

Dems go batty over NJ governor's comments

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TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — New Jersey Gov. **Chris Christie** is known for talking tough, but his suggestion this week that the media "take the bat out" on a 76-year-old state senator who criticized him has **Democrats** crying foul.

Even in New Jersey's rough-and-tumble political world, some said that was a line that ought not to have been crossed.

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"The statement was offensive, indecent and so far beneath the standing of a public official it boggles the mind how the governor could even think of uttering it," State Sen. President **Stephen Sweeney** said Thursday.

The target, state Sen. **Loretta Weinberg**, a feisty grandmother who ran for lieutenant governor on former Gov. **Jon Corzine's** losing ticket in 2009, went further, suggesting that Christie is insensitive to battered women.

SPORTS



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"Frankly, considering I've devoted my entire legislative career to fighting for the rights of women — including battered women — I think his words continue to show the level of insensitivity and poor judgment that the governor has demonstrated on women's issues since getting elected."

She said she wasn't holding her breath for an apology.

Ironically, the insult throwing began with Weinberg criticizing the governor for going too soft on another Democrat — Essex County executive and powerbroker **Joe DiVincenzo, Jr.**, who took advantage of a loophole to collect a pension while continuing to draw a paycheck from the same six-figure job.

NATION

Weinberg said that Christie had double standards when it came to attacking his allies, and then a few days later admitted that she was also receiving a pension and salary simultaneously.



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"I mean, can you guys please take the bat out on her for once?" Christie said during a Statehouse news conference on Wednesday. "Here's a woman who knows she did it, yet she comes to you and is pining . 'Oh! My goodness! How awful this is! What a double standard!' But she's the queen of double standard."

On Thursday, Christie's spokesman, [Michael Drewniak](#), repeated the same mantra, saying Weinberg's response was "a ridiculous and over-the-top distortion to deflect from (her) pension double-dipping."



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Some political watchers say the bickering is a double foul — for both sides.

"The public doesn't generally decide who's being the hypocrite, the public assumes everyone is a hypocrite," said [Peter Woolley](#), a political scientist and pollster at [Fairleigh Dickinson University](#).

However, Woolley warned that the image that Christie is a bully is increasingly taking hold.

A recent poll showed a growing number of voters describing Christie as a "bully," "arrogant," and as

"stubborn."

An [Eagleton Institute of Politics](#) poll showed 53 percent of Democrats and 16 percent of Republicans found Christie to be a "bully," compared to 35 percent of Democrats and 10 percent of Republicans in August.

However, Christie's approval ratings remain high. The [Fairleigh Dickinson-PublicMind](#) poll released earlier this month showed 51 percent approve of the way Christie is handling his job.

"It's easier to oppose him on personality," Woolley said, "than to oppose his reform proposals."

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