

## Does Chris Christie Stand a Chance in 2016?

Anthea Mitchell August 3, 2014



Scott Olson/Getty Images

If you mentioned Chris [Christie](#) for 2016 presidential candidate in January, many would have called you crazy. Today, the New Jersey Governor may be able to joke about the [traffic jam scandal](#) that led to the firing of his aid and many others — as we see at around 2:19 on Jimmy Fallon below — but not all potential voters have moved past it with such rapidity.

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In a Quinnipiac University Poll of Florida, historically a major swing state, Governor Christie came in [sixth place behind](#) other potential Republican contenders for 2016 at 6 percent. This was far behind former Florida Governor Jeb Bush — notably in possession of the home state advantage — who received 21 percent of respondents votes, ahead of Senator Marco Rubio's (R-Fla.) 18 percent, and Senator [Ted Cruz's](#) (R-Tex.) 10 percent. Against other Republicans in the state, he holds very little sway, and against Hillary Clinton there's not even a chance. Florida pollees show 67 percent of Democratic support in favor of Clinton in Florida. The poll took into [account](#) responses from 451 Republicans, 457 Democrats with a [margin of error](#) of +/- 4.6 percent.

Looking at other states, Christie does a little better, but fails to hold his own in favorability. In an *NBC News/Marist* poll of Iowa he is reportedly [quite competitive against](#) Hillary Clinton and Rand Paul, with Jeb Bush trailing behind in a head to head against Clinton.

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"[In a state Obama](#) carried twice, Hillary Clinton would find Rand Paul and Chris Christie formidable opponents in the battle for Iowa's six electoral votes. The contest narrows in these two matchups because Paul and Christie do better with independent voters than do the other Republicans," said Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, the director of the Marrist College Institute for Public Opinion.

But when favorable and unfavorable scores are compared for each singular candidate, Clinton takes a majority of 52 percent positive, Paul has a 38 percent favorable to 36 percent unfavorable rating, Rubio 30 percent favorable to 28 percent, and Christie has higher unfavorability than favorability. Yet in a head-to-head comparison, asked who they would vote for if the election were tomorrow, Clinton and Christie come neck and neck, with Clinton taking 44 percent of Iowa registered voters, and Christie taking 43 percent of all registered voters. Clinton wins a 50 percent of women, with Christie taking 36 percent, but 51 percent of men to Clinton's 37 percent.

Against Jeb Bush she has more of an edge, 46 to 42 percent, and against Rand Paul, less — tied with each at 45 percent.

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New Hampshire, another swing state of note, was also covered in the polls from *NBC/Marist*. They showed that Clinton put up against Republican candidates would stay ahead, but not by much. Against Paul, she'd have a 3 point advantage of 46 to 43 percent, and against both Christie and Bush she'd have a 47 over 42 percent advantage. Still, even looked at amongst only his own party members, Christie doesn't take the lead, with Paul tending to be the favorite by 1 percentage point.

Based on *The New York Times*' "[House Effects](#)" table, Marist/NBC leans to the left by +1.9 and Quinnipiac leans + 1.7 to the right (as shown below.)

When you consider the damage that events in Benghazi did to Hillary Clinton's polls and PR, it's unsurprising that Christie's own bad press has hurt his approval ratings and image. Clinton's own ability to retain support was rather impressive, but her party has also shown a considerably more single minded attitude regarding 2016 than the GOP.

*The Huffington Post*'s combination of [opinion polls](#) shows a strongly unfavorable [polling](#) trend that remains to this day, diverging from past popularity in January, around the time of the bridgegate scandal investigations — shown below.

A February 22-28 poll showed only 23 percent of 729 voting respondents in a *Rutgers/Eagleton Poll* saying they thought Christie was "trustworthy," and only 54 percent described him as a "strong leader," the lowest percentage, according to *NJ.com*, that he's seen in office. "In particular, trustworthy was one of Christie's hallmarks, especially given voters' normal cynicism about politicians. Losing the trust of voters puts Christie into the category of an ordinary politician," said David Redlawsk, director of the poll, according to *NJ*.

Of course, in February, the events were still fresh, making the more competitive polling he's done since then indicative of at least some recovery in public reception. However, hearings related to the bridge closure haven't fully come to a close. In fact, this summer will see as many as thirteen more people called to testify, with lawmakers waiting on the attorney general's office before putting out [further subpoenas](#), reports *MSNBC*. Continued attention drawn by the investigation could make it hard to put events behind Christie as quickly as might be preferred, and should anything new be uncovered, the scandal could prove to have laid eggs awaiting fruition.

Pollster	House Effect
Pew Research	D +3.2
Public Policy Polling (PPP)	D +3.1
Ipsos	D +2.9
SurveyUSA	D +2.4
Marist (NBC/Marist)	D +1.9
YouGov	D +0.8
CNN (Opinion Research)	D +0.4
Rasmussen Reports	R +1.3
Washington Post / ABC News	R +1.4
Fox News (Robbins & Shaw)	R +1.5
Quinnipiac	R +1.7
Gallup	R +2.5

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