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### Poll: Christie Approval Remains High, But Not on the Economy

By Dan Roem // February 8, 2013 | 12:05 a.m.



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Just over two weeks after a Quinnipac University [poll](#) pegged New Jersey Gov. **Chris Christie's** job approval rating at 74 percent, a new Rutgers-Eagleton [poll](#) reaffirmed that rating by giving the Republican a virtually identical approval mark of 73 percent. The leading Democratic challenger in the November election, on the other hand, remains little-known in the Garden State.

Christie also sports a 70-percent favorability rating, an uptick of three percentage points from the last poll, conducted in November. Two-thirds of respondents did not offer any opinion about his likely Democratic opponent, state Sen. **Barbara Buono**, suggesting her name identification is still low. The poll also showed that Democratic state Senate President **Steve Sweeney**, who endorsed Buono after considering a bid of his own, is unknown by 56 percent of the electorate.

The poll release did not include a Christie-Buono ballot test.

One potential boon for Buono is that Christie's approval rating for how he is handling the economy and taxes is only at parity. The poll also states that two-thirds of voters consider those two issues to be the Garden State's most important problems, with 35 percent choosing the "economy and jobs" and 31 percent selecting "high taxes."

While 45 percent of voters approved of Christie's performance on the economy, 46 percent disapproved. Meanwhile, 40 percent of voters gave Christie high marks for how he has handled "high taxes" and 52 percent disapproved.

Eleven percent of voters identified "Hurricane Sandy recovery" as New Jersey's biggest problem. It is that issue that Christie receives his highest approval rating: 86 percent, compared to an 11-percent disapproval rating. The incumbent governor also received high marks for his handling of education and schools (54 percent) and crime and drugs (51 percent).

Voters gave Christie more of a mixed review on the state budget, with 49 percent approving and 38 percent disapproving.

Poll director **David Redlawsk** explained in news release that Christie's favorability and job approval ratings appear to be due to his handling of Sandy, despite receiving negative marks on the economy and taxes.

"If voters begin to focus on these issues instead of the Sandy recovery, we could see a change in the governor's overall ratings over the next few months," said Redlawsk.

The Rutgers-Eagleton was conducted Jan. 30-Feb. 3, surveying 698 registered voters. The poll has a margin of error of plus-or-minus 3.7 percentage points.

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