

N.J. Politics Roundup: Christie still highly popular; Democrats pick state party chair

Brent Johnson/The Star-Ledger



Gov. Chris Christie and state Sen. Barbara Buono greet each other Wednesday night at the New Jersey Business and Industry Association's Employer Legislative Committee dinner. (*Aristede Economopoulos/The Star-Ledger*)

TRENTON — Gov. Chris Christie's popularity in the wake of Hurricane Sandy doesn't seem to be waning.

A new Rutgers-Eagleton poll shows that [Christie's approval rating](#) among New Jersey voters is at 70 percent.

REPUBLICANS VYING FOR U.S. SENATE

Meet the two candidates vying for the Republican nomination to run for the U.S. Senate seat vacated after the death of Frank Lautenberg: conservative activist [Steve Lonegan](#) and medical doctor [Alieta Eck](#).

Meanwhile, a high-ranking official in New Jersey Education Association — the state's largest teacher's union — said her organization would likely [sit out the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate](#).

And Newark Mayor Cory Booker, a Democratic candidate, took time out of his campaign schedule to [celebrate an historic Newark neighborhood](#).

Video: [Christie says he'll "throw League of Municipalities report in the garbage where it belongs"](#) While visiting the Monmouth Beach Elementary School Wednesday afternoon, Gov. Chris Christie held a press conference in front of

students and faculty who returned to their hurricane Sandy damaged school on June 3rd. Commenting on a new report from the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, he said, "all they do is put out stupid reports like this, and put on corrupt conventions in Atlantic City, where I (as United States District Attorney) arrested more people than any other spot." Video by Mike Roy/The Star-Ledger

CHRISTIE BLASTS REPORT

Christie [lambasted the New Jersey State League of Municipalities](#) after the organization released a task force report on a proposal to reduce property taxes.

CHALLENGERS, SIDE BY SIDE

Chris Christie and Barbara Buono on the same stage as each other? The Republican governor and his Democratic challenger in this year's governor's race [appeared at the same event](#) Wednesday night in West Windsor. (See photo above.)

A DEMOCRATIC COMPROMISE

Buono, a state senator from Middlesex County, and state Senate President Stephen Sweeney came to a compromise in the battle of who will become New Jersey's Democratic party chair: [John Currie of Passaic County](#).

Earlier in the day, state Sen. Raymond Lesniak — a contender for the job — said the outgoing chairman, Assemblyman John Wisniewski, has [left the party "in shambles."](#) He quickly apologized for the remark.

ENDORSEMENTS FOR CHRISTIE, BUONO

Both gubernatorial candidates drew new endorsements Wednesday. The N.J. AFL-CIO announced it [will back Buono](#), while Christie received a vow of support [from another Democrat](#), Long Branch Mayor Adam Schneider.

CHRISTIE RETURNS TO FALLON

Christie made his third appearance [on Jimmy Fallon's late-night talk show](#) — and he participated in one of the program's most popular segments, "Slow Jam the News."

EDITORIAL: CELL PHONE BILL

The Star-Ledger Editorial Board writes that a proposed new that would let police ask for your phone when they ask for your license and registration [is a bad idea](#).

IN OTHER NEWS ...

- Christie said he has not decided [what to do with the proceeds](#) of a \$130 million settlement the state has reached with several companies responsible for pollution in the Passaic River.
- The Christie administration is allowed move forward with its plan to have a private firm to take over parts of the New Jersey lottery after a state appellate court [denied a request by the the Communication Workers of America](#) to block the deal. But the court said it will speed up the process of hearing the union's appeal of the contract.
- Nearly 8 percent fewer Medicare patients in New Jersey cycled in and out of hospitals last year than in 2010, [new data shows](#).
- The state Department of Children and Families [plans to limit the information](#) it publicly discloses when a child dies or suffers life-threatening injuries from abuse and neglect.

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