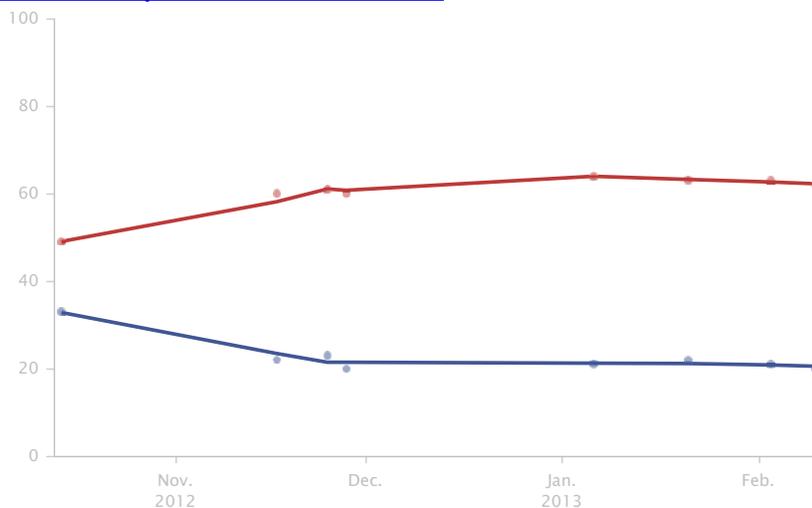


## Chris Christie Leads In 2013 New Jersey Gubernatorial Race: Poll

Months after Sandy swept New Jersey, heightened support for state Gov. Chris Christie shows little sign of receding. Seven in 10 voters have a favorable opinion of Christie, according to a Rutgers-Eagleton poll [released Tuesday](#), and support for his reelection in 2013 is at 64 percent, 5 points up from November.

Christie leads his only declared opponent, Democratic state Sen. Barbara Buono, 63 percent to 21 percent, according to the poll, an increase of 4 points from his already overwhelming lead in November.

### [2013 New Jersey Governor: Christie vs. Buono](#)



Other Democrats, including state Sen. Steve Sweeney, have [decided not to challenge](#) Christie for the seat.

One positive sign for Buono: while she remains unknown to most voters, her name recognition is up significantly since the last poll, as is her favorable rating.

"We would expect that as the campaign progresses Buono will become better known, and Democrats, at least, will probably gravitate toward her," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. "Republicans, of course, will stick with their guy, so the real question is whether Buono will peel away enough independents to pull off what looks right now like an improbable outcome."

As New Jersey shifts into election mode, there are also some areas of potential weakness for Christie. While the vast majority of voters approve of his work on Hurricane Sandy recovery, views on his handling of New Jersey's economy are divided, and a majority of poll respondents said they disapprove of the state's taxes.

The Rutgers-Eagleton poll surveyed 698 registered voters by phone between Jan. 30 and Feb. 3.

**UPDATE 9:13 a.m.** -- A Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press poll released Tuesday also found majority approval for Christie and support for his reelection, with the governor maintaining a 42-point lead over Buono.

"There is a long history that shows horse race polling has little predictive value this far out from an election. This is especially true when there is a popular incumbent and a largely unknown challenger. The important number here is that six in 10 voters support Gov. Christie's reelection," Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute, [said in a release](#). "This suggests that the race should close in on a 20-point margin as the campaign progresses and Buono becomes better-known. The question remains whether the challenger can peel off Christie supporters to shrink that gap even more."

