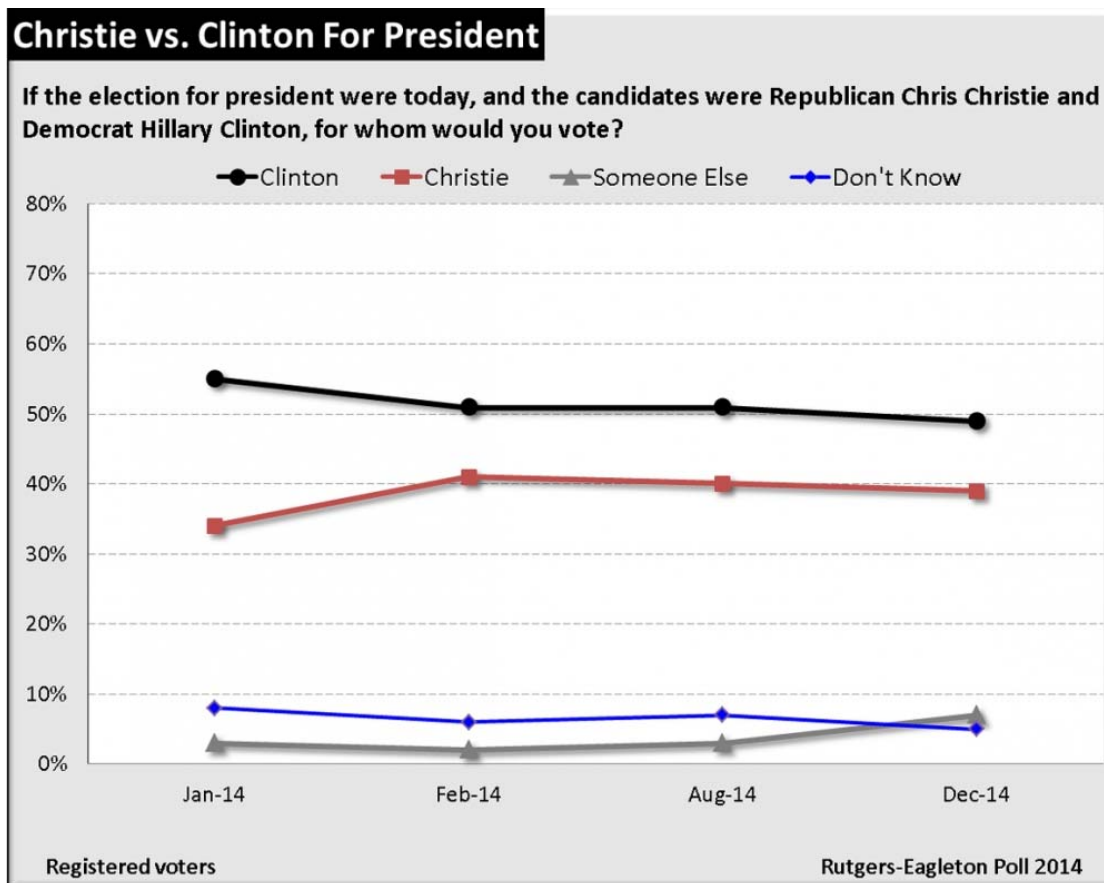


Christie trails Clinton by double-digit margin in Eagleton poll



Courtesy of Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling | If Hillary Clinton and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie were to run for United States president in 2016, Clinton would command approximately 55 percent of the vote compared to a little less than 35 percent of the vote for Christie.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton suspended her 2008 presidential campaign to endorse Barack Obama as the democratic nominee for president. Now, a poll conducted by the Eagleton Institute of Politics shows her on track to win New Jersey in 2016.

In a theoretical 2016 presidential race between Clinton and Gov. Chris Christie, New Jersey voters continue to show support for the former First Lady, who leads Christie by a 10-point margin.

According to a press release from the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling, 49 percent of registered voters polled said they would support Clinton. Thirty nine percent of registered voters polled said they would support Christie.

David Redlawsk, director of the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling and the Eagleton Institute of Politics, said Clinton's 10-point lead is not typically considered to be a large margin in the Garden State.

Wikimedia | In a press release from the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling, 49 percent said they would vote for Clinton compared to 39 percent who would vote for Christie.

"[New Jersey] is a very democratic state and even with a Republican governor the odds are very high that a democrat would win this state," he said. "I think it's still a very difficult task for [Christie] to win New Jersey."

Comparing the governor to Al Gore during the 2000 election and Mitt Romney during the 2012 election, Redlawsk said Christie still has a chance of gaining national support without winning his home state in 2016.

While it may not be necessary for the governor to win New Jersey, Redlawsk said no candidate can just concede their home state, even if they have support elsewhere.

“You don’t want to give up any state you don’t have to give up,” he said. “Whether you absolutely have to win your home state to win the election, I don’t think that’s necessarily true. It depends entirely on where you are strong and what states you can win.”

Redlawsk, also a professor in the Department of Political Science, said the race is certainly not decided on a national scale. Referencing the 2008 campaign trail, he said polls before Election Day indicated Clinton running against former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani.

Even though Clinton has not announced a presidential campaign for the 2016 election, Redlawsk said she is likely to win the Democratic nomination. Contrary to that, the Republican nomination is presumably up for grabs.

At the present time, Christie has a fair chance of winning the presidential nomination, he said. The only “big unknown” for the governor is the investigation of the “Bridgegate” scandal being conducted by the U.S. attorney’s office.

“This is a wide-open race for the Republicans,” he said. “Christie has a reasonable shot as long as nothing goes particularly wrong for him.”

While he declined to comment on the Rutgers–Eagleton poll, Matt Farrauto, communications director for the New Jersey Democratic State Committee, said the governor’s past behavior warrants a dismissal rather than a promotion.

Mentioning how Christie “ditched work” on 137 days in 2014, he said the governor is an embarrassment to the state.

“Governor Chris Christie has been an unmitigated disaster for the state of New Jersey, undermining our economy, punishing lower and middle income families and embarrassing our state with his wasteful spending, scandalous abuses of power and resources and ethical misconduct,” Farrauto said in an email.

Nicole Sizemore, communications director for the New Jersey State Republican Committee, declined to comment on the matter.

Redlawsk said one of the reasons why Christie might be less popular than Clinton in New Jersey is because of his traveling to raise funds for the Republican Governors Association, of which he is the chair.

He said Christie’s travels presumably generate “IOUs” for fellow Republican politicians who have won with the RGA’s financial assistance. While this is beneficial to the governor on a national level, it hurts him at home.

“It certainly hurts Christie with New Jerseyans, but that’s not a terribly relevant point right now,” Redlawsk said. “If he’s going to run for president, he’s got to establish himself on the national stage as that’s far more important for him.”

Redlawsk also mentioned the existence of every voter’s inherent bias that reinforces his or her political ideology. He said democrats are going to assume Christie’s work is for a presidential campaign, while Republicans are going to assume his work is for the state’s benefit.

At the end of the day, Redlawsk said the main reason why Clinton beat Christie in the poll was because New Jersey is home to more Democratic voters.

Keeping this in mind, he acknowledged how New Jersey residents know Christie better than they do Clinton, having seen him in moments of glory and moments of shame.

“New Jerseyans don’t necessarily know [Clinton] the same way they know Chris Christie,” Redlawsk said. “It’s different when it’s your own governor, having seen his positives and negatives.”

