

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2012**

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### **CHRISTIE GAINS AS SMART, EFFECTIVE LEADER IN RUTGERS-EAGLETON POLL**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J – Polls released over the last week show Gov. Chris Christie with one of the highest approval ratings ever recorded for a New Jersey governor. Analysis from the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll says the reason is voters are much more likely to see him as a smart, effective leader than they were before Superstorm Sandy.

Christie's leadership and bipartisan embrace of President Obama after Sandy earned strong approval from residents, leading nearly two-thirds to say "smart" and "strong leader" are the two traits that best describe the governor. More than half also call him "effective" and "independent." These positive traits are up sharply from a March 2012 Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, the last time they were asked.

In contrast, negative traits are now much less likely to be applied to Christie. Only 32 percent now say "bully" describes the governor "very well," down nine points, while 40 percent now say it does not describe him at all, an improvement of 13 points. While voters are still more likely to apply the traits "stubborn" and "arrogant" to the governor, their use has also declined: stubborn by eight points to 54 percent and arrogant by 13 points to 43 percent.

More than half of poll respondents say Christie makes them proud, a gain of 16 points since March. Almost half – 47 percent – say they are enthusiastic about him, up 11 points. Concurrently, negative feelings are down sharply: 33 percent say the governor makes them worried (down 17 points) and only 29 percent say he makes them angry (down 13 points).

"We saw Governor Christie's ratings spike post-Sandy and these results tell us why," said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and professor of political science at Rutgers University.

"People liked the way Christie led during the storm and that performance has rubbed off on all aspects of how voters see the governor. Leadership is paramount, but so is the drop in the use of negative labels. Many seem to see the governor in a new light."

Among the 67 percent of voters who now have a favorable impression of Christie, 23 percent say they are positive because of his honesty, integrity or frankness. Another 18 percent specifically cite Christie's leadership during Sandy as the reason for their favorability toward him. Other top reasons for

favorable impressions include Christie's governing style and policy decisions (11 percent) and his results in getting things done and improving New Jersey (11 percent).

One-third of voters continue to have an unfavorable impression of Christie, with the leading reasons given as his dealings with education reform and teachers (24 percent), followed by their belief that Christie has a confrontational or bully-like persona (17 percent). Another 10 percent say Christie's overall character and personality turns them off.

Results are from a poll of 1,228 New Jersey adults conducted statewide among both landline and cell phone households from Nov 14-17. Within this sample is a subsample of 1,108 registered voters; this subsample has a margin of error of +/- 2.9 percentage points.

### **Christie gets highest-ever marks for positive traits**

Since the poll started asking about his personality traits in August 2010, Christie has received his most positive reviews in the still-evolving short, post-Sandy era, surpassing his previous personal bests of April 2011, when more than half said "smart," "strong leader," and "independent" applied very well.

Reflecting nearly unanimous praise for his handling of Sandy, leadership is now the predominant trait applied to Christie, with 65 percent saying it applies very well, a 15-point bump since last March. Sixty-three percent of respondents now call the governor smart, a 13-point improvement. He also gets higher marks for other traits, including effective (53 percent, up 20 points), independent (55 percent, up five points), trustworthy (45 percent, up 14 points), fair (42 percent, up 16 points) and reformer (36 percent, up five points).

"The dramatically increased recognition of positive traits is a complete turnaround from March, when the top traits were stubborn and arrogant," said Redlawsk. "While 54 percent still say the governor is stubborn, it's now less likely to be applied than many positive traits, and is down eight points overall. Arrogance has dropped even further, down 13 points to 43 percent. The genesis of Christie's improved ratings is the change in the positive versus negative traits people apply to him."

Other negative traits – bully, self-centered, and impulsive – are all much less likely to be applied than they were in March, down between seven and 13 points.

### **Improved assessments close gender gap, partisan differences**

Women have consistently been less supportive of Christie than have men both in terms of favorability and job performance. Similar results were previously visible in positive trait assessments, where women were less likely to assign positive traits to the governor. This gender gap now has disappeared. More than 60 percent of male and female voters think Christie is a strong leader and smart, and more than half think he is effective. Women now are less likely to call him stubborn, self-centered and impulsive.

“Women voters are more likely to be Democrats and have typically been far less enamored of Christie,” said Redlawsk. “But the governor’s Sandy leadership seems to have had a disproportionate effect on women, perhaps because he came across as empathetic and caring, traits not often seen in his public persona.”

Prior to Sandy, there were no positive traits that a majority of Democrats said applied very well to Christie. But a majority did think most negative traits for him very well. Now, a majority of Democrats (52 percent) says “strong leader” applies very well, and 51 percent say the same about “smart.” Democrats still think Christie is stubborn (63 percent) and arrogant (56 percent), but both are down sharply, by 13 and 17 points respectively.

### **More pride, less anger toward Christie**

Since Sandy, more voters say they are proud of Christie and are less likely to become angry when thinking or reading about him. In March, 35 percent of voters felt proud when they thought about Christie, and 36 percent were enthusiastic. But 42 percent said they were angry and 46 percent worried.

Today the numbers have reversed, with 51 percent expressing pride and 47 percent enthusiasm, while only 29 percent are angry and 33 percent are worried. “At its core, politics has an emotional component,” noted Redlawsk. “When negative emotions are at the forefront, political leaders are at real risk of being rejected. But when emotions run as positive as they are today, they create a framework of support that lifts all other ratings.”

While only a third of Democrats say they feel proud when they hear or read about the governor, this number has doubled since March. Independent voters’ pride has increased by 21 points to 52 percent, while 82 percent of Republicans say they feel the same, up six points. Women are now more likely than men to say they are proud of the governor – 53 percent compared to 49 percent. This is a double-digit increase for both men and women and a reversal in the direction of the gender gap.

Fewer than half of Democrats now say Christie makes them angry (43 percent), an almost 20-point drop since March. Independents display a 14-point decline in their feelings of anger to 23 percent, while about 10 percent of Republicans say the same, virtually no change since March.

### **Christie’s leadership and straightforwardness**

After describing their impressions of Christie, voters were asked to explain their feelings.

Among the 67 percent of all voters who are favorable toward Christie, his leadership through Superstorm Sandy and his honest and frank style of communication get the largest number of mentions. In particular, those who feel favorable toward Christie cite how he “speaks his mind,” is “a man of his word,” “says it like it is” and “does what he says.”

Democrats who feel favorable toward the governor are most likely to mention his take-charge approach with Sandy (29 percent). Twenty percent of independents also talk about Christie’s leadership specifically in terms of Sandy, but only 5 percent of favorable Republicans mention the storm as their primary reason for liking him. Both independents and Republicans are more likely to mention Christie’s straightforwardness and candidness – 26 percent and 28 percent, respectively. Fifteen percent of favorable Democrats mention these qualities.

In contrast, for the one-quarter of all voters with an unfavorable impression of the governor, references to Christie’s stance on education and teachers, and their perception of him as confrontational or a bully take the top spots. About a quarter of displeased Democrats and independents bring up education as the reason for their dislike. Sixteen percent of Democrats and 18 percent of independents also said something about the governor being mean or bully-like.

“Taken together, the results of our questions on traits, emotions and reasons for impression of the governor suggest that Superstorm Sandy allowed Christie to present a side that changed many impressions of him at very core levels,” said Redlawsk. “Obviously, things can change again and likely will somewhat, but even many voters who were unremittingly negative about Christie before the storm have warm feelings and ascribe positive traits to him because of their experience with how he led the state during the crisis.”

# # #

**QUESTIONS AND TABLES BEGIN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE**

**Questions and Tables**

The questions covered in the release of November 29, 2012 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey Registered Voters; all percentages are of weighted results.

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**Q. I'd like to ask about some people and groups. Please tell me if your general impression of each one is favorable or unfavorable, or if you do not have an opinion. [ROTATE NAMES]**

**Registered Voters**

	<b>Gov. Chris Christie</b>
Favorable	67%
Unfavorable	25%
No Opinion	8%
Don't Know (vol)	1%
Unwgt N=	
	1105

**[QUESTIONS ABOUT RE-ELECTION, HEAD-TO-HEAD BALLOT TESTS, AND JOB APPROVAL COME DIRECTLY BEFORE THE FOLLOWING.]**

**Q. Now let's talk for a bit about Governor Christie. Earlier, you said you feel [INSERT RESPONSE FROM IMPRESSION QUESTION: FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE] about the governor. In just a word or two can you tell me why you have a [FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE] impression of Governor Christie?**

**Registered Voters - Christie Favorability: Favorable**

Honesty, Integrity, and Frankness	23%
Hurricane Sandy Leadership	18%
Overall Governing and Policy Decisions	11%
Gets Things Done and Improving NJ	11%
Economy and General Fiscal Responsibility	7%
Overall Leadership Style	7%
Character/Personality	4%
Cares About NJ/citizens	4%
Effort/Tries Hard	3%
Confrontational/Bully-Like Persona	2%
Unions and Handling of State Workers	2%
Education and Teachers	2%
Bipartisanship	2%
Taxes	1%
Relationship to Republican Party	1%
Other	2%
Don't Know	0%
Unwgt N=	
	739

**Registered Voters - Christie Favorability: Unfavorable**

Education and Teachers	24%
Confrontational/Bully-Like Persona	17%
Character/Personality	10%
Overall Governing and Policy Decisions	8%
Unions and Handling of State Workers	8%
Economy and General Fiscal Responsibility	5%
Wrong Priorities and Hurting NJ	5%
Relationship to Republican Party	4%
Taxes	4%
Doesn't Care About NJ/citizens	3%
Bipartisanship	2%
Honesty, Integrity, and Frankness	1%
Hurricane Sandy Leadership	1%
Overall Leadership Style	1%
Other	8%
Don't Know	1%
Unwght N=	262

**Favorable Voters**

	Party ID			Gender	
	Democrat	Independent	Republican	Male	Female
Honesty, Integrity, and Frankness	15%	26%	28%	22%	25%
Hurricane Sandy Leadership	29%	20%	5%	16%	20%
Overall Governing and Policy Decisions	12%	9%	10%	11%	10%
Gets Things Done and Improving NJ	6%	11%	15%	10%	11%
Economy and General Fiscal Responsibility	6%	6%	9%	9%	5%
Overall Leadership Style	6%	7%	8%	8%	6%
Unwght N=	220	291	217	341	398

**Unfavorable Voters**

	Party ID		Gender	
	Democrat	Independent	Male	Female
Education and Teachers	25%	26%	16%	30%
Confrontational/Bully-Like Persona	16%	18%	17%	16%
Character/Personality	8%	12%	9%	11%
Overall Governing and Policy Decisions	9%	6%	11%	5%
Unions and Handling of State Workers	7%	9%	7%	8%
Unwght N=	167	75	117	145

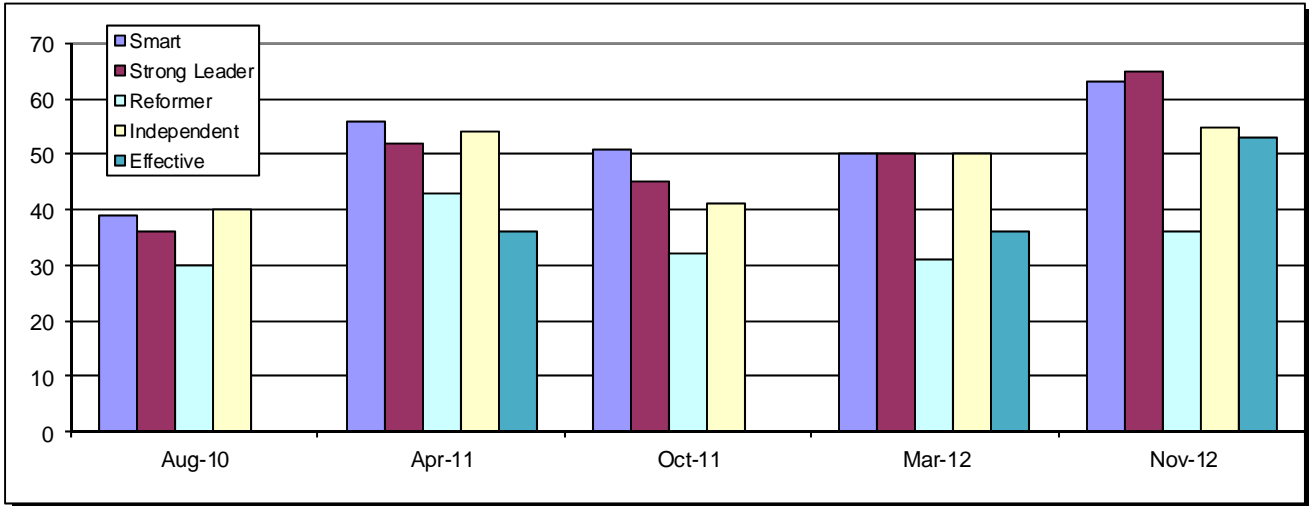
**Q. I am going to list some words that might describe Governor Chris Christie. For each word, tell me how well it describes him. Is it very well, somewhat well, or not at all? [RANDOM ORDER]**

- A. Bully   B. Strong Leader   C. Stubborn   D. Reformer   E. Independent   F. Arrogant  
G. Smart   H. Effective   I. Trustworthy   J. Fair   K. Self-Centered   L. Impulsive**

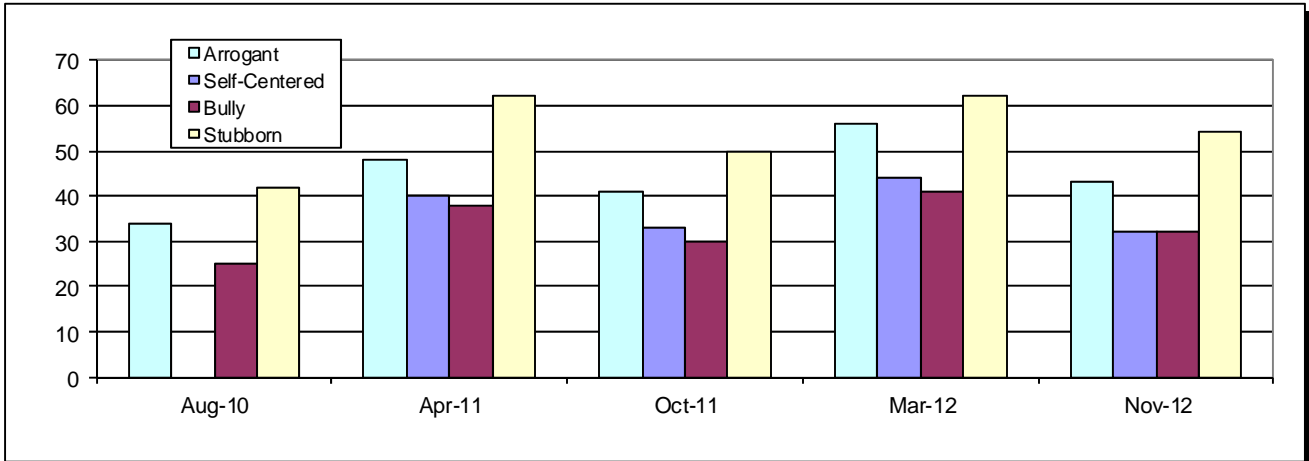
	Smart	Leader	Indep	Reform	Effect	Trust	Fair	Stubb	Arrog	Self	Bully	Impul
Very Well	63%	65%	55%	36%	53%	45%	42%	54%	43%	32%	32%	30%
Somewhat Well	28%	22%	30%	35%	33%	32%	36%	30%	30%	29%	25%	33%
Not at All Well	8%	12%	12%	23%	11%	20%	20%	12%	25%	35%	40%	32%
Don't Know	2%	1%	3%	6%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	4%	3%	5%
Unwght N=	1104	1103	1105	1102	1103	1103	1102	1102	1103	1102	1102	1103

**Trend Charts: REGISTERED VOTERS**

**Positive Traits: Strong Leader, Reformer, Independent, Smart, Effective  
Percent describes Gov. Christie "Very Well"**



**Negative Traits: Stubborn, Arrogant, Self-Centered, Bully  
Percent describes Gov. Christie "Very Well"**



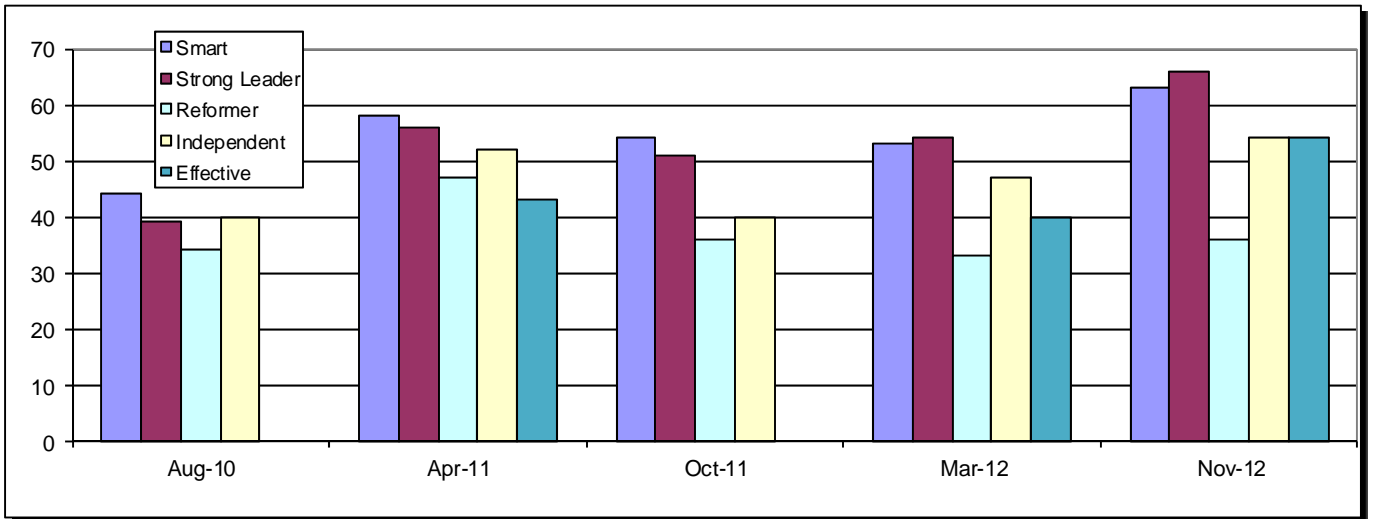
*Gov. Christie Traits November 2012  
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

**Voter Gender**

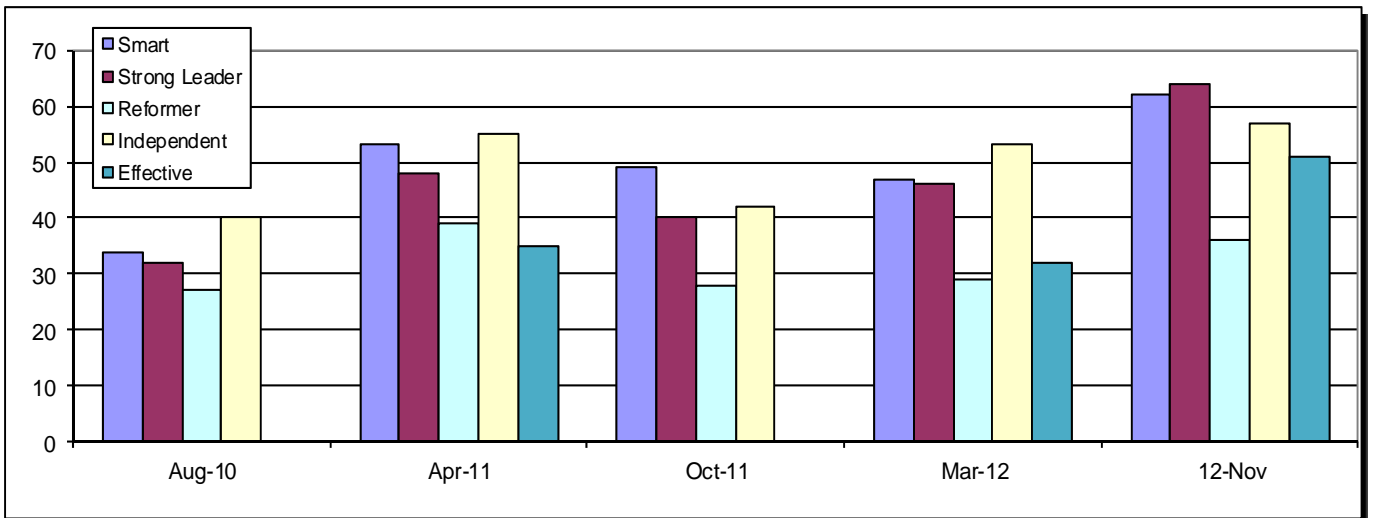
<u>Male</u>	Smart	Leader	Indep	Reform	Effect	Trust	Fair	Stubb	Arrog	Self	Bully	Impul
Very Well	63%	66%	54%	36%	54%	48%	43%	57%	44%	35%	34%	32%
Somewhat Well	28%	21%	29%	37%	32%	29%	36%	29%	29%	29%	28%	33%
Not at All Well	7%	12%	14%	23%	12%	20%	19%	12%	25%	32%	36%	30%
Don't Know	2%	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	5%
Unwght N=	503	502	503	502	503	503	502	501	502	502	502	503

<u>Female</u>	Smart	Leader	Indep	Reform	Effect	Trust	Fair	Stubb	Arrog	Self	Bully	Impul
Very Well	62%	64%	57%	36%	51%	43%	40%	52%	42%	29%	31%	28%
Somewhat Well	28%	23%	30%	34%	35%	35%	35%	30%	31%	29%	21%	33%
Not at All Well	9%	12%	10%	23%	11%	19%	21%	13%	24%	37%	44%	34%
Don't Know	2%	1%	3%	8%	3%	3%	3%	5%	2%	4%	3%	5%
Unwght N=	601	601	602	600	600	600	600	601	601	600	600	600

**Male Registered Voters – Positive Traits; Percent Trait describes Christie “Very Well”**

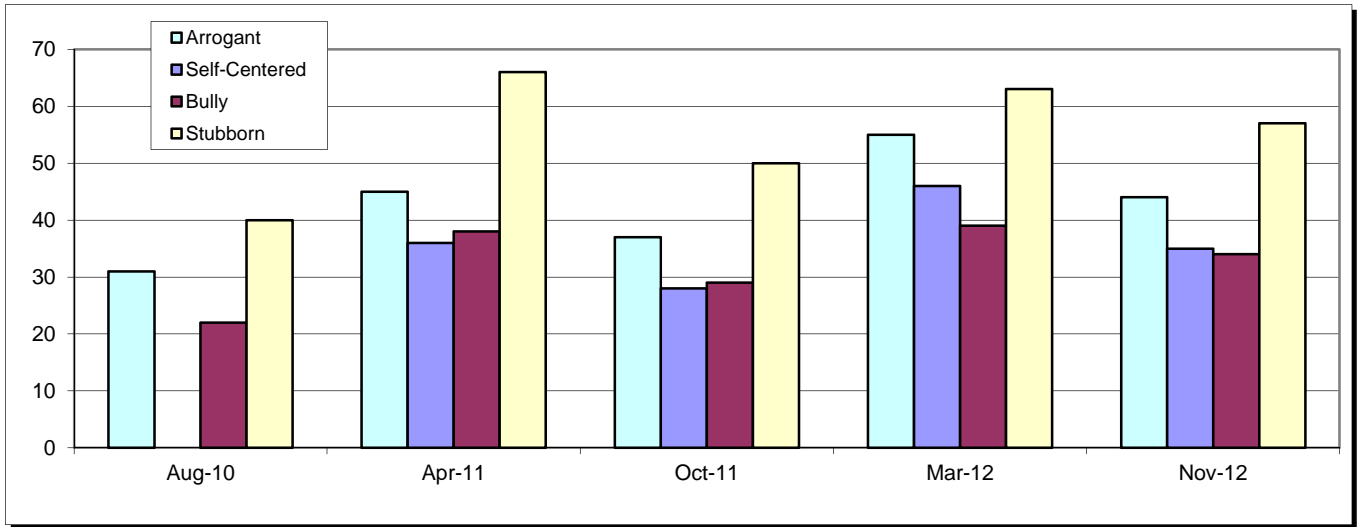


**Female Registered Voters – Positive Traits; Percent Trait describes Christie “Very Well”**

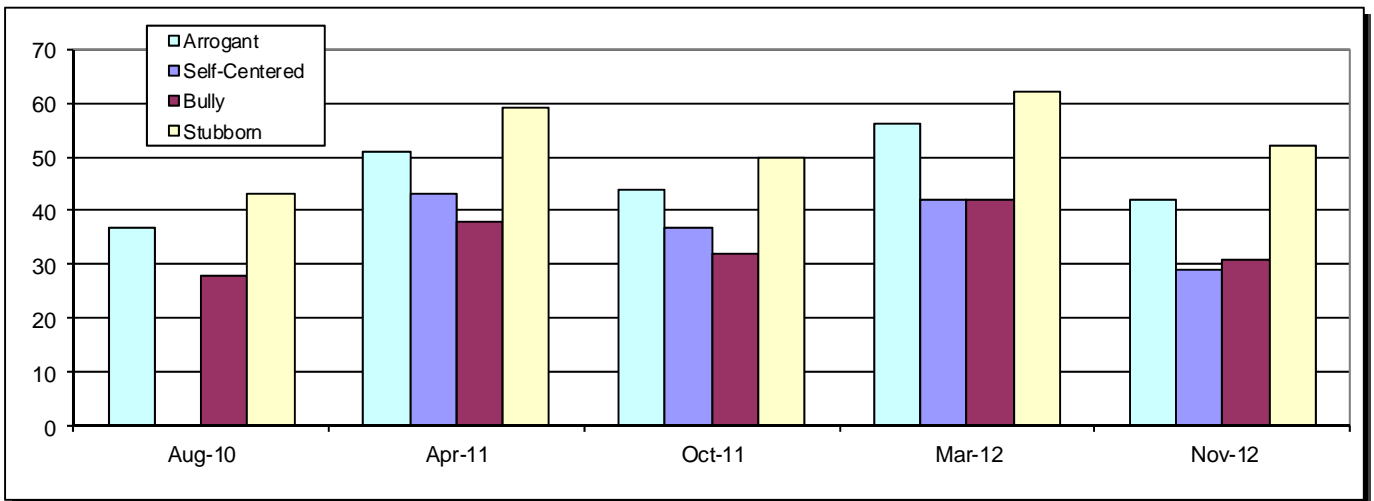




**Male Registered Voters – Negative Traits; Percent Trait describes Christie “Very Well”**



**Female Registered Voters – Negative Traits; Percent Trait describes Christie “Very Well”**



**Impression of Governor Christie**

<u>Favorable</u>	Smart	Leader	Indep	Reform	Effect	Trust	Fair	Stubb	Arrog	Self	Bully	Impul
Very Well	77%	84%	66%	48%	72%	64%	59%	45%	29%	18%	19%	21%
Somewhat Well	21%	14%	26%	36%	26%	29%	34%	35%	35%	31%	27%	34%
Not at All Well	1%	1%	6%	9%	1%	5%	5%	16%	34%	48%	52%	40%
Don't Know	1%	1%	2%	6%	1%	2%	2%	4%	2%	4%	2%	5%
Unwght N=	742	741	742	741	742	742	740	741	741	741	741	742
<u>Unfavorable</u>	Smart	Leader	Indep	Reform	Effect	Trust	Fair	Stubb	Arrog	Self	Bully	Impul
Very Well	34%	23%	33%	10%	14%	7%	6%	79%	79%	69%	67%	57%
Somewhat Well	42%	38%	38%	29%	47%	32%	33%	15%	15%	21%	18%	26%
Not at All Well	23%	38%	27%	57%	37%	58%	58%	4%	6%	8%	12%	15%
Don't Know	2%	1%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	0%	3%	3%	2%
Unwght N=	265	265	265	265	265	265	265	264	265	265	265	265

*Gov. Christie Traits November 2012  
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

**Party ID**

<u>Democrat</u>	Smart	Leader	Indep	Reform	Effect	Trust	Fair	Stubb	Arrog	Self	Bully	Impul
Very Well	51%	52%	49%	23%	37%	29%	23%	63%	56%	45%	46%	39%
Somewhat Well	36%	29%	33%	38%	42%	38%	43%	24%	28%	29%	24%	33%
Not at All Well	11%	19%	16%	34%	18%	29%	32%	10%	14%	23%	27%	24%
Don't Know	2%	1%	3%	5%	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Unwght N=	449	449	450	449	449	449	448	449	449	448	448	449

<u>Independent</u>	Smart	Leader	Indep	Reform	Effect	Trust	Fair	Stubb	Arrog	Self	Bully	Impul
Very Well	65%	67%	55%	39%	56%	46%	46%	53%	41%	26%	28%	28%
Somewhat Well	26%	22%	31%	37%	33%	35%	34%	29%	30%	31%	25%	33%
Not at All Well	8%	9%	11%	18%	9%	17%	17%	12%	27%	39%	44%	33%
Don't Know	2%	2%	3%	6%	3%	3%	3%	5%	2%	4%	3%	6%
Unwght N=	400	399	400	398	399	399	399	398	400	399	399	399

<u>Republican</u>	Smart	Leader	Indep	Reform	Effect	Trust	Fair	Stubb	Arrog	Self	Bully	Impul
Very Well	81%	86%	68%	58%	77%	74%	71%	38%	22%	16%	11%	17%
Somewhat Well	14%	9%	23%	28%	18%	17%	22%	40%	34%	26%	27%	32%
Not at All Well	3%	4%	7%	8%	3%	7%	5%	18%	42%	53%	58%	45%
Don't Know	2%	1%	3%	6%	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%	5%	4%	6%
Unwght N=	242	242	242	242	242	242	242	242	241	242	242	242

**Public Employee Union Household**

	Smart	Leader	Indep	Reform	Effect	Trust	Fair	Stubb	Arrog	Self	Bully	Impul
Very Well	57%	53%	44%	31%	41%	34%	22%	64%	53%	45%	46%	43%
Somewhat Well	32%	26%	40%	39%	42%	32%	41%	27%	29%	27%	28%	32%
Not at All Well	10%	20%	15%	24%	17%	30%	34%	8%	16%	26%	23%	23%
Don't Know	2%	1%	2%	6%	1%	4%	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%	3%
Unwght N=	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186

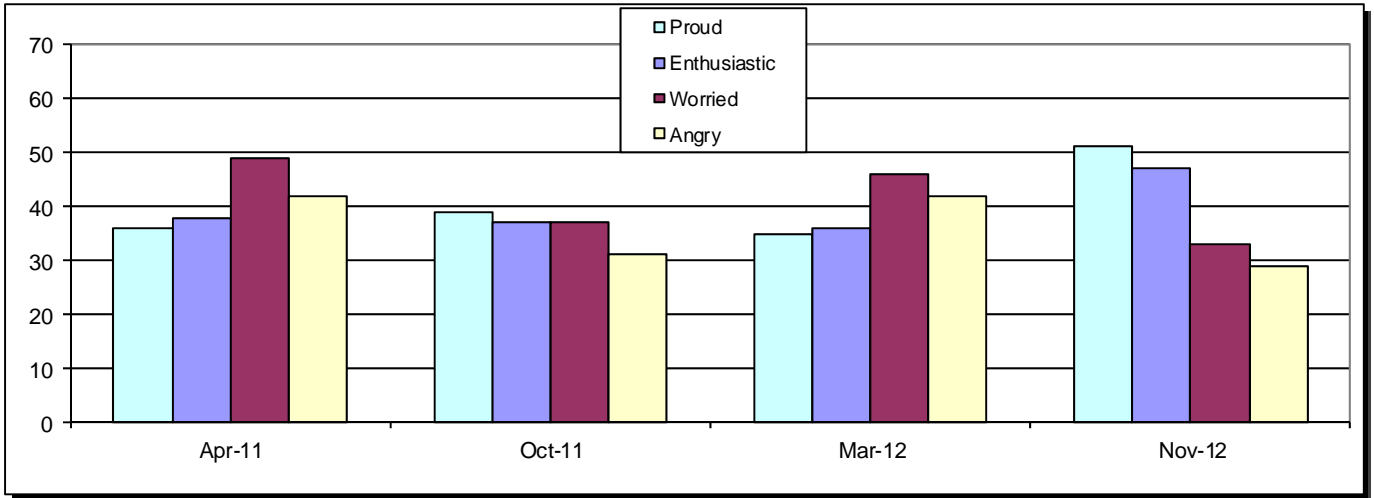
**Q. How does reading or hearing about Governor Christie make you feel? Please tell me yes or no for each of the following: [ROTATE]**

**A. Proud B. Enthusiast C. Worried D. Angry**

**Registered Voters**

	Proud	Enthus	Worried	Angry
Yes	51%	47%	33%	29%
No	47%	51%	65%	70%
Don't Know	2%	2%	2%	1%
Unwght N=	1102	1106	1106	1105

**Trend: Percentage YES, All Registered Voters**

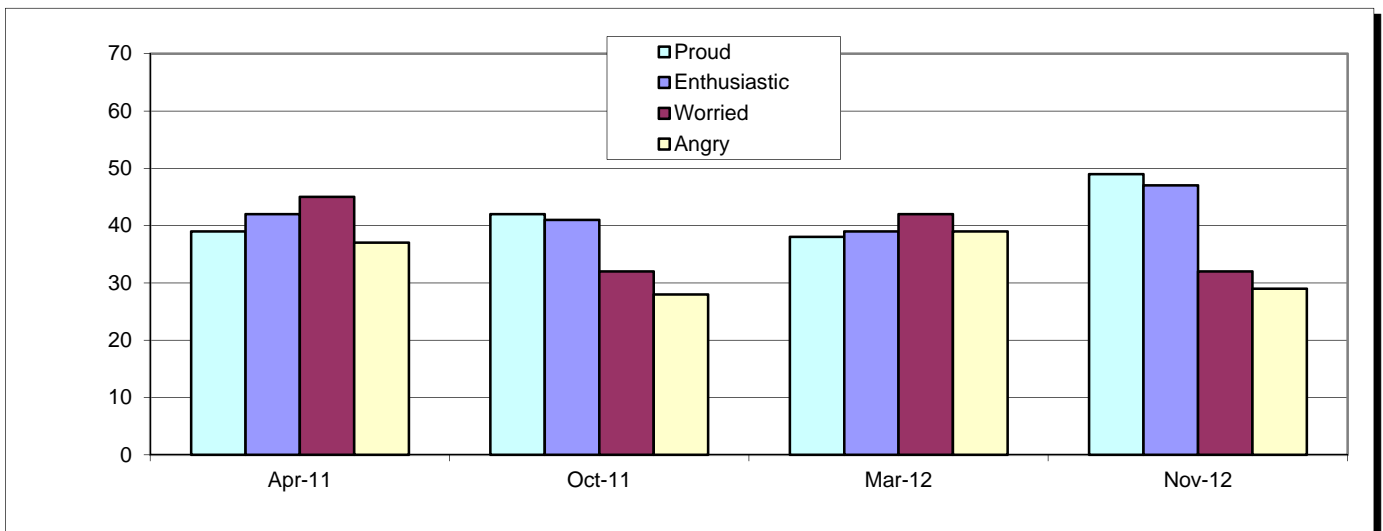


**Voter Gender**

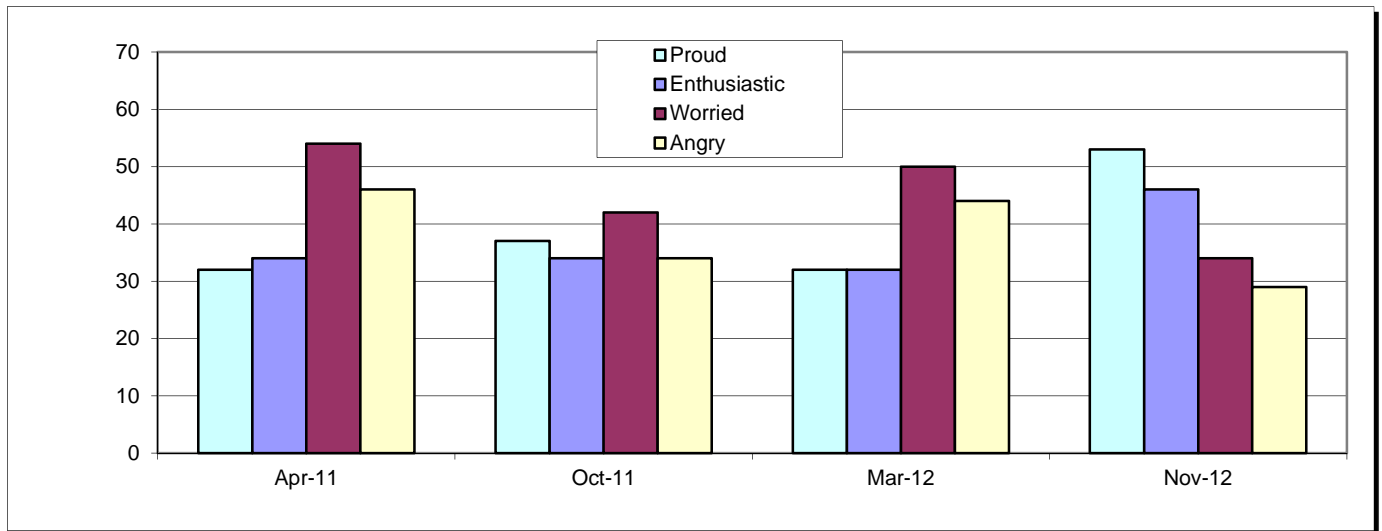
<u>Male</u>	Proud	Enthus	Worried	Angry
Yes	49%	47%	32%	29%
No	50%	50%	66%	70%
Don't Know	1%	2%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	502	503	504	503

<u>Female</u>	Proud	Enthus	Worried	Angry
Yes	53%	46%	34%	29%
No	44%	52%	63%	69%
Don't Know	3%	2%	2%	1%
Unwght N=	600	603	602	602

**Trend: Percentage YES, Male RV**



**Trend: Percentage YES, Female RV**



**Impression of Gov. Christie**

<u>Favorable</u>	Proud	Enthus	Worried	Angry
Yes	71%	66%	16%	13%
No	27%	32%	83%	85%
Don't Know	2%	2%	1%	1%
Unwght N=	740	743	744	743

<u>Unfavorable</u>	Proud	Enthus	Worried	Angry
Yes	7%	6%	75%	68%
No	92%	93%	24%	31%
Don't Know	%	%	2%	%
Unwght N=	264	265	265	265

**Party ID**

<u>Democrat</u>	Proud	Enthus	Worried	Angry
Yes	34%	28%	49%	43%
No	64%	70%	50%	56%
Don't Know	2%	2%	2%	1%
Unwght N=	447	450	450	449

<u>Independent</u>	Proud	Enthus	Worried	Angry
Yes	52%	50%	28%	23%
No	47%	48%	70%	76%
Don't Know	2%	2%	2%	1%
Unwght N=	399	400	400	400

<u>Republican</u>	Proud	Enthus	Worried	Angry
Yes	82%	77%	13%	13%
No	16%	20%	86%	85%
Don't Know	2%	3%	1%	2%
Unwght N=	243	243	243	243

<b>Public Employee Union Household</b>	<b>Proud</b>	<b>Enthus</b>	<b>Worried</b>	<b>Angry</b>
Yes	37%	30%	46%	48%
No	62%	69%	54%	52%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%	0%
Unwght N=	186	186	186	186

**Rutgers-Eagleton Poll November 14-17, 2012**

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone from November 14-17, 2012 with a scientifically selected random sample of 1228 New Jersey adults. This telephone poll included 900 landline respondents and 338 cell phone respondents, all acquired through random digit dialing. Distribution of the phone sample is:

Cell Phone Only Household:	10%
Landline Only Household:	7%
Both landline/Cell Reached on Cell:	17%
Both landline/Cell Reached on Landline:	66%

Within the adult sample, a total of 1108 respondents said they were registered voters. This subsample has a margin of error of +/-2.9 percentage points. All data in this release are reported using this registered voter sample.

Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey registered voter population, using gender, age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity matching to US Census Bureau data. All results are reported with these weighted data.

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 sampling error for 1108 registered voters is +/-2.9 percentage points, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey registered voters favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 47.1 and 52.9 percent (50 +/-2.9) had all New Jersey registered voters been interviewed, rather than just a 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 by Braun Research Incorporated and through our in-house calling center. The questionnaire was developed and 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 focused on the study and teaching of politics and the political process.

<b>Weighted Sample Characteristics 1108 New Jersey Registered Voters</b>			
43% Democrat	47% Male	13% 18-29	74% White
35% Independent	53% Female	32% 30-49	13% Black
22% Republican		31% 50-64	8% Hispanic
		24% 65+	6% Asian/Other/Multi