



Stockton Poll: Booker Leads Bell 49% to 36%

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Galloway Township, NJ - Incumbent U.S. Sen. Cory Booker leads Republican challenger Jeff Bell by 13 percentage points in the U.S. Senate race, according to a poll of likely New Jersey voters released today by the Stockton Polling Institute.

Booker, 45, a Democrat, is ahead 49 percent to 36 percent when voters who lean toward one candidate or the other are included. Twelve percent are undecided, while 3 percent express other choices or decline to answer.

The statewide survey of 807 likely New Jersey voters was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. Live interviewers on The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey campus called both landlines and cell phones from Sept. 5-8, 2014. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.5 percentage points.

Voters have a generally positive view of Booker, the former mayor of Newark. Fifty-eight percent have favorable opinions of him, and 23 percent have unfavorable opinions. Only 10 percent are unfamiliar with Booker, and 9 percent are unsure.

Bell remains unknown to 37 percent of the electorate. Thirty-two percent have a favorable view of him and 21 percent have an unfavorable view. Ten percent are unsure.

"The fact that more than a third of voters aren't familiar with Mr. Bell presents both a challenge and an opportunity for him," said Daniel J. Douglas, director of the Hughes Center.

"A 13-point difference against an incumbent in September could be encouraging to Mr. Bell, but it is offset by the lack of funds available to increase his familiarity with the voting public," Douglas explained.

Bell, 70, a former speechwriter for Ronald Reagan, ran for the U.S. Senate in New Jersey in 1978. He lost to Democrat Bill Bradley.

Fifty-one percent approve of the job Booker is doing, with 9 percent rating his performance excellent and 42 percent as good. Twenty-three percent rate it as fair, 10 percent as poor and 10 percent are unsure.

Voters identify jobs (19 percent) as the most important issue facing New Jersey. Second is property taxes (18 percent), followed by taxes in general (17 percent) and the economy (14 percent).

The poll finds strong support for a proposed state Constitutional amendment that would allow judges to deny bail to defendants who are flight risks or who pose threats to the public. Eighty-two percent support the proposal, with 11 percent opposed and 6 percent unsure.

A smaller majority (54 percent) supports a second proposed Constitutional amendment that would increase the percentage of the Corporation Business Tax dedicated to environmental programs. The dedication would go from 4 percent to 6 percent on July 1, 2019. Thirty-five percent oppose the proposal, and 10 percent are unsure.

Methodology

The survey was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter). Live interviewers on the Stockton campus called both landlines and cell phones from September 5 – 8, 2014. The poll was conducted with 807 adults who are likely voters. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.5 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets. Data are weighted based on United States Census Bureau demographics for the New Jersey population.



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