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Released:

Wednesday, April 2, 2014

Please attribute this information to:

***Monmouth University/
Asbury Park Press Poll***

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GOV. CHRISTIE HALTS RATINGS SLIDE

But few New Jerseyans see Mastro report as fair and unbiased

Public opinion of Chris Christie has stabilized after suffering a significant drop when the Bridgegate scandal broke in early January. The ***Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll*** found the governor's job approval rating hovering just above 50% – similar to his standing in February which had fallen by double digits since his re-election last year. While a recent report contends that Gov. Christie had no involvement in the toll lane closures, the internal inquiry does not seem to be the cause behind his steadying job ratings. In fact, most New Jerseyans say the investigation was conducted mainly to improve Christie's reputation and they actually disagree with many of the report's findings.

Currently, Gov. Christie's job rating stands at 51% approve to 41% disapprove among New Jersey residents and 51% approve to 43% disapprove among the state's registered voters. His approval numbers are nominally, but not significantly, better than February, when they were 50% among all adults and 49% among registered voters. They remain 14 points lower than December, before the Bridgegate scandal broke.

Christie receives solid approval from 84% of his fellow Republicans and majority support from 55% of independents. Only 34% of Democrats approve of his job performance. These findings are similar to the February *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll*.

“The bleeding has stopped for now. The poll was conducted after the Mastro report was released, but this does not seem to be the reason why Christie's ratings have stabilized. In fact, few New Jerseyans agree with the report's conclusions,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Just over half (54%) of New Jerseyans have heard about the report released last week that detailed the findings of an investigation led by Randy Mastro of the Gibson Dunn & Crutcher law firm.

Few (30%) see it as a fair and unbiased investigation of the Governor's office involvement in the George Washington Bridge toll lane closings. Instead, most (52%) say the report was done to help Chris Christie's reputation.

The report seems to conclude that two staff members in the Governor's office and at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey were responsible for the closures. Only 11% of the New Jersey public agree. More than 3-in-4 (77%) say that others were involved. This opinion is no different than when the Bridgegate emails first became public. In January, 80% of New Jerseyans said more people were involved than the staffers who had been identified in the emails and fired by the governor.

The report also clears Gov. Christie of any wrongdoing, but the public verdict is not quite as conclusive. Few New Jerseyans (32%) feel that the governor has been completely honest about what he knows of the incident. Most (61%) say he has not come clean. This opinion is unchanged from February. In fact, more state residents believe that the governor himself was involved in the decision to close the lanes (47%) than believe he was not directly involved (38%). The number who believe Christie was involved has declined slightly by 3 points since February, but remains significantly higher than the 34% who felt he was involved shortly after the news broke in January.

The report also dismisses the claims of Hoboken Mayor Dawn Zimmer that she was told by members of the administration that her town would not get Sandy relief funding if the mayor withheld approval of an unrelated development project. The New Jersey public, though, is not so certain. In fact, more residents tend to believe (45%) rather than disbelieve (40%) the mayor's claims. These results are not too different from the findings of February's poll when 49% believed the mayor. Moreover, among those New Jerseyans who are familiar with the Mastro report's release, a majority of 53% actually believe the mayor compared to just 36% who do not.

The governor's job rating is lower among those who have been paying attention to the Bridgegate scandal than those who have not. Among Garden State residents who have been paying a lot of attention, Chris Christie gets a 49% approve to 44% disapprove job rating. Among those who know about the Mastro report, he earns a split 47% approve to 46% disapprove rating. He does significantly better among those who have not heard about the report – 56% approve to 34% disapprove.

“Considering the governor does worse among those who know about the Mastro investigation, it's possible we could see a negative impact on Christie's rating as more New Jerseyans become aware of the report's contents,” said Murray.

In other developments last week, Gov. Christie announced the resignation of David Samson, Chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, with the stated reason that Samson wanted to retire. Only 19% of New Jerseyans believe that was really the motivation. According to state residents, more probable reasons for Samson's resignation are that he was involved in either the toll lane

or Hoboken issues (36%) or that he resigned as a way to take political pressure off Chris Christie (23%). Overall, most New Jerseyans (56%) have no opinion of the Port Authority. Those who do are twice as likely to hold an unfavorable (30%) rather than favorable (14%) view of the bi-state agency.

The poll also found that Chris Christie’s personal ratings remain mixed. Currently 40% have a favorable view of the governor as a person, 35% have an unfavorable view, and 25% are not sure how they feel about Christie as a person. These numbers are similar to February. Matching another finding from February, a majority (54%) of New Jerseyans say Gov. Christie puts his own political future first compared to just 35% who say is more concerned about governing his home state. Prior to the Bridgegate scandal, more people saw Christie as putting New Jersey first.

In terms of Gov. Christie’s political future, 62% of New Jerseyans say that the Bridgegate and Hoboken issues hurt his presidential prospects for 2016. This number is up from 51% in January. Also, state residents are split on how Christie affects New Jersey’s image around the country – 29% say he helps, 33% say he hurts it, and 34% he makes no difference to the state’s reputation.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by telephone with 803 New Jersey adults from March 30 to April 1, 2014. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the Asbury Park Press and its sister publications (Courier-Post, Courier News, Daily Journal, Daily Record, and Home News Tribune).

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Chris Christie is doing as governor?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Approve	51%	51%	55%	34%	55%	84%	56%	47%	49%	57%	47%	56%
Disapprove	41%	43%	28%	59%	36%	14%	38%	42%	44%	33%	46%	34%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	6%	17%	8%	9%	2%	5%	11%	7%	9%	7%	9%

TREND: <i>All adults</i>	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Jan. 2014	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013	Dec. 2012	Sept. 2012	July 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	Feb. 2011	Sept. 2010	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010
Approve	51%	50%	59%	65%	61%	63%	70%	67%	53%	52%	51%	52%	54%	48%	47%	47%	45%	44%	41%	33%
Disapprove	41%	44%	32%	25%	24%	26%	17%	21%	35%	36%	35%	38%	38%	42%	49%	40%	38%	44%	44%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	8%	6%	8%	10%	15%	11%	14%	12%	11%	12%	14%	10%	9%	9%	5%	12%	17%	12%	15%	52%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	803	803	541	802	783	806	803	816	805	803	804	803	817	802	807	801	801	801	804	803

TREND: <i>Registered voters</i>	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Jan. 2014	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013	Dec. 2012	Sept. 2012	July 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011	May 2011	Feb. 2011	Sept. 2010	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010
Approve	51%	49%	58%	65%	63%	65%	70%	69%	55%	53%	50%	55%	55%	50%	46%	49%	44%	45%	42%	31%
Disapprove	43%	46%	35%	27%	24%	26%	16%	22%	36%	35%	38%	37%	37%	41%	49%	41%	40%	43%	44%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	6%	7%	8%	13%	10%	13%	9%	10%	12%	12%	9%	8%	8%	5%	9%	16%	12%	13%	53%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	690	690	470	698	674	694	697	726	715	678	692	709	693	730	725	718	726	747	719	716

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the state legislature is doing?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Approve	40%	38%	47%	44%	37%	43%	42%	38%	38%	45%	36%	45%
Disapprove	43%	46%	30%	39%	48%	41%	46%	40%	46%	37%	50%	35%
(VOL) Don't know	17%	15%	22%	17%	15%	16%	11%	22%	16%	18%	14%	20%

TREND: Registered Voters	April 2014	Feb. 2014	Jan. 2014	Dec. 2013	Sept. 2013	April 2013	Feb. 2013	Dec. 2012	Sept. 2012	July 2012	April 2012	Feb. 2012	Oct. 2011	Aug. 2011
Approve	38%	38%	47%	44%	38%	41%	40%	43%	32%	34%	37%	34%	33%	35%
Disapprove	46%	47%	35%	38%	36%	42%	35%	34%	43%	45%	41%	42%	45%	48%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	14%	18%	19%	27%	17%	25%	22%	25%	21%	23%	24%	22%	17%
Unwtd N	690	690	470	698	674	694	697	726	715	678	692	709	693	730

TREND: Registered Voters Continued	May 2011	Feb. 2011	July 2010	April 2010	Feb. 2010	July 2009	Feb. 2009	Sept. 2008	July 2008	April 2008	March 2008	Oct. 2007	Feb. 2007
Approve	32%	29%	25%	19%	24%	31%	23%	29%	27%	28%	25%	32%	34%
Disapprove	48%	45%	49%	57%	49%	48%	55%	50%	47%	55%	53%	43%	42%
(VOL) Don't know	20%	26%	26%	24%	27%	22%	22%	21%	26%	17%	22%	25%	23%
Unwtd N	725	718	747	719	716	792	721	709	889	720	719	688	681

3. Is your general impression of Chris Christie favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of him?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Favorable	40%	41%	35%	21%	42%	71%	43%	37%	39%	40%	42%	37%
Unfavorable	35%	37%	27%	46%	32%	18%	36%	34%	38%	28%	41%	28%
No opinion	25%	22%	38%	32%	25%	11%	21%	29%	22%	32%	16%	36%

TREND:	April 2014	February 2014	January 2014	February 2013	September 2012
Favorable	40%	42%	44%	70%	52%
Unfavorable	35%	37%	28%	19%	34%
No opinion	25%	21%	28%	11%	15%
Unwtd N	803	803	541	803	805

TREND: Registered voters only:	April 2014	February 2014	January 2014	February 2013	September 2012
Favorable	41%	43%	46%	71%	54%
Unfavorable	37%	39%	31%	18%	34%
No opinion	22%	18%	23%	10%	13%
Unwtd N	690	690	470	697	715

4. Do you think Chris Christie is more concerned with governing the state of New Jersey or more concerned about his own political future? [CHOICES WERE ROTATED]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Governing the state of NJ	35%	35%	31%	23%	35%	59%	37%	32%	34%	36%	35%	33%
His own political future	54%	54%	55%	70%	51%	34%	52%	57%	56%	50%	56%	52%
(VOL) Both equally	7%	7%	9%	5%	11%	4%	8%	7%	6%	10%	5%	10%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	3%	3%	5%	4%	4%	3%	4%

TREND:	April 2014	February 2014	January 2014	September 2013	December 2012	February 2012
Governing the state of NJ	35%	35%	42%	44%	61%	39%
His own political future	54%	56%	47%	38%	30%	48%
(VOL) Both equally	7%	5%	6%	12%	5%	6%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	4%	5%	6%	4%	7%
Unwtd N	803	803	541	783	816	803

5. Thinking nationally, does Chris Christie help or hurt New Jersey's image around the country, or does he make no difference to the state's image?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Help	29%	29%	29%	17%	33%	47%	33%	26%	28%	31%	28%	31%
Hurt	33%	35%	28%	49%	28%	14%	30%	37%	36%	27%	39%	26%
No difference	34%	33%	37%	31%	35%	37%	34%	33%	33%	36%	31%	37%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	3%	6%	3%	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%	6%	2%	6%

TREND:	April 2014	January 2014	July 2012
Help	29%	36%	41%
Hurt	33%	21%	29%
No difference	34%	40%	25%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	3%	5%
Unwtd N	803	541	803

6. How much have you read or heard about issues surrounding George Washington Bridge toll lane closures in Fort Lee last year – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
A lot	69%	72%	56%	76%	62%	73%	69%	68%	100%	0%	86%	48%
A little	24%	22%	33%	18%	29%	23%	22%	26%	0%	77%	13%	36%
Nothing at all	7%	6%	11%	6%	10%	4%	9%	6%	0%	23%	1%	15%

TREND:	April 2014	February 2014	January 2014
A lot	69%	67%	53%
A little	24%	25%	30%
Nothing at all	7%	8%	17%
Unwtd N	803	803	541

[Note: In prior polls, Questions 7 & 8 were only asked of those who had heard at least a little about Bridgegate. Since the number who know nothing of Bridgegate is now insignificant, those questions were asked of the full sample in the current poll.]

7. Do you think the governor himself was or was not personally involved in the decision to close the toll lanes?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Was involved	47%	47%	48%	62%	44%	22%	47%	47%	48%	45%	49%	45%
Was not involved	38%	39%	36%	23%	38%	72%	41%	36%	40%	34%	40%	36%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	14%	16%	14%	19%	6%	12%	17%	12%	21%	11%	19%

TREND:	April 2014	February 2014	January 2014
Was involved	47%	50%	34%
Was not involved	38%	40%	52%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	10%	14%
Unwtd N	803	751	474

8. Based on what you have read or heard so far, do you believe Chris Christie has been completely honest about what he knows about the incident, or not?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Been completely honest	32%	32%	32%	19%	32%	58%	33%	30%	33%	29%	32%	31%
Not been completely honest	61%	62%	60%	76%	58%	40%	60%	63%	63%	57%	64%	59%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	6%	8%	5%	10%	2%	7%	7%	3%	14%	4%	10%

TREND:	April 2014	February 2014	January 2014
Been completely honest	32%	33%	40%
Not been completely honest	61%	61%	51%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	5%	9%
Unwt'd N	803	751	474

9. A recent report conducted for the Governor's office by an outside law firm concluded that one person in the governor's office and one person in the Port Authority were responsible for the lane closures. Do you think these were the only staff members involved in the decision to close the toll lanes or were others involved?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Were the only staff members involved	11%	12%	9%	9%	10%	17%	12%	10%	12%	10%	12%	10%
Others were involved	77%	78%	74%	81%	78%	72%	78%	76%	79%	75%	80%	74%
(VOL) Don't know	12%	10%	17%	10%	12%	11%	9%	14%	10%	15%	8%	16%

10. Have you read or heard anything about this report conducted for the Governor's office, or not?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes
Yes	54%	59%	34%	54%	50%	67%	53%	56%	68%	25%	
No	45%	40%	66%	46%	50%	32%	47%	44%	32%	75%	
(VOL) Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	

11. Do you think this report was a fair and unbiased investigation of the Governor's office involvement in the toll lane closings or was it done to help Chris Christie's reputation?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Fair and unbiased investigation	30%	28%	35%	25%	25%	49%	29%	31%	30%	28%	31%	28%
To help Chris Christie's reputation	52%	55%	41%	61%	54%	34%	54%	51%	55%	46%	59%	44%
(VOL) Don't know	18%	17%	24%	14%	21%	17%	17%	19%	14%	26%	10%	29%

12. The mayor of Hoboken claims that members of the Christie administration told her that the town would not get Sandy relief funding if the mayor did not approve an unrelated development project. Do you tend to believe or not believe the mayor's claim?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Believe	45%	47%	40%	60%	41%	27%	42%	48%	48%	41%	53%	37%
Not believe	40%	39%	43%	27%	41%	65%	45%	36%	40%	40%	36%	45%
(VOL) Don't know	14%	14%	17%	12%	18%	7%	13%	16%	12%	19%	11%	18%

TREND:	April 2014	February 2014
Believe	45%	49%
Not believe	40%	40%
(VOL) Don't know	14%	11%
Unwtd N	803	803

13. Do you think these issues will hurt Governor Christie's chances of running for president in 2016, or not?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Will hurt	62%	60%	70%	70%	61%	51%	62%	62%	64%	58%	61%	63%
Will not hurt	33%	36%	21%	27%	32%	47%	33%	32%	32%	35%	34%	31%
(VOL) Had no plans to run	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	3%	7%	2%	5%	1%	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%	3%

TREND:	April 2014	January 2014
Will hurt	62%	51%
Will not hurt	33%	43%
(VOL) Had no plans to run	2%	1%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	5%
Unwtd N	803	474

14. And, is your general impression of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey favorable or unfavorable, or do you have no opinion of it?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Favorable	14%	14%	15%	13%	14%	17%	15%	13%	12%	18%	13%	16%
Unfavorable	30%	33%	17%	27%	32%	31%	36%	24%	37%	14%	42%	16%
No opinion	56%	53%	68%	60%	53%	52%	49%	64%	50%	68%	46%	69%

15. Have you heard that David Samson, the Chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, resigned last week, or not?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Yes	51%	56%	29%	54%	47%	56%	51%	50%	62%	26%	69%	29%
No	48%	43%	69%	44%	52%	44%	47%	49%	36%	73%	30%	69%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%

16. Which of the following is the most likely reason you think he resigned: because he was involved in the toll lane or Hoboken incidents, or because he wanted to help take the pressure off Chris Christie, or because he was ready to retire?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
Involved in toll lane/Hoboken	36%	36%	38%	40%	37%	30%	33%	39%	39%	31%	39%	33%
Take pressure off Christie	23%	22%	25%	27%	21%	21%	28%	17%	25%	17%	26%	18%
Ready to retire	19%	20%	14%	15%	18%	29%	19%	19%	14%	29%	14%	25%
(VOL) None of these	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%
(VOL) All of these	3%	3%	3%	5%	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%	1%	4%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	15%	15%	9%	18%	14%	14%	16%	14%	18%	13%	18%

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from March 30 to April 1, 2014 with a statewide random sample of 803 adult residents, including 601 contacted via live interview on a landline telephone and 202 via live interview on a cell phone. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>			
38% Dem	49% Male	28% 18-34	63% White
43% Ind	51% Female	40% 35-54	13% Black
19% Rep		32% 55+	15% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other
<i>Registered Voter Sample (weighted)</i>			
38% Dem	49% Male	22% 18-34	68% White
41% Ind	51% Female	42% 35-54	12% Black
21% Rep		36% 55+	15% Hispanic
			5% Asian/Other

	TOTAL	MARGIN OF ERROR										
		REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AWARE OF LANE CLOSURES		AWARE OF REPORT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Lot	Little/None	Yes	No
<i>Unweighted N</i>	803	690	113	285	329	163	387	416	599	203	504	297
<i>moe</i>	3.5%	3.7%	9.2%	5.8%	5.4%	7.7%	5.0%	4.8%	4.0%	6.9%	4.4%	5.7%

It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult New Jersey residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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