	31%	47
Women	47%	32
Age		
18-29	48%	28
30-44	35%	39
45-64	39%	41
65+	42%	39
Republicans	5%	81
Democrats	73%	9
Independents	31%	39
Liberals	71%	10
Moderates	38%	39
Conservatives	17%	64
Union Households	51%	29
<u>President 2004</u>		
Kerry Voters	74%	11

As is the case nationally, Democrats in New Jersey are more enthusiastic about voting this year than their Republican counterparts. Still, Democrats in the Garden State are not quite as excited as Democrats nationwide - perhaps reflecting their concerns about Menendez.

42% of Democrats in New Jersey say they are more enthusiastic than usual, compared to 29% of Republican voters. Nationally, 50% of Democratic voters are enthusiastic, compared to 35% of Republicans.

ENTHUSIASM COMPARED TO PAST CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

(Among Likely Voters)

	New Jersey				U.S.
	All	Reps	Dems	Inds	(10/9/2006)
More	34%	29%	42%	31%	43%
Less	37	45	31	36	35
Same(vol.)	27	26	26	28	20

THE CAMPAIGN

Most New Jersey registered voters are paying at least some attention to the Senate campaign, but less attention than they did at this point in the 2002 race. Right now 25% are paying a lot of attention and 48% are paying some. In 2002 36% were paying a lot of attention to that year's race, and 38% were paying some.

ATTENTION TO THE CAMPAIGN

(Among Registered Voters)

	Now	10/2002
A lot	25%	36%
Some	48	38
Not much/none	26	26

More New Jersey registered voters - 50% - call the race dull than call it interesting; just 39% find it interesting.

As the candidates continue to saturate the airwaves with commercials, an overwhelming majority of New Jersey's registered voters have seen television ads for both men: 69% have. Only 17% can't recall seeing any ads.

Both candidates are seen as doing more attacking of their opponent than explaining their own positions. 59% say Menendez is mostly attacking, and slightly more, 64%, say Kean is spending most of his time attacking.

WHAT HAVE THE CANDIDATES BEEN DOING?

(Among Registered Voters)

	Menendez	Kean
Explaining own positions	20%	16%
Attacking their opponent	59	64

COMPARING THE CANDIDATES

With less than two weeks before the general election, slightly more than half of all registered voters either don't know or are undecided when asked to form an opinion of either Menendez or Kean. Among voters who do have an opinion, Kean has the edge. 24% of New Jersey voters have a favorable opinion of him, as opposed to only 18% of voters who have a favorable opinion of Robert Menendez.

VIEWS OF THE CANDIDATES

(Among Registered Voters)

	Menendez	Kean
Favorable	18%	24%
Not favorable	28	22
Undecided/ Haven't heard enough	53	54

Still, Menendez has the advantage among New Jersey voters in terms of both understanding their problems and having the right kind of experience for the job of United States Senator. But when asked if the candidates have enough honesty and integrity for the job, Kean has the advantage. A majority (55%) says he does, compared to 45% who say the same of Menendez.

CANDIDATE'S PERSONAL QUALITIES

(Among Registered Voters)

	Menendez	Kean
Understands your needs and problems	43%	36%
Right kind of experience	59%	48%
Has enough integrity for the Senate	45%	55%

Nearly 1 out 4 New Jersey voters think Kean has more honesty and integrity than most people in public life, compared to only 14% who think the same of Menendez. Only 8% of voters think Kean has less honesty and integrity than most people in public life, compared to more than twice as many (18%) who think the same about Menendez. 4 out 10 voters think both Menendez and Kean have about the same honesty and integrity as most people in public life.

**COMPARED TO MOST PEOPLE IN PUBLIC LIFE,
MENENDEZ/KEAN HONESTY & INTEGRITY IS...**

(Among Registered Voters)

	Menendez	Kean
More	14%	24%
About same	39	38
Less	18	8

In terms of ideology, 40% of voters perceive Menendez as a liberal, 33% describe him as a moderate, while just 8% think he's a conservative. Kean is perceived as a conservative by 36% of voters. 34% say he's a moderate, and 9% think he's a liberal.

CANDIDATES' POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

(Among Registered Voters)

	Menendez	Kean
Liberal	40%	9%
Moderate	33	34
Conservative	8	36

SENATORS AND GOVERNORS

38% of all New Jerseyans approve of the way Robert Menendez is handling his job as United States Senator, while 34% disapprove. Frank Lautenberg, the senior Senator from New Jersey who is not running this year, fares somewhat better: 44% of New Jerseyans approve of the way he is handling his job. 28% of New Jerseyans don't know enough about either Senator to say either way.

JOB APPROVAL

	Menendez	Lautenberg	Corzine
Approve	38%	44%	49%
Disapprove	34	28	35
Don't Know	28	28	16

Governor John Corzine gets a 49% job approval rating from New Jersey residents. 35% disapprove. Most likely voters who approve of Corzine are voting for Menendez, but three in 10 of those who approve are backing Kean.

Two former governors elicit very different opinions from New Jerseyans. Former Governor James McGreevey is seen unfavorably by a 2-to-1 margin. Former Governor Tom Kean Sr., meanwhile, is seen favorably by four to one.

VIEWS OF FORMER NJ GOVERNORS

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Undecided/Haven't heard
Jim McGreevey	23%	45	29
Tom Kean Sr.	43%	10	46

29% of likely voters say that the elder Kean makes them think more favorably of Tom Kean Jr., and that is borne out in vote choice as well. Most likely voters with a favorable view of his father are backing Tom Kean Jr.

This poll was conducted among a statewide random sample of 1023 adults in New Jersey, interviewed by telephone October 20-25, 2006. The sample included 849 registered voters. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points and plus or minus three points among registered voters.