

# Richard Stockton College poll shows New Jersey voters support Obama over Romney 54 percent to 38 percent

By **DEREK HARPER**, Staff Writer | Posted: Saturday, October 20, 2012 2:00 am

New Jersey voters support Barack Obama, the Stockton Polling Institute has found, even if they don't particularly like what he's done in office.

A poll released Friday found that Obama, a Democrat, led Republican challenger Mitt Romney 54 percentage points to 38. At the same time, the poll reported only 45 percent of respondents found the president's performance in office to be excellent or good, compared with the 54 percent who thought it was fair or poor.

"I think there's just continuing dissatisfaction with the president, and in this case Mitt Romney hasn't made the case that he's a viable alternative," said Daniel J. Douglas, director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, which oversees the Stockton Polling Institute.

Douglas said the president's job performance numbers showed there has been a chance for Republicans to make up the difference, but they have not.

New Jersey is generally considered safe for Democrats, having not voted for a Republican for president since 1988. Four other statewide polls taken this month have staked Obama with leads of 7 to 15 percentage points over Romney.

The Stockton poll also found that U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez, an incumbent Democrat, led his Republican challenger, Joseph Kyrillos, 52 percentage points to 30.

State residents generally viewed both candidates favorably, although far more people knew who Menendez was, which will likely help him in November.

In the poll, Menendez was recognized by 80 percent of those polled. Kyrillos, a Republican state senator from Monmouth County, was recognized by 59 percent.

Residents viewed Menendez favorably by a margin of 54 percent to 26 percent, and Kyrillos by a margin of 34 percent to 26 percent. The balance was made up of people who were uncertain or unfamiliar with the candidates.

Respondents were split on Gov. Chris Christie, with half rating the Republican's job performance as excellent or good, 48 percent rating it fair or poor, and 2 percent uncertain.

However, 52 percent of those polled viewed him favorably, 42 percent viewed him unfavorably and 5 percent were uncertain or declined to answer.

The poll of 811 likely voters was conducted on cell and landline phones between Oct. 12 and 18, with

a 3.5 percentage point margin of error. It is one of several polls the institute is conducting this election season, including upcoming polls on the 2nd and 3rd Congressional Districts. This is the first year of the Stockton Polling Institute's existence and the first time it has conducted a statewide presidential poll.

The institute released parts of this survey Thursday evening. It showed state voters supported the two questions on the ballot. Respondents backed a proposal to borrow \$750 million for state colleges and universities by a margin of 72 percent to 21 percent, with 8 percent uncertain or declining to respond.

Respondents also agreed that judges should pay more for their benefits, supporting the proposed constitutional amendment by a margin of 62 percent to 30 percent. Nine percent of those polled did not know or would not answer.

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