

Robert Menendez holds 12-point lead over Joe Kyrillos in U.S. Senate race, poll shows

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By **Matt Friedman/Statehouse Bureau**

TRENTON — U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez has a 12-point lead over Republican opponent Joe Kyrillos, according to a new Rutgers Eagleton poll.

Forty-seven percent choose Menendez, a Democrat, while 35 percent pick Kyrillos, according to the survey of 688 likely voters.

The poll, which was conducted just before Kyrillos began running ads on cable television, shows the state senator from Monmouth County is virtually unknown.

“Senator Kyrillos is fighting an uphill battle for attention against a well-funded incumbent in a blue state,” said poll director David Redlawsk. “Kyrillos’ biggest challenge is simply getting known. While Menendez’s favorability has improved, Kyrillos has been stuck. Independents are not sold on Menendez, so Kyrillos may have an opportunity, especially if he can improve his base support.”

Both candidates garner the same support among men, at 41 percent each, but Menendez enjoys an overwhelming lead with women, 53 percent to 28 percent.

The Kyrillos campaign attempted to discredit the poll by noting it was conducted before his two ads aired, calling it “irrelevant.”

“Rutgers is better than this poll and the people running it,” said Kyrillos Campaign Manager Chapin Fay. “It’s curious that after two polls were released this week showing a much closer race, Rutgers releases their survey based on data from two weeks ago.”

Redlawsk responded by noting that Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick trumpeted their data this week showing a plurality of voters feel the state is headed in the right direction.



Star-Ledger file photos

U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez (left) and State Sen. Republican Joe Kyrillos are shown in file photos.

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“The only other point I would make is Quinnipiac (University Polling Institute) released a 10-point lead for Menendez post republican

sports and entertainment.



convention,” said Redlawsk. “Those numbers are our numbers are essentially the same.”

The poll also found New Jersey voters overwhelmingly approve of a \$750 million bond issue to fund higher education institutions that will

be on the ballot this November. Even though 55 percent have heard nothing about it, 56 percent said they will support – up from 48 percent when asked about it in February.

“One reason for increased support is that originally, the talk was about a bond for more than \$1 billion,” said Redlawsk. “Keeping it below that level seems important and even though voters with little information seem willing to buy in, the more they hear, the better they like it.”

The poll was conducted from August 23 to August 25 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.7 percentage points.

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