

## Polling News & Notes

*Overlooked Recent Polling and Insights • September 3, 2009*

**Will New Jersey and Virginia Foreshadow 2010?:** Barack Obama carried both New Jersey and Virginia by large margins last fall—16 points and 6 points, respectively. Less than a year later, his Democrats trail in both states' November 2009 gubernatorial elections. In New Jersey, former U.S. attorney Chris Christie (R) leads incumbent Gov. Jon Corzine (D) by 10 points in a new Quinnipiac poll (8/25-8/30), 47%-37% and 5 points in the Fairleigh Dickinson University poll (8/24-8/30), 47%-42%. In Virginia, Attorney General Bob McDonnell (R) leads by 7 points over State Sen. Creigh Deeds (D) in the latest Public Policy Polling survey (8/28-8/31), 49%-42%, and led by 15 points in a mid-August *Washington Post* poll, 54%-39%. If Christie and McDonnell hold on and win, it would mark the first time that GOP carried both states since 1993, when Christie Todd Whitman won New Jersey and George Allen Virginia.

Will these off-year gubernatorial elections foreshadow what will come in the next year's midterms? The table below lists the winner of each state's election in the year before midterm election since 1968. It shows that since 1968, when the opposition party wins both off-year governors' elections, it has gained an average of 16 House seats and 3 Senate seats in the next year's midterm, about the same average loss that the president's party suffered in all midterm elections over that time period (18 House and 3 Senate seats). However, in 2001 and 1997 the capture of both the New Jersey and Virginia governor's mansions by the party out of power has had little predictive value. Republicans picked up seats in Congress in 2002 and Democrats gained House seats in 1998.

Election Cycle	New Jersey Winner	Virginia Winner	Midterm House Result	Midterm Senate Result
2005/2006	Dem	Dem	GOP -30	GOP -6
2001/2002	Dem	Dem	GOP +8	GOP +2
1997/1998	GOP	GOP	Dem +5	No Change
1993/1994	GOP	GOP	Dem -54	Dem -8
1989/1990	Dem	Dem	GOP -8	GOP -1
1985/1986	GOP	Dem	GOP -5	GOP -8
1981/1982	GOP	Dem	GOP -26	GOP +1
1977/1978	Dem	GOP	Dem -15	Dem -3
1973/1974	Dem	GOP	GOP -48	GOP -4
1969/1970	GOP	GOP	GOP -12	GOP +1

Interestingly, New Jersey and Virginia have moved in tandem in the five elections since 1989 with the same party winning both states.

More than two-thirds of America's governors will be elected next fall, and 20 of the 34 races will be open seats where no incumbent is running for re-election. But the results of the New Jersey and Virginia gubernatorial elections this fall may provide a spark of momentum to either party heading into 2010.

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