

Stockton Poll: Christie Holds 24 -Point Lead Over Buono

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Galloway, NJ - Republican Gov. Chris Christie holds a commanding 24-point lead over his Democratic challenger, state Sen. Barbara Buono, according to a Stockton Polling Institute poll released today.

Christie leads Buono by a margin of 56 percent to 32 percent, including voters who lean toward supporting either candidate. Eight percent say they are undecided, and another 4 percent refuse or give some other choice. An earlier Stockton Poll, released Oct. 10, found the governor ahead with a 33-point lead at 61 percent to 28 percent.

In three Stockton polls done over the fall, Buono has never reached the 33 percent mark. The governor's percentage of support has remained consistently in the mid-50s to low 60s and comfortably ahead of the challenger. The governor leads across multiple demographic categories, including age, household income, sex, and education levels. The only group in which Buono leads is among racial and ethnic minorities. Christie leads in every county except in the Democratic stronghold of Essex County and in Union County, where there is a statistical tie.

If the election for New Jersey governor were held today, would you vote for:			
	Sept. 21	Oct. 10	Oct. 29
Democrat Barbara Buono	30.2%	27.8%	32.1%
Republican Chris Christie	58.2%	61.2%	56.4%
	11.7%	10.9%	11.6%

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The latest statewide poll was conducted with 804 likely New Jersey voters from Oct. 23-28, 2013. Interviewers calling live from The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey campus called both land lines and cell phones. The survey has a margin of error of +/-3.5 percent. The Stockton Polling Institute is part of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton College.

“Even if all of the undecideds break for Senator Buono, Governor Christie still leads by landslide proportions,” said Daniel J. Douglas, director of the Hughes Center.

Buono still struggles with name recognition; more than one-third (35 percent) are unfamiliar with Buono and only 33 percent view her favorably.

However, the governor is known by 97 percent of respondents and 67 percent have a somewhat or very favorable opinion of him. Sixty-two percent rate Christie’s job performance as excellent or good, with 36 percent rating it as fair or poor.

Despite his popularity, Christie appears to have limited coattails potential. Twenty-seven percent say a legislative candidate endorsement by Christie would make them more likely to vote for that candidate, while 25 percent would be less likely to be swayed and 43 percent say the endorsement would make no difference. Christie has made little progress in extending his popularity down the ballot; in September, only 29 percent said his endorsement would influence their legislative vote.

This poll was conducted before the Christie campaign announced he would actively campaign for and spend money on selected legislative campaigns.

Regarding the recent budget showdown in Washington that resulted in the federal government being closed, 44 percent of New Jersey voters hold mainly Republicans in Congress responsible for the shutdown. Twenty-seven percent hold President Obama mainly responsible, and 4 percent blame Democrats in Congress, with 22 percent saying all three are equally responsible.

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In terms of next year's congressional elections, 37 percent say they would be more likely to support a generic Democrat for Congress and 21 percent would support the Republican candidate. Thirty-six percent say the shutdown will make no difference in their vote.

Broken down along party lines, Republicans are not inclined to abandon their party over the shutdown; only 3 percent are likely to support the Democrat, with 50 percent supporting the Republican and 43 percent saying it will not affect their vote.

Fifty-one percent of unaffiliated voters say the shutdown will make no difference, with 22 percent likely to support the Democrat and 18 percent favoring the Republican.

Seventy-two percent of Democrats would support their party's candidate, with 21 percent saying the shutdown makes no difference and 2 percent likely to support the Republican.

In other poll results:

55 percent say New Jersey is heading in the right direction – a number that has not changed over the course of three polls – while 29 percent say it is on the wrong track.

When asked to name top funding priorities from a list of eight state budget areas, 22 percent identify property taxes and 21 percent identify jobs. Seventeen percent identify K-12 education and 13 percent name health care. Rounding out the list is higher education (9 percent), environment (6 percent), state workers' pensions (5 percent), transportation (4 percent), and some other budget priority (2 percent). The percentages are nearly identical to those found in the Oct. 10 poll.

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chance of joining the sample because of random selection. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets. Data are weighted based on United States Census Bureau demographics for the New Jersey population.

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey. The Center is named for William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton College. The Hughes Center can be found at www.facebook.com/Hughes.Center.Stockton.College and can be followed on Twitter @hughescenter.

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