

## Poll: Christie leads Buono by 30 points, down from 42 points in February

By [Matt Friedman/The Star-Ledger](#) [http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/04/poll\\_christie\\_leads\\_buono\\_by\\_3.html](http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/04/poll_christie_leads_buono_by_3.html)

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on April 12, 2013 at 6:30 AM, updated April 12, 2013 at 11:58 AM

**TRENTON** — Gov. Chris Christie continues to dominate his likely Democratic challenger, state Sen. Barbara Buono, in the polls, but his substantial lead is shrinking.

A Rutgers-Eagleton poll released today shows 57 percent of voters say they support Christie, a Republican, while 27 percent pick Buono, a Middlesex County legislator who is still mostly unknown to voters.

Christie's 30-point lead is down from 42 points in February. Nevertheless, the vast majority of voters — 80 percent — say Christie will win re-election in November. Even 61 percent of voters who support Buono say she'll lose.

"While Christie maintains a large lead, some tightening is all but inevitable, since we expect most Democrats to vote the party line in November," David Redlawsk, the director of the poll, said. "But unless Buono can make gains among independents and also get Democrats energized, she is going to have a long road ahead."

The poll shows Christie has maintained the support of most voters who backed him in 2009 and is cutting into historically Democratic blocs that are crucial for Buono to win over. But Buono loses to the governor about a quarter of those who said they supported former Gov. Jon Corzine, the Democrat whom Christie unseated.

"While Buono has made some very noticeable gains among her base, many of the voters.

Democrats usually count on continue to support Christie," Redlawsk said. "She can't afford to give Christie a quarter of black voters, a majority of women, and even a third of liberals, as she does right now."

Although Buono has begun to campaign, she's still unknown to most voters in the state. The poll found 70 percent either don't have an opinion on her or don't know enough about her to form one, which is up 3 percentage points from February.

The poll, which surveyed 819 voters from April 3 to April 7, has a margin of error is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points.

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