



March 26, 2024

## New Jersey Governor Democratic Primary Memo

Poll Analysis

**To:** Interested Parties

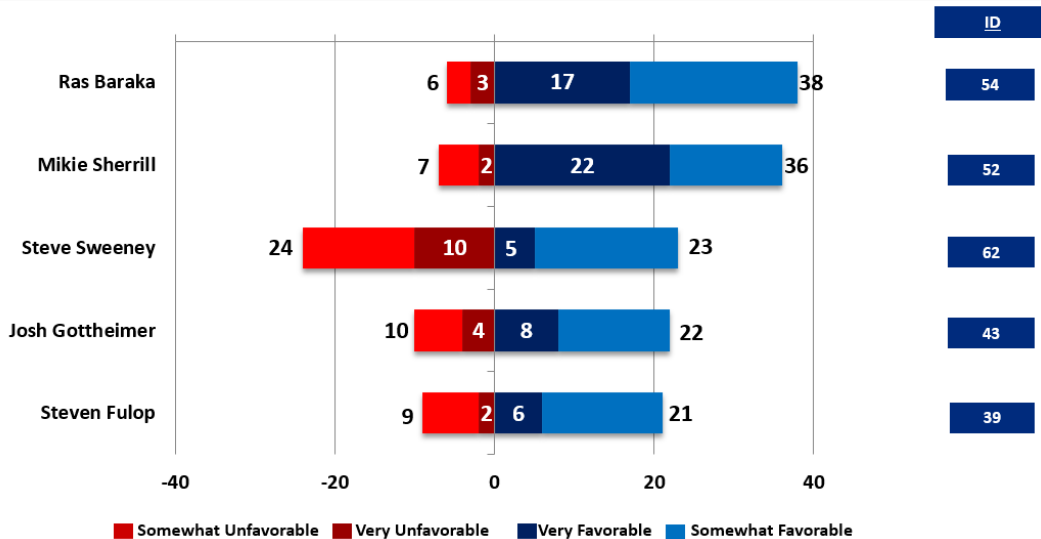
**From:** Anna Greenberg and John Barry, GQR

A recent statewide poll in New Jersey<sup>1</sup> finds that Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill is in the strongest position to win the Democratic gubernatorial primary. She is well-known and better liked than most of her potential competitors. Her profile holds broad regional, ideological, and demographic appeal. She performs especially well among women, who comprise almost 60 percent of the primary electorate.

Sherrill starts with a positive profile. A majority of voters are familiar with her, and she has the highest number of strongly favorable voters.

### Chart 1: Candidate Favorability

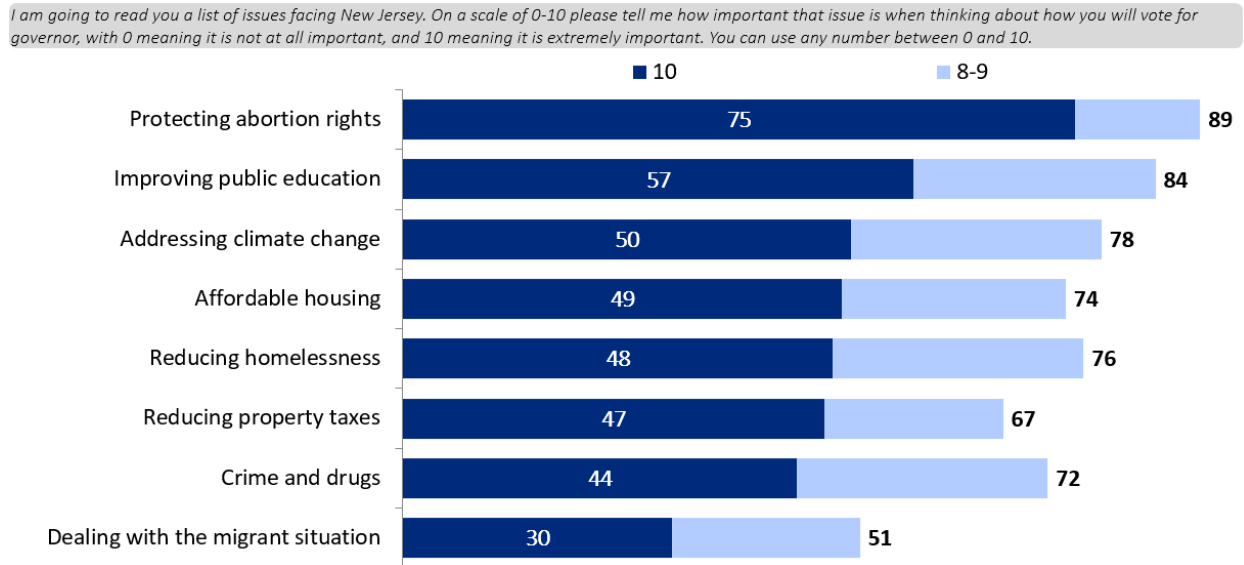
*Now, I am going to read you a list of public figures and organizations. After I read each one, please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable impression. If you have not heard of that person or organization, or are unfamiliar with them, please tell me so.*



<sup>1</sup> This memo is based on a survey of 603 likely 2025 Democratic primary voters in New Jersey that fielded from March 7-12, 2024. Respondents were contacted through the voter file. The data is subject to a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval; the margin of error is higher among subgroups.

Abortion is the central animating factor among the primary electorate. Three in four primary voters rate abortion rights as the most important issue when considering their vote for governor. Majorities also say that abortion policy is more important than both cost of living and taxes when deciding who to support for governor. Among the 44 percent of voters who satisfy all three criteria, Sherrill’s favorability ratings spike to 43 percent.

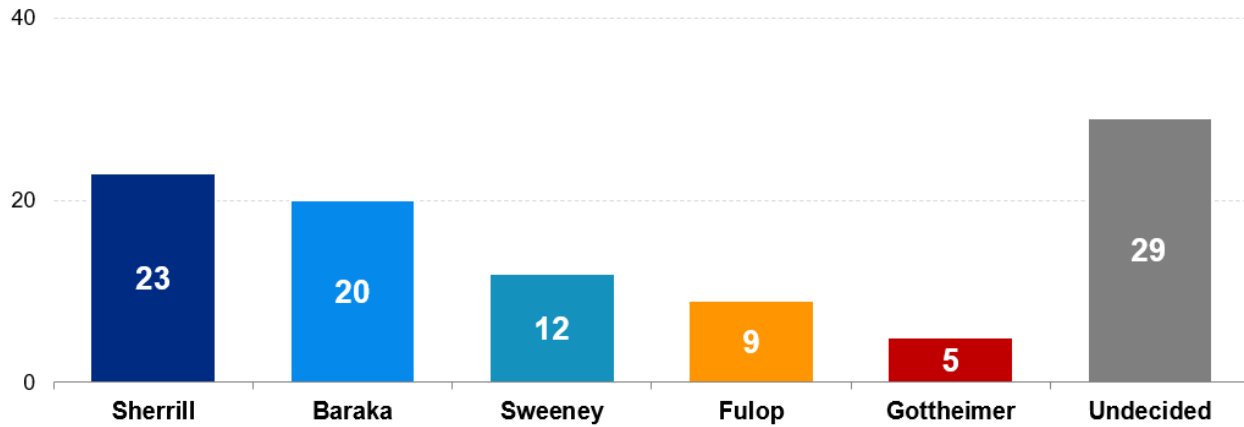
### Chart 2: Most Important Issues



At the outset of the survey, Sherrill earns 23 percent of the vote while Ras Baraka begins with 20 percent. Steve Sweeney (12 percent), Steve Fulop (9 percent), and Josh Gottheimer (5 percent) all trail significantly.

### Chart 3: Initial Vote in Democratic Gubernatorial Primary

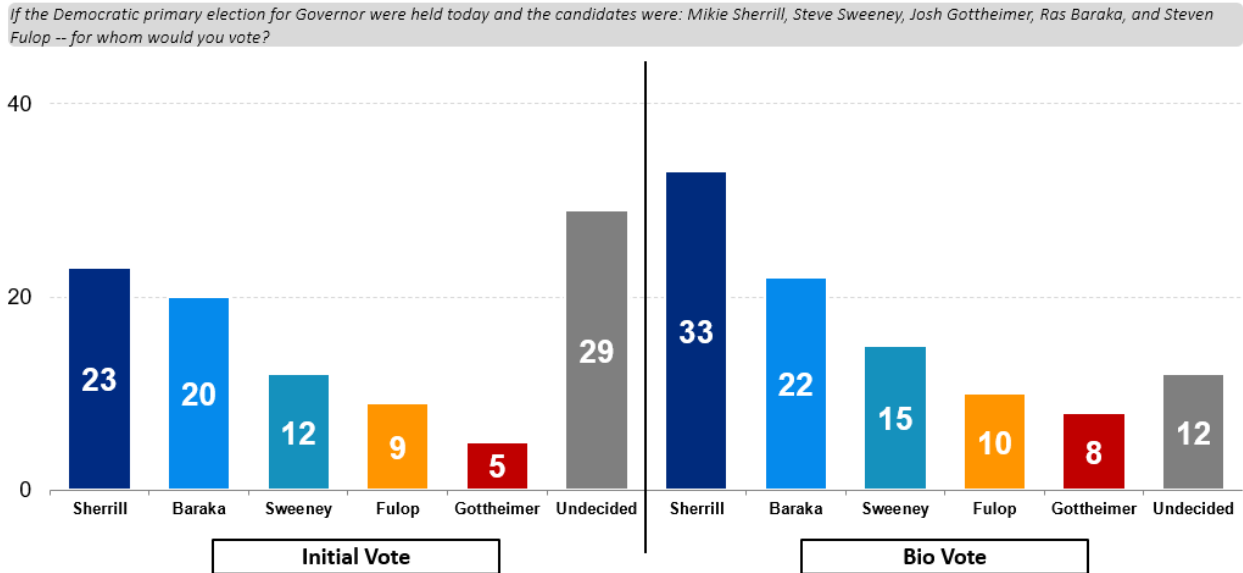
*Thinking ahead to the Democratic primary election for Governor in 2025, if the Democratic primary election for Governor were held today and the candidates were: Mikie Sherrill, Steve Sweeney, Josh Gottheimer, Ras Baraka, and Steven Fulop -- for whom would you vote?*



Sherrill has broad support in the primary, leading among women (26 to 20 percent), voters 50 years and older (23 to 17 percent), and in the New York media market (27 to 23 percent). She wins “abortion” voters by 13 points, 28 to 15 percent (voters who express the highest possible concern about abortion rights).

Sherrill vaults into a clear lead with 33 percent of the vote after voters hear biographies on every candidate. Her focus on abortion rights, military background, and congressional record combined with her unique appeal as the only woman in the race increases her vote share among most regional and demographic groups. Her lead grows with women (38 to 19 percent), older voters (33 to 20 percent) and abortion rights voters, growing to a near majority of their vote (44 to 14 percent). She also leads Baraka in both the New York (34 to 24 percent) and Philadelphia (31 to 15 percent) media markets.

### Chart 4: Informed Gubernatorial Vote



### Key Takeaways

- **Abortion is the central issue animating primary voters.** Abortion is the most important issue in this race for governor, higher than other issues like the cost of living and taxes. Among abortion motivated voters, Sherrill holds a clear lead that grows to a near majority (44 percent) after voters hear her biography.
- **Sherrill is well positioned to win the 2025 Gubernatorial primary.** She also has an advantage as the only woman in the race and among the voters most concerned about protecting abortion rights. She easily beats Gottheimer and Fulop in North Jersey while Sweeney manages only a third of the vote in South Jersey.
- **Baraka has a voter base, but he also has a ceiling of support.** Throughout the survey, Baraka never gets more than 23 percent of the vote and struggles to expand his base of support.
- **Sherrill grows her support after voters hear more about her,** especially among women, older voters and voters in both major media markets.