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### GOV. CHRISTIE JOB RATINGS SLIGHTLY LOWER

2016 buzz may be more of a detriment than Bridgegate

Gov. Chris Christie's job approval ratings have declined by a small but notable amount since this summer. The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* found that his out-of-state travel and the surrounding presidential buzz, which had been a positive asset in the past, may be a factor in this slight downturn. On the other hand, he appears to continue to weather the ongoing Bridgegate investigation. In fact, most New Jerseyans say it's time to wrap up the legislative inquiry even though they don't believe the governor has come clean.

Currently, Gov. Christie's job rating stands at 46% approve to 39% disapprove among New Jersey residents and 46% approve to 42% disapprove among the state's registered voters. This marks a decline from his ratings in the June *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* which stood at 50% positive to 42% negative among all residents and 49% positive to 43% negative among registered voters. Also, 15% of Garden State residents do not have an opinion of the governor at this point in his tenure, compared to between 6% and 9% in other polls this year.

"Gov. Christie's ratings took a significant drop after the Bridgegate story broke in early January, but they quickly stabilized in February. These new numbers mark the first perceptible shift in our poll in more than six months, even if it is a shift into the undecided category," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. "These numbers are akin to the ratings he received in the first year and a half of his tenure when New Jerseyans were not quite sure what would come of a Christie administration."

Most New Jerseyans (56%) believe that Gov. Christie is more concerned with his own political future than he is with governing the state (33%). This finding is similar to other poll readings taken since February of this year. However, somewhat more Garden State residents (75%) now believe that he is

planning a 2016 run for president than felt that way back in February (65%). Among this group, 39% say that Christie's travel schedule and potential presidential plans have made him less effective as governor compared to 9% who say it has made him more effective and 48% who say it has had no impact on his ability to perform his "day job."

Of note, most New Jerseyans (52%) feel that the governor's highly publicized visit to Mexico earlier this month was mainly to burnish his presidential prospects. Only 21% accept the official administration account that the trip was designed to build trade relations between New Jersey and Mexico. Even the governor's fellow Republicans are split on whether the purpose of the trip was to help Christie run for president (33%) or to help the state's economy (31%). Most Democrats (61%) and independents (53%) feel that presidential ambition was the primary motive.

"In the past, buzz about Christie's presidential potential was a source of pride for most New Jerseyans. These findings suggest that some of his constituents are starting to resent his time out of state," said Murray. "This is no definitive indication that growing uncertainty about the governor's job performance will result in widespread backlash against his presidential ambitions, but it bears watching."

One issue that has dogged the governor over the past few months is the George Washington Bridge lane closures ordered by his staff last year. The poll found that public opinion of the governor's involvement in Bridgegate has remained stable – specifically, few people believed he came clean when the news first broke and the same number continue to feel that way now. Fully 60% of New Jerseyans say that Christie has not been completely honest about what he knows of the incident. This is nearly identical to the 61% who felt that way in late February and the 61% who continued to feel that way even after the Mastro report was released in April. *[Note: about three-quarters of the interviews for the current poll were conducted after an NBC news report last week claimed that the U.S. Attorney had cleared Christie of wrongdoing in Bridgegate.]* 

At the same time, a similar 6-in-10 (59%) Garden State residents say the special joint legislative committee looking into Bridgegate should end its investigation. Only 34% say it should continue with its inquiry. Republicans (85%) and independents (59%) are firmly in the camp of shutting down the inquiry. However, even Democrats are divided on whether the investigation is worth pursuing (46%) or it would be more prudent to end it now (46%).

"Few people think that Christie has been forthcoming about Bridgegate, but they don't believe that the motives of Democratic legislators leading the investigation are all that pure either. This seems to have made the issue a wash for the governor," said Murray.

One of the major policy issues Christie will have to face this year – and something he put on the table himself this summer – is the state's ballooning pension obligation. Only 14% of New Jersey residents believe that the state pension system's costs have been managed wisely. This compares to 66%

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who say these costs are out of control. This is basically unchanged from the 62% who felt that way when Christie first launched his "No Pain No Gain" public relations blitz and is only somewhat lower than Christie's first year in office in 2010 (78%).

In terms of who's to blame for the poor condition of New Jersey's pension system, Gov. Christie has a slight advantage in the public's eye. Just under 4-in-10 (38%) say the governor shoulders a lot of the blame for the poorly managed pension system while half (50%) say that the state legislature should get a lot of the blame. This blame-gap, though, is narrower than it was in June when 35% said Christie carried a lot of responsibility for the pension problem and 59% said the same about the legislature.

The poll also found that public opinion of the overall job the state legislature is doing currently stands at 36% approve to 43% disapprove among all adults and 35% approve to 46% disapprove among registered voters. These results are similar to negative ratings of the state legislature registered in other polls taken since February.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by telephone with 802 New Jersey adults, including 680 registered voters, from September 17 to 21, 2014. The total sample has a margin of error of  $\pm$  3.5 percent and the registered voter sample has a margin of error of  $\pm$  3.8 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. D	o you approve or o	disapprov	e of the job	Chris Christie is	doing as governor	r?
		R	EGISTERED			PUBLIC

					тот	AL		TERED TER	)		PARTY	' ID		G	ENDEF	र		UBLIC				
							Yes	Nc	)	Dem	Ind	1	Rep	Male	Fe	male	Yes		No			
	App	orove			46	%	46%	46%	6	35%	45%	5 6	8%	51%	4	1%	30%	5	1%			
	Dis	approve	е		39	%	42%	30%	6	53%	35%	5 2	2%	36%	4	2%	57%	34	4%			
	(VO	L) Don	't know		15	%	12%	239	6	12%	19%	<b>b</b>	9%	12%	1	7%	12%	1:	5%			
	Sept.	June	April	Feb.	Jan.	Dec.	Sept.	April	Feb.	Dec.	Sept.	July	April	Feb.	Oct.	Aug.	May	Feb.	Sept.	July	April	Feb.
TREND: All adults	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2013	2013	2013	2013	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2011	2011	2011	2011	2010	2010	2010	2010
Approve	46%	50%	51%	50%	59%	65%	61%	63%	70%	67%	53%	52%	51%	52%	54%	48%	47%	47%	45%	44%	41%	33%
Disapprove	39%	42%	41%	44%	32%	25%	24%	26%	17%	21%	35%	36%	35%	38%	38%	42%	49%	40%	38%	44%	44%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	9%	8%	6%	8%	10%	15%	11%	14%	12%	11%	12%	14%	10%	9%	9%	5%	12%	17%	12%	15%	52%
Unwtd N	802	800	803	803	541	802	783	806	803	816	805	803	804	803	817	802	807	801	801	801	804	803
TREND:	Sept.	June	April	Feb.	Jan.	Dec.	Sept.	April	Feb.	Dec.	Sept.	July	April	Feb.	Oct.	Aug.	May	Feb.	Sept.	July	April	Feb.
Registered voters	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2013	2013	2013	2013	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2011	2011	2011	2011	2010	2010	2010	2010
Approve	46%	49%	51%	49%	58%	65%	63%	65%	70%	69%	55%	53%	50%	55%	55%	50%	46%	49%	44%	45%	42%	31%
Disapprove	42%	43%	43%	46%	35%	27%	24%	26%	16%	22%	36%	35%	38%	37%	37%	41%	49%	41%	40%	43%	44%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	12%	8%	6%	6%	7%	8%	13%	10%	13%	9%	10%	12%	12%	9%	8%	8%	5%	9%	16%	12%	13%	53%
Unwtd N	680	717	690	690	470	698	674	694	697	726	715	678	692	709	693	730	725	718	726	747	719	716

		т	OTAL	RE	GISTE VOTEF			PAF	RTY ID			GEND	DER		PUB WOR			
				Ye	s	No	Den	ו ר	nd	Rep	M	ale	Female	ε ì	'es	No		
Approve			36%	359	%	40%	40%	ώ 3	6%	31%	38	3%	35%	3	6%	37%		
Disapprove			43%	469	%	31%	44%	64	1%	47%	42	2%	44%	4	7%	42%		
(VOL) Don't k	now		21%	199	%	28%	17%	62	3%	22%	20	0%	21%	1	6%	21%		
TREND: Registered				April	Feb.	Jan				April	Feb.	Dec			July	April	Fel	
Voters	201			2014	2014	2014				2013	2013	2012			2012	2012	201	
Approve	359			38%	38%	47%	6 44	% 3	3%	41%	40%	43%	5 32	% 3	34%	37%	349	%
Disapprove	469	% 48	3% ·	46%	47%	35%	6 38	% 3	5% ·	42%	35%	34%	43	%	45%	41%	429	%
(VOL) Don't know	199	% 1	7%	15%	14%	18%	ն 19	% 2 <sup>°</sup>	7%	17%	25%	22%	5 25	% 2	21%	23%	249	%
Unwtd N	68	0 7	17	690	690	470	69	98 6	74	694	697	726	71	15	678	692	70	9
END: Registered	Oct.	Aug.	May	Fe	b. 、	July	April	Feb.	July	Feb	). S	ept.	July	April	Mar	ch O	ct.	F
ters Continued	2011	2011	2011	20	11 2	010	2010	2010	2009	9 200	9 2	800	2008	2008	200	08 20	07	2
prove	33%	35%	32%	5 29	% 2	:5%	19%	24%	31%	5 23°	% 2	9%	27%	28%	25	% 32	%	3
sapprove	45%	48%	48%	45	% 4	9%	57%	49%	48%	55%	% 5	0%	47%	55%	53	% 43	%	4
OL) Don't know	22%	17%	20%	26	% 2	6%	24%	27%	22%	5 22 <sup>9</sup>	% 2	1%	26%	17%	22	% 25	%	2
nwtd N	693	730	725	71	18	747	719	716	792	72	1 7	709	889	720	71	9 68	38	6

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

3. 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		STERED DTER		PARTY ID		GEND	ER		JBLIC DRKER
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Governing the state of NJ	33%	32%	37%	23%	33%	54%	33%	34%	26%	35%
His own political future	56%	57%	49%	68%	55%	33%	55%	56%	66%	53%
(VOL) Both equally	5%	5%	2%	5%	3%	7%	4%	5%	4%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	5%	12%	4%	8%	6%	8%	5%	4%	7%
TREND:	Septem 2014		June 2014	April 2014	February 2014	January 2014	Septem 2013		cember 2012	February 2012
Governing the state of NJ	33%		32%	35%	35%	42%	44%		51%	39%
His own political future	56%	, b	55%	54%	56%	47%	38%	3	80%	48%
(VOL) Both equally	5%		7%	7%	5%	6%	12%		5%	6%
(VOL) Don't know	7%		6%	4%	4%	5%	6%		4%	7%
Unwtd N	802		800	803	803	541	783		816	803

## 4. Do you think that the state of New Jersey is managing the costs of its pension system wisely or have the costs gotten out of control?

	TOTAL		REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			NDER	PUE WOF	BLIC RKER
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Managing wisely	14%	13%	20%	13%	16%	12%	17%	12%	17%	14%
Costs out of control	66%	69%	56%	65%	67%	70%	67%	66%	67%	66%
(VOL) Don't know	19%	18%	23%	22%	17%	18%	16%	22%	16%	20%
	TREND <sup>.</sup>		Septem	ber	June	September	Septe	ember		

TREND:	September	June	September	September
IREND.	2014	2014	2010	2005
Managing wisely	14%	18%	8%	13%
Costs out of control	66%	62%	78%	59%
(VOL) Don't know	19%	20%	14%	28%
Unwtd N	802	800	801	800

# [QUESTIONS 5A/5B WERE ASKED OF THOSE WHO SAID PENSION COSTS ARE OUT OF CONTROL: n=532, moe=+/-4.3 %. QUESTIONS WERE ROTATED] 5A. How much is Governor Christie to blame for this – a lot. a little. or not at all?

	TOTAL	REGIS VO			PARTY ID		GEN	NDER	PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
A lot	38%	38%	39%	53%	35%	18%	34%	42%	50%	35%
A little	41%	41%	44%	36%	45%	43%	41%	42%	36%	43%
Not at all	16%	16%	16%	7%	15%	31%	22%	10%	11%	17%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	5%	1%	3%	4%	8%	3%	6%	3%	5%

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	TREND:	September	June
	IREND.	2014	2014
	A lot	38%	35%
	A little	41%	44%
	Not at all	16%	18%
	(VOL) Don't know	5%	3%
	Unwtd N	532	526

#### 5B. How much is the state legislature to blame for this - a lot, a little, or not at all?

	TOTAL		TERED FER		PARTY ID	)	GEI	NDER	PUBLIC WORKER		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No	
A lot	50%	53%	36%	44%	51%	54%	52%	48%	46%	51%	
A little	40%	36%	55%	46%	41%	29%	39%	41%	40%	40%	
Not at all	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	5%	3%	6%	4%	
(VOL) Don't know	6%	7%	5%	5%	4%	13%	5%	8%	9%	6%	

TREND.	September	June
IREND.	2014	2014
A lot	50%	59%
A little	40%	32%
Not at all	4%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	5%
Unwtd N	532	526

6. Turning to the closure of the George Washington Bridge toll lanes in Fort Lee last year. Do you believe Chris Christie has been completely honest about what he knows about the incident, or not?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		F	PARTY ID		GEND	ER	PUBLIC WORKER		
<b>D</b>	000/	Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No	
Been completely honest	29%	30%	24%	18%	27%	52%	32%	25%	24%	30%	
Not been completely honest	60%	62%	53%	71%	63%	36%	55%	66%	66%	59%	
(VOL) Don't know	11%	8%	23%	11%	10%	12%	13%	9%	10%	11%	
	TREN	D:		September	April	February	January	1			
	Deserve			2014	2014	2014	2014				
		ompletely h		29%	32%	33%	40%				
	Not bee	en complete	ely honest	60%	61%	61%	51%				
	(VOL) [	Don't know		11%	7%	5%	9%				
	Unwtd	N		802	803	751	474				

7. Do you think that the legislature should continue to investigate this issue or do you think it is time for the legislature to end its investigation?

	TOTAL	REGIS VO			PARTY ID		GE	NDER	PUE WOR	BLIC RKER
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Continue to investigate	34%	30%	51%	46%	33%	14%	36%	33%	36%	33%
Time to end its investigation	59%	66%	34%	46%	59%	85%	57%	62%	57%	61%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	4%	16%	7%	8%	0%	8%	6%	7%	6%

8. Chris Christie recently made a trip to Mexico with New Jersey business leaders. Do you think this trip was mainly to build trade relations between Mexico and New Jersey OR mainly to help Christie run for president? [*ITEMS WERE ROTATED*].

-					L						
		TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
			Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
	Build trade relations between Mexico and NJ	21%	21%	25%	16%	22%	31%	26%	17%	19%	22%
	Help Christie run for president	52%	54%	45%	61%	53%	33%	51%	54%	56%	52%
	(VOL) Both equally	5%	6%	4%	3%	6%	7%	4%	6%	6%	5%
	(VOL) Don't know	21%	20%	26%	19%	20%	29%	19%	24%	19%	22%

9. Do you think Chris Christie is planning to run for president in 2016, or not?

No

Unwtd N

(VOL) Don't know

			ining to		100100		$rac{10}{10}$	01 1100		
	TOTAL		TERED FER	P	ARTY ID	GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Yes	75%	77%	64%	78%	71%	77%	73%	77%	78%	74%
No	14%	13%	18%	14%	14%	13%	16%	12%	12%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	11%	10%	18%	8%	14%	10%	12%	11%	10%	11%
	TREN	ND:		September 2014 75%	Februar 2014 65%	2	ember 013 9%			

14%

11%

802

26%

9%

803

20%

11%

802

[QUESTION 10 WAS ASKED OF THOSE WHO THINK CHRISTIE IS PLANNING TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT: n=609, moe=+/-4.0 %.]

10. Do you think his travel schedule and planning a possible presidential run has made Chris Christie more effective or less effective as governor, or has it had no impact on his performance as governor?

	TOTAL		REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		PUBLIC WORKER	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No	
More effective	9%	6%	24%	6%	10%	12%	12%	7%	11%	9%	
Less effective	39%	40%	35%	46%	37%	28%	40%	38%	40%	39%	
No impact	48%	51%	36%	43%	50%	55%	45%	51%	43%	49%	
(VOL) Don't know	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%	5%	3%	4%	6%	3%	

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from September 17 to 21, 2014 with a statewide random sample of 802 adult residents, including 602 contacted via live interview on a landline telephone and 200 via live interview on a cell phone. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). 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.

		PC	DLL DEMC	GRAPH	IICS (weig	ghted)				
	36% Dem	50%	6 Male	28	8% 18-34		63% W	hite		
	45% Ind	50%	6 Female	38	8% 35-54		13% Bla	ack		
	19% Rep			34	4% 55+		15% Hi: 9% As	spanic ian/Other		
		Re	gistered V	oter San	nple (weig	ghted)				
	36% Dem	46%	6 Male	23	3% 18-34		68% W	hite		
	43% Ind	54%	6 Female	39	9% 35-54		14% Bla	ack		
	21% Rep			38	8% 55+		14% Hi			
							4% As	ian/Other		
			MAR	GIN OF I	ERROR					
	TOTAL	REGISTERED PARTY ID GENL								BLIC RKER
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Male	Female	Yes	No
Unweighted N	802	680	122	261	352	149	423	379	206	569
moe	3.5%	3.8%	8.9%	6.1%	5.2%	8.0%	4.8%	5.0%	6.8%	4.1%

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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