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Poll: Sandy recovery still fueling Christie's popularity

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BY JOHN REITMEYER

Governor Christie remains popular, with a 70 percent approval rating, thanks to state residents' ongoing approval of his handling of the superstorm Sandy recovery effort, according to a new Rutgers-Eagleton poll.

Christie, a Republican running for a second term this year, did not fare too well on two issues voters rank as their top concerns: the economy and jobs, and taxes. Only 41 percent of those surveyed approve of the way he's handling those issues. He also has an only 45 percent approval rating on education.

But Christie scored an 86 percent approval rating for his ongoing effort to rebuild New Jersey after Sandy hit last year, driving his overall high mark.

"The post-Sandy 'Rally around Christie' effect has continued much longer than we might have expected," said David Redlawsk, poll director and political science professor at Rutgers University. "Christie, despite negative ratings for key issues, has seen very little long-term erosion in support."

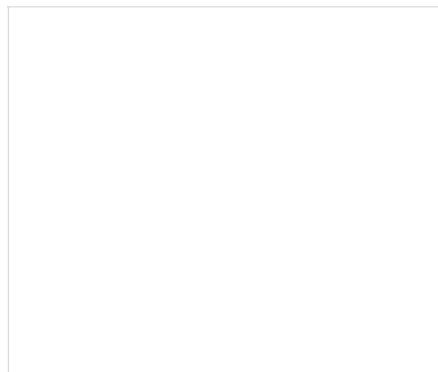
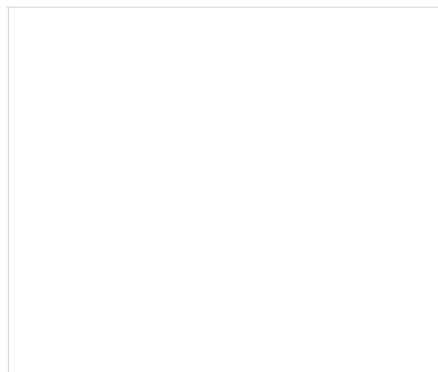
The survey of 888 adults in New Jersey was conducted between June 3 and June 9, carrying a margin of error of +/- 3.3 percent.

Overall, Christie scored a 56 percent approval rating among Democrats, and 87 percent from Republicans. Independent voters gave him an approval rating of more than 75 percent. On the Sandy recovery, 88 percent of independents, 87 percent of Republicans, and 85 percent of Democrats approve of his performance.

"Given the sizable split on nearly every specific issue we poll on, it is clearly his image as a strong leader in the aftermath of the storm that continues to make the difference," Redlawsk said. "Many voters may not like the specifics of his job performance, but they appreciate his leadership."

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