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SEN. MENENDEZ UNAFFECTED BY DONOR SCANDAL

Jersey voters not keen on Geraldo Senate run

While many New Jersey voters have heard about the potential donor scandal surrounding Sen. Bob Menendez, few have formed an opinion about his role and his job approval rating has held steady. Looking ahead to 2014, the ***Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll*** also finds that many voters prefer an alternative to incumbent Frank Lautenberg, but Geraldo Rivera is unlikely to be their pick.

Senator Menendez –

Two thirds (68%) of New Jersey voters have heard about Sen. Menendez's trips to the Dominican Republic on a donor's plane. However, few have formed an opinion on Sen. Menendez's involvement in any potential illegal or unethical activity. Just 24% believe he was involved in wrong-doing while 11% say he was not. Another 65% don't know enough to form an opinion or have not heard about the issue at all.

These views are somewhat less favorable, though, among the one-third of New Jersey voters who have heard a lot about the issue. Nearly half (47%) of this aware group say Menendez was probably involved in wrong-doing compared to just 18% who say he was not. Among Democrats who have heard a lot, 36% think the senator was involved in wrong-doing and 31% say he was not. Among aware independent voters, opinion is 47% involved to 11% not involved, and among aware Republicans it is 65% involved to 12% not involved.

Overall, 28% of voters say the tips leading to the investigation were likely to have been politically motivated compared to 12% who say they were not, while 60% have no opinion or are unaware

of the investigation. Among those who have heard a lot about it, twice as many suspect that the investigation was politically motivated (50%) as say it was not (25%).

“Right now, the unfolding story has not hurt Senator Menendez’s standing among New Jersey voters, in part because very few voters have been following it all that closely,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Currently, 41% of Garden State voters approve of the job Sen. Menendez is doing, 31% disapprove and 28% have no opinion. These results are similar to prior ratings over the last two years.

Senator Lautenberg –

More New Jersey voters approve (44%) than disapprove (27%) of Sen. Frank Lautenberg’s job performance. Another 29% offer no opinion on the U.S. Senator who was first took office 30 years ago. These ratings are comparable to voter opinion measured over the last two years.

While Lautenberg’s ratings are more positive than negative, many voters would prefer to have someone else hold that seat after next year’s election. Assuming that a Democrat will win in 2014, just 15% of New Jersey voters prefer that Lautenberg continue to serve, while 35% prefer that a different Democrat take that seat. Another 42% say it really doesn’t matter to them which Democrat holds that seat. Among Democratic voters, 22% prefer Lautenberg and 31% prefer someone else; among independents, 9% prefer Lautenberg and 43% prefer a different Democrat; and among Republicans, 15% prefer Lautenberg – if it has to be a Democrat – and 33% would prefer another Democrat.

Interestingly, Lautenberg’s age does not appear to be a determining factor in the lack of voter enthusiasm for another term. Just 34% of Garden State voters say he is too old to be an effective senator. Nearly half (48%) disagree with this view and 18% have no opinion. These findings are very similar to voter opinion when he was running for re-election in 2008 at the age of 84.

The lack of concern over Sen. Lautenberg’s age is probably related to the fact that most voters have no idea how old he is. Lautenberg turned 89 last month, but just 39% of voters estimate his age at 80 or older while 46% think he is in his 60s or 70s, and 15% cannot make a guess. These estimates are slightly more accurate than September 2008, when 25% of New Jersey voters thought Lautenberg was in his 80s or older, 45% thought he was in his 60s or 70s, and 30% would not estimate his age. Among voters who are able to peg Lautenberg’s age accurately (at least within a decade of 89), 57% say he is too old to be an effective senator and 33% say his age does not hamper his ability to serve. Among those who significantly underestimate Lautenberg’s age, just 21% say he is too old while 66% say his age is appropriate for the demands of his office.

Senator Booker ? –

Potential Democratic primary voters were asked who they would choose in a crowded – and extremely hypothetical – field for the 2014 U.S. Senate nomination. Four-in-ten (40%) say they would choose Newark Mayor Cory Booker, 25% would vote for Lautenberg, 4% would support Congressman Frank Pallone, and 2% would support State Senate President Steve Sweeney.

Another 2% say they would vote for Alan Rosenthal. Professor Rosenthal is unlikely to be a candidate and it's unclear that Democratic voters recall his service as the tie-breaking member of the state redistricting commission who sided with the Democrats' legislative map. But this result indicates the challenges other candidates would have gaining traction in a race that featured Booker and Lautenberg.

If Sen. Lautenberg decides not to run in 2014, Democratic primary voters are unsure whether Mayor Booker should get a clear path to the nomination. Just under 4-in-10 (38%) say the party should rally around Booker while 31% say other Democratic candidates should get into the race. Another 23% of potential Democratic primary voters say it doesn't really matter to them what happens in the primary.

Mayor Booker continues to receive high ratings from New Jersey voters, currently clocking in at 55% favorable to 9% unfavorable, with 36% having no opinion. This is a few notches higher than his September 2012 rating of 49% favorable to 13% unfavorable.

Other potential 2014 Senate candidates don't have anywhere near the positive opinion or name recognition as Booker. Congressman Pallone has a 20% favorable to 7% unfavorable rating, with 72% offering no opinion. State Sen. Sweeney has a 22% favorable to 14% unfavorable rating, with 64% offering no opinion. General Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver, who has also indicated her interest in the seat, has a 13% favorable to 9% unfavorable rating, with 78% offering no opinion. Ratings for all three officials are nearly identical to voter opinion of them in September 2012.

Senator Rivera ??? –

T.V. host Geraldo Rivera had New Jersey and national political circles jumping recently when he suggested he may run for Lautenberg's seat as a Republican. New Jersey voters do not seem to be keen on the idea. Just 1-in-4 say they are very (9%) or somewhat (17%) likely to vote for Rivera should he choose to run, while nearly 2-in-3 (65%) say they would not be likely. This includes a majority (51%) who say they would not consider voting for Rivera at all. Even among GOP voters, just 44% say they would be at least somewhat likely to vote for Rivera while 48% would be unlikely.

About half of New Jersey voters have formed an opinion of Rivera, and it is evenly divided – 26% have a favorable view of him and 27% have an unfavorable view. The remaining 47% have no opinion.

President Obama –

The poll also tabs Pres. Barack Obama’s job rating among New Jersey voters at 60% approve to 33% disapprove. His positive job number is statistically similar to the 58% approve to 35% disapprove rating he received in December. Nominally, though, this marks only the second time Obama reached 60% approval in the Garden State. The previous 60% approval rating came in May 2011, shortly after Osama bin Laden was killed.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by telephone with 803 New Jersey adults from February 6 to 10, 2013. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the Asbury Park Press and its sister publications (Courier-Post, Courier News, Daily Journal, Daily Record, and Home News Tribune).

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Barack Obama is doing as president?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Approve	62%	60%	73%	90%	52%	33%	54%	76%	76%	58%	56%	61%	64%
Disapprove	31%	33%	19%	5%	40%	60%	39%	17%	18%	35%	36%	33%	29%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	7%	9%	4%	8%	7%	7%	7%	5%	7%	8%	6%	7%

TREND: <i>Registered voters only</i>	February 2013	December 2012	April 2012	February 2012	October 2011	August 2011	May 2011	September 2010	July 2010	April 2010	February 2010	October 2009	July 2009
Approve	60%	58%	54%	51%	47%	52%	60%	47%	51%	54%	53%	54%	59%
Disapprove	33%	35%	41%	42%	46%	39%	36%	44%	42%	41%	38%	33%	29%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	6%	5%	6%	7%	9%	4%	9%	6%	5%	9%	14%	12%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	697	726	692	709	693	730	725	726	747	719	716	785	792

[QUESTIONS 2 AND 3 WERE ROTATED]

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Frank Lautenberg is doing as United States Senator?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Approve	43%	44%	38%	56%	34%	34%	41%	46%	45%	41%	43%	39%	46%
Disapprove	24%	27%	15%	13%	32%	35%	29%	14%	14%	27%	30%	29%	20%
(VOL) Don't know	33%	29%	47%	31%	34%	31%	30%	40%	41%	32%	26%	31%	34%

TREND: <i>Registered voters only</i>	February 2013	April 2012	February 2012	October 2011	August 2011	May 2011	July 2010	October 2008	July 2008	April 2008	January 2008
Approve	44%	41%	39%	43%	41%	48%	47%	48%	45%	48%	43%
Disapprove	27%	32%	33%	31%	32%	30%	33%	28%	33%	31%	28%
(VOL) Don't know	29%	27%	28%	27%	26%	21%	21%	24%	22%	21%	30%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	697	692	709	693	730	725	747	900	874	720	698

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Bob Menendez is doing as United States Senator?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Approve	41%	41%	44%	58%	32%	28%	35%	53%	50%	39%	38%	40%	43%
Disapprove	28%	31%	16%	15%	36%	42%	35%	15%	16%	32%	35%	32%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	30%	28%	40%	27%	31%	30%	30%	33%	34%	29%	27%	28%	32%

TREND: Registered voters only	February 2013	April 2012	February 2012	October 2011	August 2011	May 2011	July 2010	October 2008	April 2008	January 2008
Approve	41%	40%	41%	43%	38%	46%	38%	34%	41%	37%
Disapprove	31%	25%	26%	29%	33%	28%	33%	25%	31%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	28%	35%	33%	28%	29%	26%	29%	41%	28%	37%
Unwtd N	697	692	709	693	730	725	747	900	720	698

4. I'm going to read you a few names. Please tell me if your general impression of each is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion. [NAMES WERE ROTATED]

Newark Mayor Cory Booker

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Favorable	51%	55%	33%	56%	48%	50%	53%	48%	41%	55%	56%	52%	50%
Unfavorable	9%	9%	9%	6%	9%	13%	9%	9%	8%	8%	11%	10%	8%
No opinion	40%	36%	58%	38%	42%	38%	38%	42%	52%	37%	34%	39%	42%

TREND: Registered voters only	February 2013	September 2012
Favorable	55%	49%
Unfavorable	9%	13%
No opinion	36%	38%
Unwtd N	697	715

State Senate President Steve Sweeney

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Favorable	21%	22%	17%	26%	20%	18%	21%	25%	20%	22%	21%	23%	20%
Unfavorable	12%	14%	7%	6%	17%	17%	17%	4%	7%	13%	17%	16%	9%
No opinion	66%	64%	76%	68%	64%	65%	62%	71%	73%	64%	62%	61%	71%

TREND: Registered voters only	February 2013	September 2012
Favorable	22%	19%
Unfavorable	14%	16%
No opinion	64%	65%
Unwtd N	697	715

State Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Favorable	14%	13%	18%	20%	11%	8%	11%	18%	19%	11%	13%	14%	13%
Unfavorable	8%	9%	4%	6%	9%	10%	9%	9%	5%	9%	10%	10%	6%
No opinion	79%	78%	78%	74%	79%	82%	80%	72%	76%	80%	77%	75%	80%

TREND: Registered voters only	February 2013	September 2012
Favorable	13%	14%
Unfavorable	9%	10%
No opinion	78%	76%
Unwtd N	697	715

U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Favorable	41%	44%	25%	50%	36%	33%	41%	39%	31%	43%	47%	38%	44%
Unfavorable	21%	23%	13%	11%	26%	31%	26%	10%	9%	25%	26%	23%	19%
No opinion	38%	33%	61%	39%	38%	35%	32%	51%	61%	31%	26%	39%	38%

TREND: Registered voters only	February 2013	October 2008	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008
Favorable	44%	45%	42%	34%	43%
Unfavorable	23%	24%	28%	27%	30%
No opinion	33%	30%	30%	39%	27%
Unwtd N	697	900	689	874	720

U.S. Senator Bob Menendez

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Favorable	39%	39%	38%	53%	31%	29%	32%	54%	39%	42%	36%	35%	43%
Unfavorable	26%	29%	14%	15%	34%	34%	32%	16%	17%	29%	32%	32%	21%
No opinion	35%	32%	48%	32%	34%	37%	35%	30%	44%	29%	32%	32%	36%

TREND: Registered voters only	February 2013	September 2012	July 2012	October 2006	September 2006	July 2006
Favorable	39%	41%	36%	33%	29%	29%
Unfavorable	29%	23%	20%	27%	22%	13%
No opinion	32%	35%	44%	40%	49%	57%
Unwtd N	697	715	678	647	630	670

Congressman Frank Pallone

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Favorable	20%	20%	15%	25%	15%	20%	20%	17%	20%	22%	16%	21%	18%
Unfavorable	7%	7%	7%	5%	10%	5%	7%	6%	5%	6%	10%	8%	5%
No opinion	73%	72%	77%	71%	75%	74%	72%	77%	76%	72%	74%	70%	76%

TREND: Registered voters only	February 2013	September 2012
Favorable	20%	17%
Unfavorable	7%	8%
No opinion	72%	75%
Unwtd N	697	715

T.V. host Geraldo Rivera

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Favorable	25%	26%	23%	24%	22%	35%	27%	30%	17%	27%	32%	27%	24%
Unfavorable	25%	27%	14%	27%	26%	21%	29%	19%	11%	33%	27%	24%	25%
No opinion	50%	47%	64%	49%	52%	44%	44%	51%	72%	41%	40%	48%	50%

[THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY: *moe*=+/-3.7%]

5. Senator Frank Lautenberg is up for reelection in 2014. For the sake of argument, let's say that a Democrat will hold onto that seat. If it has to be a Democrat, would you prefer that Lautenberg continue serving or would you prefer that another Democrat serve, or doesn't it matter to you?

	Registered Voters	PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Prefer Lautenberg	15%	22%	9%	15%	13%	23%	7%	18%	16%	13%	17%
Prefer another Democrat	35%	31%	43%	33%	42%	19%	19%	34%	46%	38%	33%
Doesn't matter	42%	43%	41%	40%	39%	47%	70%	39%	31%	43%	42%
(VOL) Refuses choice	2%	0%	2%	5%	3%	0%	0%	3%	2%	2%	2%
(VOL) Don't Know	5%	4%	5%	7%	3%	10%	4%	6%	5%	4%	7%

[QUESTIONS 6 AND 7 WERE ASKED OF POTENTIAL DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY VOTERS ONLY: *moe*=+/-7.1%]

6. If the choices in the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate were Frank Lautenberg, Cory Booker, Steve Sweeney, Frank Pallone, or Alan Rosenthal, for whom would you vote?

	Potential Primary Voters
Frank Lautenberg	25%
Cory Booker	40%
Steve Sweeney	2%
Frank Pallone	4%
Alan Rosenthal	2%
(VOL) Someone else	5%
(VOL) Don't Know	22%

7. If Frank Lautenberg decides to step down next year, should state Democrats rally around Cory Booker as the nominee or should other candidates get into the primary race, or doesn't it matter to you?

	Potential Primary Voters
Rally around Booker	38%
Other candidates in the race	31%
Doesn't matter	23%
(VOL) Don't Know	8%

8. Do you agree or disagree that Frank Lautenberg is too old to be an effective senator?

	Registered Voters	PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Agree	34%	29%	39%	35%	38%	19%	20%	30%	48%	41%	28%
Disagree	48%	56%	40%	48%	47%	55%	55%	52%	39%	43%	53%
(VOL) Don't know	18%	15%	20%	17%	15%	27%	26%	17%	13%	16%	19%

TREND: Registered voters only	February 2013	October 2008	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008	January 2008
Agree	34%	29%	31%	31%	41%	34%
Disagree	48%	61%	57%	54%	46%	51%
(VOL) Don't know	18%	10%	12%	15%	13%	15%
Unwtd N	697	451	689	435	639	698

9. And how old do you think he is? Your best guess is fine.

	Registered Voters	PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Under 70	17%	21%	14%	16%	15%	26%	37%	18%	5%	20%	15%
70 to 79	29%	28%	27%	33%	30%	23%	28%	30%	28%	28%	30%
80 to 89	33%	31%	37%	32%	37%	21%	9%	34%	45%	31%	34%
90 or older	6%	4%	8%	5%	6%	4%	4%	4%	9%	8%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	16%	15%	14%	11%	27%	22%	13%	13%	13%	17%

TREND: Registered voters only	February 2013	September 2008
Under 70	17%	12%
70 to 79	29%	33%
80 to 89	33%	23%
90 or older	6%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	30%
Unwid N	697	808

10. How likely would you be to vote for Geraldo Rivera if he ran for U.S. Senate as a Republican in 2014 – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

	Registered Voters	PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Very likely	9%	6%	8%	14%	8%	11%	8%	7%	12%	9%	9%
Somewhat likely	17%	8%	19%	30%	20%	10%	24%	15%	16%	20%	15%
Not too likely	14%	16%	13%	14%	14%	18%	20%	12%	13%	15%	13%
Not at all likely	51%	62%	50%	34%	50%	54%	42%	57%	48%	47%	54%
(VOL) Don't Know	9%	8%	10%	8%	9%	7%	7%	9%	11%	8%	10%

11. How much have you heard or read about trips Senator Bob Menendez took to the Dominican Republic on a donor's plane – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	Registered Voters	PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
A lot	32%	31%	36%	30%	36%	22%	14%	27%	48%	34%	30%
A little	36%	33%	40%	34%	37%	34%	23%	41%	37%	34%	37%
Nothing at all	30%	33%	22%	36%	26%	39%	63%	30%	11%	30%	30%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%	5%	0%	2%	4%	2%	2%

12. Do you think Senator Menendez was involved in any wrong-doing or not, or haven't you heard enough about this? [IF "YES" ASK: Do you think this is serious or not too serious?]

	Registered Voters	PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Yes, serious	17%	9%	22%	22%	19%	12%	7%	18%	21%	21%	13%
Yes, not too serious	7%	7%	8%	4%	7%	5%	5%	7%	7%	8%	6%
No, not involved	11%	18%	6%	11%	11%	12%	5%	11%	15%	11%	11%
Haven't heard enough	33%	30%	40%	25%	35%	27%	20%	32%	42%	28%	38%
Not aware of issue (Q11)	32%	36%	24%	37%	27%	44%	63%	32%	15%	33%	32%

13. Do you think it is likely or not likely that the tips leading to this investigation were politically motivated to hurt Senator Menendez, or haven't you heard enough about this?

	Registered Voters	PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female
Likely	28%	33%	31%	16%	29%	26%	16%	21%	41%	29%	27%
Not likely	12%	7%	15%	16%	14%	8%	6%	13%	14%	15%	9%
Haven't heard enough	28%	25%	30%	31%	30%	22%	15%	33%	30%	23%	32%
Not aware of issue (Q11)	32%	36%	24%	37%	27%	44%	63%	32%	15%	33%	32%

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from February 6 to 10, 2013 with a statewide random sample of 803 adult residents, including 603 contacted on a landline telephone and 200 on a cell phone. Live interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. and the telephone sample was obtained from Survey Sampling International. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>			
38% Dem	49% Male	28% 18-34	63% White
41% Ind	51% Female	40% 35-54	12% Black
21% Rep		32% 55+	16% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other
<i>Registered Voter Sample (weighted)</i>			
37% Dem	47% Male	21% 18-34	68% White
40% Ind	53% Female	42% 35-54	12% Black
23% Rep		37% 55+	13% Hispanic
			7% Asian/Other

	<i>MARGIN OF ERROR</i>												
	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			RACE		AGE			GENDER	
			Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	White	Black & Hisp	18-34	35-54	55+	Male
<i>Unweighted N</i>	803	697	106	292	322	164	585	151	155	257	380	387	416
<i>moe</i>	3.5%	3.7%	9.5%	5.7%	5.5%	7.7%	4.1%	8.0%	7.9%	6.1%	5.0%	5.0%	4.8%

It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult New Jersey residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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