

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2014

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**TRUST IN CHRISTIE REMAINS AT ALL-TIME LOW
BUT MORE THAN HALF OF VOTERS STILL SEE GOVERNOR AS STRONG LEADER**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – Despite a reboot of his town hall meetings, and even with no significant new revelations in the Bridgegate scandal, perceptions of Gov. Chris Christie's personal traits remain at a low point in New Jersey, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

Following a sharp, negative turn in opinions of key Christie traits in January, New Jersey registered voters now rate his "trustworthiness" at an all-time low with just 23 percent saying "trustworthy" applies very well to Christie, down 20 points from October 2013. Another 38 percent say trustworthy fits Christie just somewhat well, while 35 percent say it does not fit him well at all.

While more than half of voters still say "strong leader" describes Christie "very well", even that trait which has been key for Christie since Superstorm Sandy, is at a low point. Voters are more divided on the extent to which "sincere" describes the governor: 31 percent say it fits him very well, 35 percent say somewhat well, and 30 percent say Christie is not sincere at all.

"The Bridgegate and Sandy allegations continue to take their toll on perceptions of the governor's positive personality traits," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers. "In particular, trustworthy was one of Christie's hallmarks, especially given voters' normal cynicism about politicians. Losing the trust of voters puts Christie into the category of an ordinary politician. At the same time, his overall New Jersey ratings remain pretty good for a Republican in this blue state."

The number of respondents who see Christie as a bully – 37 percent – has fallen since January's all-time high of 43 percent. And just under half say "arrogant" fits Christie very well.

Emotional responses toward Christie show little change from January. Pride in and enthusiasm about the governor remain nearly steady at 36 percent after double-digit declines in January. But 40 percent of voters are angry, and 45 percent are worried when they think about the governor.

Results are from a statewide poll of 842 New Jersey adults with a margin of error of +/- 3.7 percentage points, contacted by live callers on both landlines and cell phones from Feb. 22 to 28. Within this sample are 729 registered voters reported upon in this release, with a margin of error of +/- 3.8 percentage points.

Bridgagate believers most likely to distrust Christie

The decline in assessments of Christie's trustworthiness is significantly driven by partisan differences and views on the George Washington Bridge (GWB) scandal. Fewer than 10 percent of Democrats say trustworthy describes Christie very well, while 52 percent of Republicans are still in this camp. While partisan perceptions have stayed fairly steady, independents are even less trusting than they were in January: just 20 percent say trustworthy fits Christie very well, down 10 points in the last five weeks and 24 points lower than in October.

Voters' beliefs about whether Christie knew of his staff's alleged involvement in closing bridge access lanes from Fort Lee last September influence whether they still trust the governor. Thirty-seven percent find it very unlikely Christie was unaware ahead of time of what his staff allegedly planned, and an additional 15 percent think it is somewhat unlikely, while 44 percent say it is at least somewhat likely he did not know.

Among those who think it is very likely Christie did not know ahead of time of his staff's actions, more than half (52 percent) see Christie as trustworthy. In contrast, just 7 percent of voters who say it is very unlikely the governor was unaware of the plan agree with this assessment.

Assessments of Christie's January 9 press conference about the traffic tie-up also affect how trustworthy Christie appears. The one in six voters who fully believe Christie's explanation of what happened in Fort Lee are three times as likely to say trustworthy fits him very well (76 percent), compared to the third who somewhat believe him, where only 22 percent ascribes trust to Christie. And a mere 4 percent of the 44 percent who completely disbelieve Christie's explanation see him as trustworthy; 69 percent of this group says the term does not apply to Christie whatsoever.

As for the Sandy-related allegations thrown at the governor, 41 percent think they are false, but 45 percent believe the claims. Those who think the allegations are false are more trusting of Christie than others: 44 percent say trustworthy describes Christie very well, 44 percent say somewhat well, and only 10 percent say not well at all. Just 6 percent of those who believe the allegations think trustworthy describes the governor very well; 61 percent says it does not fit at all.

The term "sincere," asked here for the second time, shows similar partisan divisions as in January: 16 percent of Democrats and 61 percent of Republicans say this word describes Christie very well, little changed. But there has been an 11 point drop to 28 percent of independents who now think that adjective describes Christie very well. Voters who believe Christie was aware of the lane closures and those who think his administration purposely withheld Sandy funds, are significantly less likely to call him sincere.

While just over half of all voters still see Christie as a strong leader, the numbers have taken a slight dip among Democrats (five points to 35 percent) and independents (six points to 54 percent).

Eight in 10 Republicans, however, continue to say that the trait describes their governor very well.

As Bridgegate quiets, negative labels stabilize

With the absence of major new allegations in recent weeks, opinions on some of the most negative descriptors applied to Christie have stabilized. Opinions on “bully” are steady or improved among partisans of all stripes. Half of Democrats now say bully fits Christie very well, a nine-point drop from January. Independents are now at 35 percent, while only 17 percent of Republicans still feel the same. More than half of Republicans say the governor is not a bully, a feeling shared by 17 percent of Democrats and 29 percent of independents. Those skeptical of Christie’s claims Bridgegate and who think Sandy aid decisions were political are much more likely to label him as a bully. And voters using the GWB at least weekly are 11 to 13 points more likely to say bully fits Christie very well, compared to voters who never cross it.

Democrats particularly find Christie “arrogant,” with 62 percent saying the term describes Christie very well, although this is a nine-point drop over the last five weeks. Forty-six percent of independents feel the same, as do 25 percent of Republicans. Seven in ten voters who think it is very likely Christie knew about his staff’s alleged actions believe arrogant fits him very well, compared to just over a third of other voters. Likewise, three-quarters of those who completely disbelieve Christie’s explanation say arrogant fits very well, compared to 30 percent who somewhat believe him and just 18 percent who fully believe him. As with bully, voters who think the Sandy-related allegations are true are about three times more likely to say arrogant describes him very well than those who disbelieve the claims.

Anger and worry over Christie continue

Voters continue to experience more negative emotions toward Christie than they did pre-Bridgegate. Anger and worry remain up, and pride and enthusiasm are still down, all back to pre-Sandy levels. Fifty-nine percent of Republicans and 35 percent of independents say Christie makes them feel enthusiastic, while 61 percent of Republicans and 34 percent of independents say he makes them feel proud. Democrats have rebounded from large dips in January, up nine points to 23 percent for pride and up five points to 22 percent for enthusiasm.

Positive emotions are significantly lower among those less likely to believe Christie had no knowledge of his staff’s involvement with the GWB lane closures, those less likely to believe his explanation and those who believe allegations over Sandy funds are true.

Partisans have remained relatively steady in their feelings of anger and worry toward the governor since January. Fifty-four percent of Democrats, 38 percent of independents and 24 percent of Republicans feel angry. Similarly, 59 percent of Democrats, 43 percent of independents, and 24 percent of Republicans are worried about Christie. About half of frequent GWB users are worried and angry,

compared to about 40 percent of those who use it less frequently or not at all. Sixty percent of those who say it is very unlikely Christie was unaware of the lane closures, those who do not believe his explanation, and those who believe in the Sandy-related allegations say they feel anger and worry toward the governor.

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QUESTIONS AND TABLES BEGIN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release of March 11, 2014 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey Registered Voters as indicated; all percentages are of weighted results.

Q. I'd like to ask about some people in public life. Please tell me if your general impression of each one is favorable or unfavorable, or if you do not have an opinion. If you do not know the name, just say so.

GOVERNOR CHRIS CHRISTIE

**REGISTERED
VOTERS**

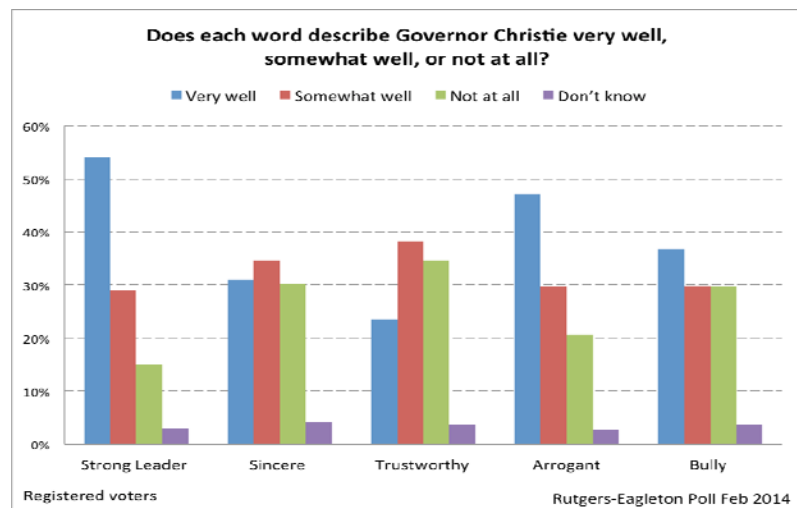
Favorable	49%
Unfavorable	40%
No opn/don't know person	11%
Unwgt N=	726

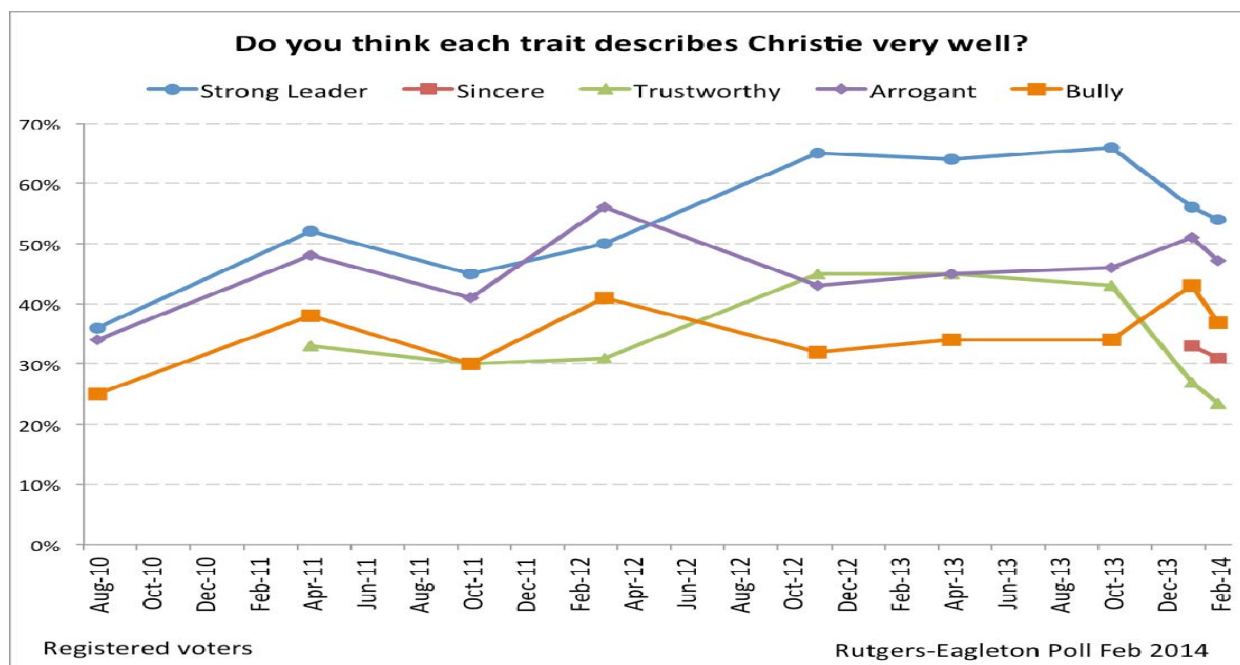
[A SERIES OF QUESTIONS ABOUT FAVORABILITY RATINGS, THE 2013 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION, CHRISTIE JOB APPROVAL, POLITICAL ISSUES, CURRENT EVENTS, AND 2016 WAS ASKED AT THIS POINT IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE AS PART OF A TRI-STATE STUDY WITH SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND ROANOKE COLLEGE. RESULTS OF THOSE QUESTIONS WERE RELEASED MARCH 4-5, 2014.]

Q. Next, I am going to read a list of words that might describe Governor Christie. For each word, tell me if it describes him very well, somewhat well, or not at all. [RANDOM ORDER]

A. Bully B. Strong Leader C. Arrogant D. Trustworthy E. Sincere

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	54%	31%	23%	47%	37%
Somewhat	29%	35%	38%	30%	30%
Not at All	15%	30%	35%	21%	30%
DK	3%	4%	4%	3%	4%
Unwt N=	729	726	727	725	727





PARTY ID

Democrat

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	35%	16%	9%	62%	51%
Somewhat	37%	35%	35%	22%	28%
Not at All	24%	45%	50%	13%	17%
DK	3%	4%	5%	3%	5%
Unwt N=	243	242	243	241	242

Independent

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	54%	28%	20%	46%	35%
Somewhat	31%	40%	42%	33%	34%
Not at All	12%	28%	36%	19%	29%
DK	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%
Unwt N=	308	307	307	308	308

Republican

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	82%	61%	52%	25%	17%
Somewhat	13%	25%	37%	36%	26%
Not at All	2%	10%	8%	36%	53%
DK	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%
Unwt N=	174	173	173	172	174

VOTER GENDER

Male

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	51%	30%	24%	47%	36%
Somewhat	29%	34%	36%	30%	32%
Not at All	17%	32%	35%	20%	29%
DK	2%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Unwt N=	361	359	361	361	361

Female

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	56%	32%	23%	47%	38%
Somewhat	29%	36%	40%	30%	28%
Not at All	13%	29%	34%	21%	30%
DK	3%	4%	3%	3%	5%
Unwt N=	368	367	366	364	366

IMPRESSION OF GOV. CHRISTIE

Favorable

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	80%	56%	46%	22%	13%
Somewhat	16%	34%	46%	41%	33%
Not at All	3%	7%	5%	35%	51%
DK	1%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Unwt N=	364	363	363	362	362

Unfavorable

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
	22%	6%	2%	80%	68%
	43%	29%	23%	14%	21%
	32%	61%	71%	5%	8%
	3%	4%	3%	1%	3%
	286	286	285	286	286

FREQUENCY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE COMMUTE

At least once/week

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	50%	31%	24%	43%	42%
Somewhat	35%	28%	32%	30%	29%
Not at All	14%	37%	43%	27%	29%
DK	1%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Unwt N=	88	87	88	86	88

Less than once/week

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
	54%	29%	21%	52%	40%
	29%	36%	40%	28%	30%
	15%	31%	37%	17%	28%
	2%	4%	3%	2%	3%
	450	448	449	448	450

Never

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	57%	35%	29%	40%	29%
Somewhat	26%	34%	38%	31%	30%
Not at All	14%	25%	26%	25%	36%
DK	3%	5%	7%	4%	5%
Unwt N=	183	183	183	183	181

HOW LIKELY CHRISTIE'S ADVISORS ACTED WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE

Very likely

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	73%	59%	52%	34%	28%
Somewhat	16%	25%	29%	32%	29%
Not at All	12%	16%	18%	34%	43%
DK	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Unwt N=	150	149	150	150	150

Somewhat likely

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
	67%	42%	30%	33%	19%
	27%	43%	53%	41%	39%
	4%	10%	14%	24%	39%
	2%	5%	3%	2%	3%
	180	179	180	179	179

Somewhat unlikely

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	56%	31%	16%	38%	26%
Somewhat	33%	45%	55%	35%	43%
Not at All	10%	23%	24%	24%	29%
DK	1%	2%	4%	3%	1%
Unwt N=	112	111	110	110	112

Very unlikely

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
	33%	9%	7%	70%	60%
	37%	30%	26%	18%	20%
	27%	55%	64%	9%	15%
	4%	5%	3%	2%	5%
	264	264	264	263	264

BELIEVE CHRISTIE’S EXPLANATION

Fully believe

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	91%	81%	76%	18%	12%
Somewhat	5%	16%	21%	30%	21%
Not at All	3%	3%	1%	51%	65%
DK	1%	0%	2%	1%	2%
Unwt N=	129	129	129	129	129

Somewhat believe

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
	71%	37%	22%	30%	20%
	26%	52%	65%	47%	41%
	2%	10%	11%	22%	37%
	1%	2%	3%	1%	2%
	257	255	256	255	256

Not believe at all

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	26%	8%	4%	75%	62%
Somewhat	41%	29%	24%	15%	25%
Not at All	30%	59%	69%	8%	9%
DK	3%	4%	2%	2%	4%
Unwt N=	306	305	305	304	306

CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION WITHHELD SANDY FUNDS

Purposely withheld as political payback

	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
Very	33%	12%	6%	75%	61%
Somewhat	37%	32%	32%	19%	26%
Not at All	27%	52%	61%	6%	10%
DK	3%	4%	1%	1%	3%
Unwt N=	318	318	317	318	318

Allegations are false

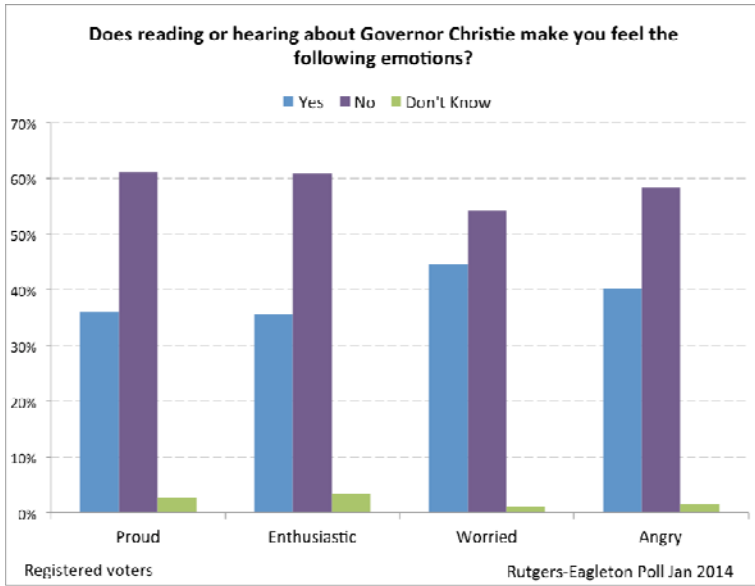
	Positive Traits		Negative Traits		
	Leader	Sincere	Trust	Arrogant	Bully
	77%	55%	44%	23%	14%
	19%	33%	44%	39%	33%
	4%	11%	10%	37%	52%
	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
	306	304	305	303	305

Q. How does reading or hearing about Governor Christie make you feel? Please tell me yes or no for each of the following: [RANDOMIZE ORDER]

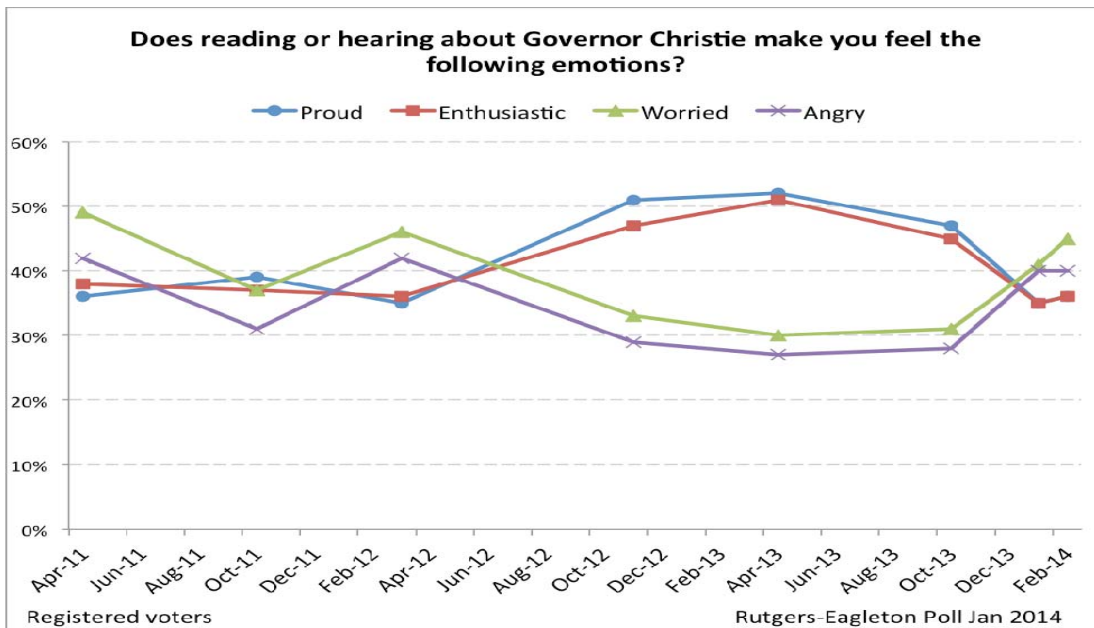
A. Proud B. Enthusiastic C. Worried D. Angry

Registered Voters

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	36%	36%	45%	40%
No	61%	61%	54%	58%
Don't Know	3%	3%	1%	2%
Unwght N=	724	723	723	721



Trend: Percentage YES, All Registered Voters



PARTY ID

Democrat

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	23%	22%	59%	54%
No	75%	74%	40%	45%
Don't Know	2%	3%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	243	242	243	242

Independent

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	34%	35%	43%	38%
No	63%	62%	57%	62%
Don't Know	3%	3%	0%	1%
Unwght N=	307	307	307	305

*Gov. Christie Traits/Emotions March 2014
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Republican

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	61%	59%	24%	24%
No	36%	36%	73%	73%
Don't Know	3%	5%	2%	3%
Unwght N=	170	170	170	171

VOTER GENDER

Make

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	34%	38%	40%	37%
No	63%	59%	59%	61%
Don't Know	3%	3%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	359	357	359	357

Female

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	38%	33%	48%	43%
No	59%	62%	50%	56%
Don't Know	3%	4%	1%	2%
Unwght N=	365	366	364	364

IMPRESSION OF GOV. CHRISTIE

Favorable

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	66%	64%	27%	18%
No	30%	32%	72%	81%
Don't Know	4%	5%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	360	360	358	358

Unfavorable

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	6%	5%	70%	71%
No	93%	93%	30%	28%
Don't Know	1%	1%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	286	284	286	284

FREQUENCY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE COMMUTE

At least once/week

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	39%	38%	52%	48%
No	59%	60%	48%	51%
Don't Know	1%	3%	0%	1%
Unwght N=	87	86	86	87

Less than once/week

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	33%	33%	45%	40%
No	64%	64%	54%	58%
Don't Know	3%	3%	1%	2%
Unwght N=	447	447	448	446

Never

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	43%	41%	41%	38%
No	55%	53%	57%	61%
Don't Know	2%	5%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	182	182	181	180

HOW LIKELY CHRISTIE'S ADVISORS ACTED WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE

Very likely

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	59%	62%	32%	33%
No	38%	33%	67%	66%
Don't Know	3%	5%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	148	147	148	147

Somewhat likely

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	50%	50%	32%	24%
No	47%	46%	67%	75%
Don't Know	3%	3%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	179	180	180	179

Somewhat unlikely

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	36%	35%	38%	34%
No	59%	64%	61%	65%
Don't Know	4%	1%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	112	111	111	112

Very unlikely

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	15%	14%	63%	60%
No	84%	83%	36%	38%
Don't Know	1%	3%	1%	2%
Unwght N=	262	262	262	261

BELIEVE CHRISTIE'S EXPLANATION

Fully believe

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	79%	77%	22%	18%
No	19%	18%	77%	81%
Don't Know	3%	5%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	128	127	128	127

Somewhat believe

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	49%	46%	33%	26%
No	47%	51%	67%	73%
Don't Know	3%	3%	0%	1%
Unwght N=	254	255	255	254

Not believe at all

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	10%	13%	65%	63%
No	88%	86%	34%	36%
Don't Know	2%	1%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	305	304	305	304

CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION WITHHELD SANDY FUNDS

Purposely withheld as political payback

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	14%	14%	62%	58%
No	84%	83%	36%	40%
Don't Know	2%	2%	1%	2%
Unwght N=	317	316	317	317

Allegations are false

	Proud	Enthusiastic	Worried	Angry
Yes	61%	60%	25%	24%
No	36%	36%	74%	75%
Don't Know	3%	4%	0%	1%
Unwght N=	304	303	304	302

[NOTE: CROSSTABS FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE RELEASED ON MARCH 5, 2014, AND ARE AVAILABLE AT <http://eagletonpollblog.wordpress.com/2014/03/05/>.

Q. Let's turn to the recent controversy over the George Washington Bridge lane closures in Fort Lee last September. Governor Christie has said that some of his advisors ordered the closure without his knowledge. How likely do you think it is that top Christie advisors acted without the governor's knowledge regarding the lane closures? Is it very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely or very unlikely?

REGISTERED VOTERS

Very likely	19%
Somewhat likely	25%
Somewhat unlikely	15%
Very unlikely	37%
Don't know	3%
Unwght N=	726

Q. Do you fully believe Governor Christie’s explanation of what happened, somewhat believe his explanation, or not believe it at all?

REGISTERED VOTERS

Fully believe	16%
Somewhat believe	35%
Not believe it at all	44%
Don't know	5%
Unwgt N=	726

Q. There have been some additional allegations that the Christie administration withheld benefits like Sandy funding from some towns because the mayors would not endorse Christie for re-election. Do you think [ROTATE: the Christie administration purposely withheld these things as political payback for not getting support, or do you think these allegations are false]?

REGISTERED VOTERS

Purposely withheld	45%
Allegations are false	41%
Don't know	13%
Unwgt N=	713

Q. And how often do you or a member of your household drive across the George Washington Bridge to go to or from New York? Is it daily, a few times a week, about once a week, less often, or have you never used the George Washington Bridge?

REGISTERED VOTERS

Daily	4%
A few times a week	4%
Once a week	5%
Less than once a week	61%
Never	25%
Unwgt N=	721

Rutgers-Eagleton Poll February 22-28, 2014

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone using live callers February 22-28, 2014 with a scientifically selected random sample of 842 New Jersey adults, including 729 registered voters. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey adult population, using gender, age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity matching to US Census Bureau data. All results are reported with these weighted data. This telephone poll included 589 landline and 253 cell phone adults, all acquired through random digit dialing.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The simple sampling error for 842 adults is +/-3.4

Gov. Christie Traits/Emotions March 2014
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

percentage points, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 46.6 and 53.4 percent (50 +/-3.4) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error should be adjusted to recognize the effect of weighting the data to better match the population. In this poll, the adult sample design effect is 1.23, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 3.7 percentage points for the adult sample

The simple sampling error for 729 registered voters is +/-3.6 percentage points. The design effect for the registered voter sample is 1.11, making the adjusted margin of error +/-3.8 percentage points for the registered voter sample.

Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling. The questionnaire was developed in conjunction with the Siena Research Institute and the Roanoke College Institute for Polling and Opinion Research. All data analyses were completed in house. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, a non-partisan academic center for the study of politics and the political process.

Weighted Sample Characteristics			
729 New Jersey Registered Voters			
36% Democrat	47% Male	14% 18-29	70% White
41% Independent	53% Female	30% 30-49	12% Black
23% Republican		33% 50-64	11% Hispanic
		23% 65+	7% Asian/Other/Multi