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Politicians find 'women's vote' not so simple

By IIIJET FLETCHER, Staff Writer, 609-777-7251 | Posted Wednesday, September 20, 2006

Call it "The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pols."

In less than a week, the two leading candidates for governor have crunched numbers and found that women are a linchpin of their agenda.

Democratic Party base. A recent poll conducted Sept. 15-17 by the William I. Hoynes Center for Public Policy at Richard Stockton College found that women expressed more support for Christie.

So at a library in Camden County on Monday night, the Republican challenger said he wanted to

Someone bought doughnuts and others wondered whether the night promised less political

But Jane Russell knew where this was going

The 87-year-old from Gloucester Township needn't work as a doctor. Whether remembering the

present not to write off all politicians as the same. Russell stuck her hand in the air.

"I've said that!" she yelled. "I've been the one saying that!"

"When you get to my age, you feel you've heard all of this before," she said.

But what demographics fail to show is that the profile of a female voter need not always be up simply, nor pandered to.

In many ways, then, Christie also could find votes that his opponent could not.

choosing instead universal issues: unemployment, health coverage and education.

Casèle Love thought she knew why.

"Women, I'd say, are the barometers," she said. "We hear the husband's gripes, and the children's thoughts and feelings. So we know what's going on in the neighborhood."

Christie, chugging bottled water after the two-hour question-and-answer session, said that despite attacks by Corzine about mammogram coverage, he had not palled on women voters' intentions.

He said he preferred "to go with my gut" and schedule the announcement for the state. But having collected local female voters for a chat, he seemed happy to admit they were as worried as anyone else in their outlook.

"We heard about everything from pensions to job security to health care to taxes," he said.

He wasn't alone in his gallantry.

"Women care about exactly the same issues as men - they just discuss them in a language they're comfortable with," state Sen. Loretta Weinberg, D-Bergen, Corzine's running mate, said Tuesday. She said Christie's campaign was trying to "hook" women from their initial interest in health coverage.

And from Chris Daggett: "Ultimately I believe men and women have the same interest in making this state a better state." The issue about mammograms, he said, was an issue that women

But to anyone still bent on wooing female voters, there's a further wrinkle.

Andi Blizard, 52, wanted to put three points to Christie. She watched her husband

taught in public schools.

But Jean Morschauser, 78, left without asking a question. Now retired, she had worked in her husband's dental office. Her generation grew up with wildly different expectations than

Blizzard's age did. As Morschauser put it while she put on her coat, the younger career women's concerns were as far from relevant to her own life as the gripes of a young, male go-getter.

"I'm old," she said flatly. "I'm not interested in the same things these young women are." She didn't take a doughnut.

For candidates, it's hard to travel with the sisterhood when the sisterhood doesn't travel.

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