

Chris Christie



Christopher James "Chris" Christie (born September 6, 1962) is the 55th Governor of New Jersey. He has been governor since January 2010 and was re-elected for a second term in the 2013 election.

Born in Newark in 1962, Christie volunteered for the gubernatorial campaign of Republican Thomas Kean when he was fifteen years old. A 1984 graduate of the University of Delaware, Christie earned a J.D. at Seton Hall University School of Law. Christie joined a Cranford, New Jersey, law firm in 1987, rose to become a partner in 1993, and continued practicing until 2002. He was elected county legislator in Morris County, serving from 1995 to 1998. By 2002, Christie had campaigned for Presidents George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush; the latter appointed him as United States Attorney for New Jersey, a position he held from 2002 to 2008.

In January 2009, Christie declared his candidacy for Governor of New Jersey. He won the Republican primary, and defeated incumbent Governor Jon Corzine in the election that November. In 2013, he won re-election as Governor, defeating Democrat Barbara Buono by a margin of over 22%. He was sworn in to a second term as governor on January 21, 2014. On November 21, 2013, Christie was elected Chairman of the Republican Governors Association. Christie was seen as a potential candidate in the 2012 presidential election, and though not running, he was the keynote speaker at the 2012 Republican National Convention. On June 30, 2015, Christie announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination in the 2016 presidential election.

Early life, education, and family[edit]

Christie was born in Newark, New Jersey, the son of Sondra A. (née Grasso) and Wilbur James "Bill" Christie, a certified public accountant.[1][2][3] His father is of German, Scottish, and Irish descent, and his mother was of Sicilian ancestry.[4][5][6][7][8] Christie's family moved to Livingston, New Jersey, after the 1967 Newark riots,[9] and Christie lived in Livingston until he graduated from Livingston High School in 1980.[10] At Livingston High School, Christie served as class president, and played catcher for the baseball team.[9] Christie's father and mother were Republican and Democratic, respectively. He has credited, however, his Democratic-leaning mother for indirectly making him a Republican by encouraging him in 1977 to volunteer for the gubernatorial candidate who became his role model: Tom Kean.[2] Christie had become interested in Kean after Kean, then a state legislator, spoke to Christie's class while Christie was in junior high school.[9]

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Christie graduated from the University of Delaware with a Bachelor of Arts in political science in 1984 and Seton Hall University School of Law with a J.D. in 1987. Christie was admitted to the New Jersey State Bar Association and the Bar of the United States District Court, District of New Jersey, in December 1987. Later in life, he was awarded honorary doctorate degrees by Rutgers University and Monmouth University.[11][12]

In 1986, Christie married Mary Pat Foster, a fellow student at the University of Delaware. After marriage they shared a studio apartment in Summit, New Jersey.[13] Mary Pat Christie pursued a career in investment banking, eventually working at the Wall Street firm Cantor Fitzgerald; she left the firm in 2001 following the September 11 attacks.[2] She is currently a managing director at the Wall Street investment firm Angelo, Gordon & Co.[14]

Christie and his wife have four children; two boys: Andrew (b. 1993) and Patrick (b. 2000) and two girls: Sarah (b. 1996) and Bridget (b. 2003).[15] The family resides in Mendham Township.[16][17] His hobbies have included coaching Little League, cheering for the New York Mets, and attending Bruce Springsteen concerts (over 120 of them).[18][19] In addition to the Mets, Christie's other favorite sports teams are the New York Knicks, New York Rangers and Dallas Cowboys.[20]

On August 4, 2015, Christie stated that he has used birth control other than the rhythm method.[21][22][23][24] This discussion was made during a town hall meeting when Christie was talking about his Catholic faith.

Law practice and local politics[edit]

Lawyer[edit]

In 1987, Christie joined the law firm of Dughi, Hewit & Palatucci of Cranford, New Jersey.[25] In 1993, he was named a partner in the firm.[25] Christie specialized in securities law, appellate practice, election law, and government affairs. He is a member of the American Bar Association and the New Jersey State Bar Association and was a member of the Election Law Committee of the New Jersey State Bar Association. From 1999 to 2001, Christie was registered statehouse lobbyist for Dughi and Hewit.[26] Morris County Freeholder[edit] Christie volunteered for President George H. W. Bush's 1992 re-election campaign in New Jersey, and became close to Bush's state director, Bill Palatucci. Following the campaign, Christie decided to run for office, and moved to Mendham Township. In 1993, Christie launched a primary challenge against the New Jersey Senate Majority Leader, John H. Dorsey. However, Christie's campaign ended after Dorsey successfully challenged the validity of Christie's petition to appear on the ballot.[9] In 1994, Christie was elected as a Republican to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for Morris County, New Jersey, after he and a running mate defeated incumbent freeholders in the party primary. Following the election, the defeated incumbents filed a defamation lawsuit against Christie based on statements made during the primary campaign.[27] Christie had incorrectly stated that the incumbents were under "investigation" for violating certain local laws. The lawsuit was settled out of court, with Christie acknowledging that the prosecutor had actually convened an "inquiry" instead of an "investigation", and apologizing for the error, which he said was unintentional.[28][29] As freeholder, Christie required the county government to obtain three quotes from qualified firms for all contracts. He led a successful effort to bar county officials from accepting gifts from people and firms doing business with the county. He voted to raise the county's open space tax for land preservation; however, county taxes on the whole were decreased by 6.6% during his tenure. He successfully pushed for the dismissal of an architect hired to design a new jail, saying that the architect was costing taxpayers too much money. The architect then sued Christie for defamation over remarks he made about the dismissal, eventually dropping the suit without explanation.[30][31] In 1995, Christie announced a bid for a seat in the New Jersey General Assembly; he and attorney Rick Merkt ran as a ticket against incumbent Assemblyman Anthony Bucco and attorney Michael Patrick Carroll in the Republican primary. Christie ran as a pro-choice candidate and supporter of the ban on assault weapons.[32] Bucco and Carroll, the establishment candidates, defeated the up-and-comers by a wide margin. After this loss, Christie's bid for re-nomination to the freeholder board was unlikely, as unhappy Republicans recruited John J. Murphy to run against Christie in 1997. Murphy defeated Christie in the primary.[33] Murphy, who had falsely accused Christie of having the county pay his legal bills in the architect's lawsuit, was sued by Christie after the election. They settled out of court with the Freeholders admitting wrongdoing and apologizing.[34] Christie's career in Morris County politics was over by 1998.[33] Lobbyist[edit] When Christie's part-time position as a Chosen Freeholder lapsed, he returned full attention to his law firm Dughi, Hewit & Palatucci. Alongside fellow partner and later, gubernatorial campaign fundraiser Bill Palatucci, Christie's firm opened an office in the state capital, Trenton, devoted mainly to lobbying.[35][36][37] Between 1999 and 2001, Christie and Palatucci lobbied on behalf of, among others, GPU Energy for deregulation of New Jersey's electric and gas industry;[36] the Securities Industry Association to block the inclusion of securities fraud under the state's Consumer Fraud Act; Hackensack University Medical Center for state grants; and the University of Phoenix for a New Jersey higher education license.[38] During the 2000 presidential election, Christie served as George W. Bush's campaign lawyer for the state of New Jersey.[9] United States Attorney[edit] Appointment[edit] On December 7, 2001, President George W. Bush appointed Christie the U.S. Attorney for the District of New

Jersey.[39] Some members of the New Jersey Bar professed disappointment at Christie's lack of experience. At the time, he had never practiced in a federal courtroom before, and had little experience in criminal law. Christie received the overwhelming support of the Republican Party in New Jersey. A spokesperson for Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco, who selected nominees for the position, said that he received hundreds of letters of support for Christie "from everyone from the Assembly speaker down to the county level, close to every member of the Legislature and every county chairman." Christie was also a top fundraiser for Bush's 2000 presidential campaign. He helped raise \$350,000 for Bush, qualifying him as a "Pioneer", and also donated to DiFrancesco.[40][41] Democrats seized upon the role played by Bush's political adviser, Karl Rove, after Christie's law partner, William Palatucci, a Republican political consultant and Bush supporter, boasted that he had selected a United States attorney by forwarding Christie's résumé to Rove.[42] According to New Jersey's senior Senator, Bob Torricelli, Christie promised to appoint a "professional" with federal courtroom experience as deputy if confirmed. By Senate tradition, if a state's senior Senator opposes the nomination of a U.S. Attorney, the nomination is effectively dead, but Christie's promise was enough for Torricelli to give the nomination his blessing.[41] He was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate on December 20, 2001, and sworn into office on January 17, 2002. The brother of Christie's uncle (his aunt's second husband) was an organized crime figure; according to Christie, the FBI presumably knew that when they conducted his background check.[43] Later, Christie recused himself and commented about what he had learned growing up with such a relative: "It just told me that you make bad decisions in life and you wind up paying a price." [43] Enforcement record[edit] Christie, c. June 2004, served as the United States Attorney for New Jersey from 2002 to 2008. Christie served as the Chief Federal Law Enforcement Officer in New Jersey from January 17, 2002, to December 1, 2008. His office included 137 attorneys, with offices in Newark, Trenton, and Camden. Christie also served on the 17-member Advisory Committee of U.S. Attorneys for Attorneys General John Ashcroft and Alberto Gonzales. Soon after taking office, Christie let it be known that his office would make public corruption a high priority, second only to terrorism.[41] During his eight-year tenure, he received praise for his record of convictions in public corruption cases. His office convicted or won guilty pleas from 130 public officials, both Republican and Democratic, at the state, county and local levels.[44] The most notable of these convictions included those of Democratic Hudson County Executive Robert C. Janiszewski in 2002 on bribery charges,[45] Republican Essex County Executive James W. Treffinger in 2003 on corruption charges,[46] former Democratic New Jersey Senate President John A. Lynch, Jr., in 2006 on charges of mail fraud and tax evasion,[47] State Senator and former Newark Democratic mayor Sharpe James in 2008 on fraud charges,[48] and Democratic State Senator Wayne R. Bryant in 2008 on charges of bribery, mail fraud, and wire fraud.[49] According to Rachel Barkow and Anthony Barkow, both of NYU Law School, Christie negotiated seven deal deferred prosecution agreements (DPAs) during his tenure, some of which were controversial.[50] Under agreements like these, corporations avoid prosecution if they promise not just to obey the law or pay for bad acts, but also promise to change personnel, or revamp business practices, or adopt new types of corporate governance. They are typically used in lieu of prosecution when there is evidence of particularly egregious corporate misconduct. Since 2002, these types of agreements have been sharply on the rise among federal prosecutors, with 23 between 2002 and 2005, and 66 between 2006 and 2008.[50] Outside monitors are appointed in about half of all DPAs, to make sure that the corporations comply.[50] In one case, Christie recommended appointment of The Ashcroft Group, a consulting firm owned by his former boss John Ashcroft, as an outside monitor of Zimmer Holdings—a contract worth as much as \$52 million from Zimmer, which was an amount in line with fee structures at that time.[51][52][53] In another instance, Christie's office deferred criminal prosecution of pharmaceutical company Bristol Myers in a deal that required the company to dedicate \$5 million for a business ethics chair at Seton Hall University School of Law, Christie's alma mater.[54][55] Christie defended the appointment of Ashcroft as someone with the necessary prominence and legal acumen,[56] and he defended the Seton Hall donation as happenstance given that there was already a business ethics endowed chair at the only other law school in the state.[57] Still, cases like these led to new rules within the Justice Department,[51][58] and sparked a congressional hearing on the subject.[50][59][60] Besides doubling the size of the anticorruption unit for New Jersey,[61] Christie also prosecuted other federal crimes. For example, he obtained convictions of brothel owners who kept Mexican teenagers in slavery as prostitutes, convicted 42 gang members of the Double II Set of various crimes including more than 25 murders, and convicted British trader Hemant Lakhani of trying to sell missiles.[62] Despite claims of entrapment,[63] Lakhani was convicted by jury in April 2005 of attempting to provide material support to terrorists, unlawful brokering of foreign defense articles, and attempting to import merchandise into the U.S. by means of false statements, plus two counts of money laundering. He was sentenced to 47 years in prison.[64] Christie at a town hall meeting in Union City, New Jersey, on February 9, 2011. During the second term of George W. Bush, a controversy arose about the administration's dismissal of several U.S. attorneys, allegedly for political reasons. When it was revealed that Christie had been on a preliminary version of the hit list, New York Senator Charles Schumer said: "I was shocked when I saw Chris Christie's name on the list last night. It just shows a [Justice] department that has

run amok." [65] Pat Meehan, the U.S. attorney in Philadelphia, said: "Among his peers, Chris stands out as one of the most admired. If you were to create a list of the U.S. attorneys who have had the greatest impact, Chris would be one of the top two or three names I'd put on it. This defies explanation." [65] Christie's opponents claimed that he had gotten off the Bush administration's hit list by going after Congressman Robert Menendez; for example, New York Times columnist Paul Krugman wrote, "Menendez's claims of persecution now seem quite plausible." [65] Christie had issued a subpoena regarding Menendez 65 days before the 2006 Senate election, in which Menendez defeated Republican Thomas Kean, Jr. to become New Jersey's junior Senator. [9] [66] Christie's biographers (journalists Michael Symons and Bob Ingle) concluded that, "The timing of the Menendez-related subpoena doesn't line up right to support the critics' theory." [65] Christie's aides have said that the subpoena was prompted by a newspaper report about Menendez, [67] which prosecutors feared might imminently lead to destruction of documents and other evidence. The investigation of Menendez continued for years after Christie left office as U.S. Attorney, until Menendez was finally cleared on October 5, 2011. [65] Governor of New Jersey [edit] Main article: Governorship of Chris Christie Campaign for office [edit] See also: New Jersey gubernatorial election, 2009 Christie's campaign bus pulls out front of Stainton Square in Ocean City, New Jersey. Christie filed as a candidate for the office of Governor on January 8, 2009. [68] Former Governor Thomas Kean helped Christie campaign and raise money. [9] In the primary on June 2, Christie won the Republican nomination with 55% of the vote, defeating opponents Steve Lonegan and Rick Merkt. [69] He then chose Kimberly Guadagno, Monmouth County sheriff, to complete his campaign ticket as a candidate for lieutenant governor. On November 3, Christie defeated Jon Corzine by a margin of 49% to 45%, with 6% of the vote going to independent candidate Chris Daggett. [70] Christie took office as Governor of New Jersey on January 19, 2010. [71] He chose not to move his family into Drumthwacket, the governor's official mansion, and instead resides in a private Mendham Township, New Jersey, residence. [72] Positions on issues and actions as governor [edit] Fiscal [edit] Christie has promised not to raise taxes. He has also vowed to lower the state income and business taxes, with the qualification that this might not occur immediately: "I'm not saying I'm cutting taxes in the first year. The first thing we have to do is get our fiscal house in order, and that's going to be tough." [73] During his term as Governor, Christie delivered balanced budgets annually for the state as required by the New Jersey Constitution. He claims to have done so without increasing taxes, though this has been debated as he has made reductions to tax credits such as the earned income tax credit and property tax relief programs. [74] [75] Under Christie, there have so far been no rate increases in the state's top three revenue generators: income tax, sales tax, and corporate business tax. [75] Christie originally proposed a 10 percent income tax cut for all residents of the State, but he later targeted his proposal for people earning less than \$400,000 per year, and it would be in the form of an income tax credit equal to 10 percent of their property taxes, capped at \$10,000 (phased in over four years). [76] The Democratic-controlled state legislature has refused to implement it to date, taking the view that there would never be enough money to fund a tax cut. [76] Christie at a town hall in March 2011 On February 11, 2010, Christie signed Executive Order No. 14, which declared that a "state of fiscal emergency exists in the State of New Jersey" due to the projected \$2.2 billion budget deficit for the current fiscal year (FY 2010). [77] In a speech before a special joint session of the New Jersey Legislature on the same day, Christie addressed the budget deficit and proposed various fiscal measures to close the gap. Christie also suspended funding for the Department of the Public Advocate and called for its elimination. [78] Some Democrats criticized Christie for not first consulting them on his budget cuts and for circumventing the Legislature's role in the budget process. [79] In late June 2011, Christie utilized New Jersey's line item veto to eliminate nearly \$1 billion from the proposed budget, signing it into law just hours prior to the July 1, 2011, beginning of the state's fiscal year. [80] In 2010, Christie signed legislation to limit annual property tax growth to 2 percent. [81] During his second year in office, Christie signed into law a payroll tax cut reducing funding of the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) fund by \$190 million per year. Effective calendar year 2012, the tax cut authorizes the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development to reduce payroll deduction for most employees from \$148 to \$61 per year. According to Labor Commissioner Harold J. Wirths, New Jersey workers had been paying much more into the disability fund than what is needed to keep it solvent. The changes took effect on January 1, 2012. [82] Under Christie's governorship, New Jersey's credit rating has been downgraded nine times (across Standard & Poor, Fitch Ratings, and Moody's Investors Service), leaving only Illinois with a lower rating among US states. [83] [84] As Governor of New Jersey, Christie has received grades of B in 2012 [85] [86] and B in 2014 [87] [88] from the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, in their biennial Fiscal Policy Report Card on America's Governors. Tax credits and incentives [edit] On September 18, 2013, Christie signed legislation to overhaul the state's business tax incentive programs. The legislation reduces the number of tax incentive programs from five to two, raises the caps on tax credits, and allows smaller companies to qualify. It increases the credits available for businesses in South Jersey. [89] Public employee pensions [edit] In March 2010, Christie signed into law three state pension reform bills, which had passed with bipartisan support. The laws decreased pension benefits for future hires and required public employees to contribute 1.5 percent of their salaries toward their health care. The laws prompted a lawsuit by the police and firefighters' unions. [90] In his

campaign for governor, Christie opposed any change in pension benefits for firefighters and law enforcement officers, including "current officers, future officers or retirees". He described the pension agreement as "a sacred trust".[91] Later that year, he called for further cuts, including the elimination of cost-of-living adjustments for all current and future retirees.[92] In June 2011, Christie announced a deal with the Democratic leadership of the legislature on a reform of public employee pensions and benefits. The deal raised public employees' pension contributions, mandated the state to make annual payments into the system, increased public employee contributions toward health insurance premiums, and ended collective bargaining for health benefits. The reform is projected to save the state \$120 billion over 30 years.[93] In June 2013, Christie signed a \$33 billion state budget that makes a record \$1.7 billion payment to the state's pension fund and also increases school funding by almost \$100 million. The budget resulted from negotiations between Christie and Democratic leaders in the state legislature and was the first that Christie has signed as passed, without vetoing any of its provisions.[94] In May 2014, Christie cut the contributions to New Jersey public workers' pension funds for a 14-month period by nearly \$2.5 billion to deal with a revenue shortfall in the state budget of \$2.75 billion.[95] The state will instead make a \$1.3 billion payment during the period. Christie cited the state constitution's requirement to have a balanced budget for his decision to cut payments to pensions for state workers, and follows Christie's changes to the state's pension formula earlier in 2014 to save \$900 million through the end of his term.[96] Education[edit] Christie, whose own children attend Catholic parochial school, is a strong supporter of the state granting tax credits to parents who send their children to private and parochial schools.[97] He also supports the introduction of state-funded vouchers, which parents of students in failing school districts could use to pay the tuition of private schools, or of public schools in communities other than their own which agree to accept them.[98] Christie supports merit pay for teachers.[99] On August 25, 2010, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced \$400 million in federal Race to the Top education grants to New Jersey would not be funded due to a clerical error in the state's application made by an unidentified mid-level state official. Christie responded by saying that the Obama administration bureaucracy had overstepped its authority and that the error lay in an administration failure to communicate with the New Jersey government.[100] However, information later came to light that the issue had already been raised with Christie's Education Commissioner Bret Schundler, and in response Christie had asked for Schundler's resignation; Schundler initially agreed to resign, but the following morning asked to be fired instead, citing his need to claim unemployment benefits. Schundler maintained that he told Christie the truth and that Christie was misstating what actually occurred.[101] In January 2011, the Christie administration approved 23 new charter schools, including the state's first independent school for children with autism. The approvals increased the number of charter schools in the state to 96.[102] On August 6, 2012, Christie signed a law reforming the tenure system for New Jersey public school teachers. Under the new law, teachers will be required to work four years, instead of three, in order to earn tenure. Additionally, teachers will need to earn positive ratings two years in a row before tenure can be awarded. Tenured teachers with poor ratings for two consecutive years will be eligible for dismissal. Finally the law limits the hearing process for appeals related to dismissal of tenured teachers to 105 days.[103] On March 6, 2013, the Christie administration released proposed regulations to overhaul the process of evaluating public school teachers in New Jersey. Under the proposal, a percentage of teachers' evaluations would be based on student growth on state tests or based on student achievement goals set with principals.[104] In September 2014, Christie signed a partnership with Mexico on a higher education project to foster economic cooperation. The program will focus on research ventures, cross-border fellowships, student and teacher exchanges and conferences—among other educational opportunities.[105] Energy and environment[edit] Christie has stated that he believes that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is too big and is "killing business" with permit delays and indiscriminate fines. He announced that, if elected, the agency would be his first target for government reduction: he would reduce its workforce and strip it of its fish and wildlife oversight.[106] Christie has stated that he intends to simultaneously spur growth in the state's manufacturing sector and increase New Jersey's capability to produce alternative energy. He has proposed a list of policy measures to achieve this, including giving tax credits to businesses that build new wind energy and manufacturing facilities, changing land use rules to allow solar energy on permanently preserved farmland, installing solar farms on closed landfills, setting up a consolidated energy promotion program, and following a five-to-one production to non-production job ratio in the creation of new energy jobs.[107] In August 2010, legislation to encourage the development of wind power in New Jersey was signed by Christie at the Port of Paulsboro The Offshore Wind Economic Development Act authorized New Jersey Economic Development Authority to provide up to \$100 million in tax credits for wind energy facilities.[108] The governor has pledged to ban coal-fired power plants, and to reach 22.5% renewable generation in the state by 2021.[109] On May 26, 2011, Christie announced he would pull the state out of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.[110] This was challenged in court which ruled in March 2014 that Christie had acted illegally in doing so since state regulations do not permit it.[111] His administration is seeking to repeal the rules.[112] Hydraulic fracturing[edit] Christie has rejected permanent bans on hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in New Jersey and vetoed

measures that would ban the process and disposal of hydraulic fracturing waste in the State. New Jersey has few proven shale reserves and the process is not practiced there. Christie argued that the vetoed Senate Bill (S253) was premature because of an ongoing study to be completed in 2014 and would discriminate against other states, a violation of the Dormant Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution.[113] Supporters of legislation have said that hydraulic fracturing waste from Pennsylvania makes its way into New Jersey for treatment, although how much is not clear. They also criticized Christie's legal analysis saying that the Office of Legislative Services have said that the bill is constitutional.[113] Exxon Mobil environmental contamination lawsuit[edit] Christie's settled a lawsuit with Exxon Mobil by allowing the corporation to pay \$225 million in damages for environmental contamination at two sites, less than 3% of the \$8.9 billion that the state's lawyers had sought, and extended the compensation to cover other damages not named in the original lawsuit.[114] Jeff Tittel of the Sierra Club called this move "a violation of the public trust." [114] The New Jersey State Senate also condemned the deal.[115] The previous gubernatorial administration, that of Democrat Jon Corzine, had also attempted to settle with Exxon, for \$550 million, though this offer was made before a 2009 ruling that strengthened the state's bargaining position.[116] Supreme Court nominations[edit] By tradition since the 1947 state constitution, the seven member New Jersey Supreme Court maintains a political balance and is composed of four members of either the Democratic Party or Republican Party and three of the other.[117] Christie broke with the tradition in May 2010 when he chose not to renominate Justice John E. Wallace, Jr.[118] Christie had said the court "had inappropriately encroached on both the executive and legislative function, and that if elected governor, I would take steps through the decisions I made regarding the court to bring back an appropriate constitutional balance to the court." [119] Since taking office, Christie has been in a major conflict with the New Jersey Legislature over the court's partisan balance.[120][121] The stand-off between the governor and the New Jersey Senate has resulted in longstanding vacancies, with temporarily assigned appellate judges filling in.[122][123] Minimum wage[edit] In January 2013 Christie vetoed a New Jersey Legislature bill that would have raised the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$8.50 per hour.[124][125] The following November, the issue was placed on the ballot as a constitutional amendment referendum, passing with 61% of the vote.[126][127] Farm Animal Welfare[edit] In June 2013, Christie vetoed S1921, an animal welfare bill introduced by the Humane Society of the United States to prohibit the use of gestation crates on pregnant pigs in the state. The bill had passed in the General Assembly with a vote of 60–5 and the Senate 29–4.[128][129][130] A 2013 survey by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research Inc. showed 91% of New Jersey voters supported the legislation.[131] An attempt to override the veto did not come to a vote.[132] In October 2014 a similar bill banning gestation crates, S998, with a vote in the Senate of 32–1 and in the Assembly 53–13 (with 9 abstentions)[133][134] While campaigning in Iowa in November in a conversation with the former president of the Iowa Pork Producers Association indicated he would veto the bill.[135] He did so on November 27, 2014.[136] The bill's sponsor, Senator Raymond Lesniak, has vowed to override it.[137] Social[edit] Immigration laws[edit] While serving as U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey, Christie stressed that simply "[b]eing in this country without proper documentation is not a crime," but rather a civil wrong; and that undocumented people are not criminals unless they have re-entered the country after being deported. As such, Christie stated, responsibility for dealing with improperly documented foreign nationals lies with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, not the U.S. Attorney's Office.[138] Christie has been critical about section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, enacted in 1996, which can be used to grant local law enforcement officers power to perform immigration law enforcement functions.[139] NJ Dream Act[edit] In December 2013 Christie signed legislation allowing unauthorized immigrants who attend high school for at least three years in New Jersey and graduate to be eligible for the resident rates at state college and universities and community colleges.[140] Same-sex marriage[edit] Christie favors New Jersey's law allowing same-sex couples to form civil unions, but would veto any bill legalizing same-sex marriage in the state,[73] saying, "I also believe marriage should be exclusively between one man and one woman.... If a bill legalizing same sex marriage came to my desk as Governor, I would veto it." [141] He has expressed concern with the recognition of civil unions, however, and has strongly advocated for more stringent laws to protect and strengthen civil unions. On February 13, 2012, the State Senate passed a bill legalizing same-sex marriage by a vote of 24 to 16, and on February 16, the Assembly passed it by a vote of 42 to 33, with three Republicans and one Democrat not voting, and one seat temporarily vacant. In neither house was the bill passed by a veto-proof majority. Governor Christie vetoed the bill the next day and called for a constitutional amendment for same-sex marriage to be presented to the voters as a ballot referendum.[142] He also called for creation of an ombudsman to ensure compliance with the state's existing civil union law.[143] Christie's veto was overturned in a court decision in the Garden State Equality v. Dow case, in which the judge stated New Jersey was "...violating the mandate of Lewis and the New Jersey Constitution's equal protection guarantee". Following the decision, the Christie administration immediately asked the state Supreme Court to grant a stay of the decision pending appeal, which was denied on October 18, 2013 in a 7–0 decision of the court which stated that it could "find no public interest in depriving a group of New Jersey residents of their constitutional right to equal protection while the appeals process unfolds".[144] Three days later Christie withdrew the state's

appeal.[145][146] Gender parity[edit] On September 21, 2012, Christie signed Assembly Bill No. 2647 (A-2647) into law that requires employers to post and distribute notice of employees' rights to gender-equal pay, but conditionally vetoed other gender parity bills, requesting revision.[147] Abortion[edit] In his early political career, Christie was pro-choice, stating in an interview that "I would call myself ... a kind of a non-thinking pro-choice person, kind of the default position".[148] Later on Christie evolved his position to be against abortion: "I am pro-life. Hearing the strong heartbeat of my unborn daughter 14 years ago at 13 weeks gestation had a profound effect on me and my beliefs." [141] He has stated, with respect to his opposition to abortion, that he would not use the governor's office to "force that down people's throats", but does favor restrictions on abortion such as banning partial-birth abortion, requiring parental notification, and imposing a 24-hour waiting period.[73] In 2014, campaigning in Alabama for incumbent governor Robert Bentley, Christie stated that he was the first "pro-life governor" elected in New Jersey since Roe v. Wade in 1973.[149] He also stated that he had vetoed funding for Planned Parenthood five times as governor.[149] In March 2015, Christie joined other potential 2016 Republican presidential candidates in endorsing a ban on abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy.[150] Medical marijuana and legalization for recreational use[edit] The "New Jersey Compassionate Use Medical Marijuana Act" was enacted in January 2010.[151][152] As of 2013 New Jersey is one of 20 states where medical marijuana is available. In August 2013 Christie signed a bill to ease restrictions for children in the program.[153] Christie is opposed to legalization of recreational marijuana use.[154] He believes marijuana to be a gateway drug and that taxes from its sale are "blood money".[155] Christie said he would "crack down" on states that have ended the prohibition of cannabis if he were president .[156] Homosexuality and gay conversion therapy[edit] Christie believes that homosexuality is innate, having said "If someone is born that way, it's very difficult to say then that that's a sin." [157] On August 19, 2013, Christie signed a bill outlawing gay conversion therapy for children, making New Jersey the second state to institute such a law.[158] The law was challenged in the courts,[159] with Christie, in his official capacity as governor, named an appellee.[160] In September 2014, a panel of the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the law, saying it did not violate free speech or religious rights.[161] Vaccination[edit] Christie responded to calls by President Obama to prevent the spread of measles by saying that parents should have a choice.[162] The governor's office said that he "believes vaccines are an important public health protection and with a disease like measles there is no question kids should be vaccinated", [163] but that he was unaware of a free national program to provide new parents with a vaccine checklist.[164] Firearms[edit] On December 20, 2010, Christie signed a letter ordering the release of Brian Aitken, who had been sentenced to seven years for transporting three guns within the state.[165] Christie has said that each state has the right to determine firearms laws and that the federal government should not interfere in the making of guns laws for New Jersey.[166] When announcing his candidacy in 2009 he said he supported strict and aggressive enforcement of the state's current gun laws.[73] In 2013 he chose not to defend a legal challenge to the state's most stringent gun law which requires individuals to prove an urgent threat of violence before getting permits to carry handguns.[167][168] On July 2, 2014, Christie vetoed legislation that would have reduced the allowed legal size of ammunition magazines. Instead he re-wrote it, proposing a new standard for involuntary commitment of people who are not necessarily deemed dangerous "but whose mental illness, if untreated, could deteriorate to the point of harm" as well as other forms of involuntary mental health treatments.[169] Christie had previously vetoed proposed legislation that would bar the state pension fund from investing in companies that manufacture or sell assault firearms for civilian use and a bill to prohibit the sale of .50-caliber rifles to civilians.[170] In July 2015, Christie vetoed a bill passed the Assembly by a 74–0 (six abstentions) and the Senate by a 38–0 (2 abstentions) which would required anyone seeking to have their mental health records expunged to purchase a firearm to notify the State Police, their county prosecutor and their local police department when petitioning the court.[171] In October 2015, the New Jersey Senate voted to override Christie's veto.[172] Transportation[edit] Christie has raised tolls and fares, which he calls "user fees" on the New Jersey Turnpike, Garden State Parkway, Hudson River crossings and NJ Transit buses and trains during his administration to fund projects throughout the state.[173] In 2014, Christie authorized the increase of numerous other fees charged by the state for various licensing and administrative fees.[174][175] In 2010, Christie cancelled the Access to the Region's Core project, which would have constructed two new tunnels under the Hudson River and a new terminal station in New York City for NJ Transit commuter trains.[176] He cited possible cost overruns as the reason for his decision.[177] Proponents of the project said it would have created 6,000 construction jobs per year and 45,000 secondary jobs once complete.[178] After the cancellation, New Jersey had to return \$95 million to the federal government, and used \$1.8 billion of Port Authority of New York and New Jersey money from the project budget to pay for repairs to the Pulaski Skyway, since the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund that should fund such maintenance is effectively bankrupt.[179] The termination of the project has made the need for increased rail capacity under the Hudson River more urgent, and Amtrak's Gateway Project to bore new tunnels is currently unfunded.[180] Hurricane Sandy[edit] See also: Hoboken Sandy relief funds investigation On December 28, 2012, the U.S. Senate approved an emergency relief bill to provide \$60

billion for states affected by Hurricane Sandy.[181] The House did not vote until the next session on January 3. On January 2, Christie criticized the delay as "selfishness and duplicity", and blamed the House Republican leadership.[182] A bill for relief was passed in the House on January 15.[183] Starting in 2014, the U.S. Department of Justice started an investigation of Christie for making state grants of Hurricane Sandy relief funds to New Jersey cities conditional on support for other projects.[184][185][186] Visit to the Middle East[edit] Continuing the tradition of earlier New Jersey governors since the 1980s, Christie traveled to Israel in April 2012.[187] His itinerary in that region included Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Tiberias, and the Golan Heights.[188][189] During the visit, which included meetings with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Shimon Peres, Christie commented that "Jerusalem has never been better or freer than under Israeli control." [190][191] Christie subsequently called a helicopter tour of the West Bank "eye-opening", and cautioned against Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, Jerusalem or the Golan Heights.[192] The official title given to the trip was "Jersey to Jerusalem Trade Mission: Economic Growth, Diplomacy, Observance".[193] The visit to Israel was Christie's first official overseas trip since taking office.[194] From Israel Christie continued with his family to Jordan, as guests of King Abdullah II.[195] 2013 re-election campaign[edit] Main article: New Jersey gubernatorial election, 2013 On November 26, 2012, Christie filed papers to run for a second term in office, which would begin in January 2014.[196][197] Christie won the election over Barbara Buono on November 5, 2013, by a large margin, earning himself the position of governor for a second straight term. His advisors say that his strategy was to focus on winning a huge margin in New Jersey against Democratic opponent Buono, which would help position the governor for the presidential primaries and develop a model for other Republican candidates.[198] Christie began building a national fundraising network, aided by the fact that only one other state had a gubernatorial contest in 2013, and those financial resources were intended to support a major outreach effort toward blacks, Hispanics and women.[198] He also ordered a \$25 million special election to fill the seat of the deceased Senator Frank Lautenberg. The move was believed to be motivated by a desire to keep Newark Mayor Cory Booker from sharing an election day, 20 days afterward, with Christie, thereby depressing otherwise anticipated black voter turnout that tended to vote Democratic.[199] Fort Lee lane closure[edit] Main article: Fort Lee lane closure scandal George Washington Bridge over the Hudson River, looking west from Manhattan to Fort Lee and the Palisades From September 9 through September 13, 2013, two of the three traffic lanes in Fort Lee normally open to access the George Washington Bridge and New York City were closed on orders from a senior Christie aide and a Christie administration appointee. The lane closures in the morning rush hour resulted in massive traffic back-ups on the local streets for five days.[200][201] One common theory as to why the lanes were closed is that it was political retribution against Democratic Fort Lee Mayor Mark Sokolich, for not supporting Christie in the 2013 gubernatorial election.[202][203] Another possible motive involves a major real estate development project, which was a top priority for Sokolich, that was underway at the Fort Lee bridge access point.[203][204] Several of Christie's appointees and aides resigned, and Christie fired others, as investigations into the closures intensified.[205][206] In a radio interview on February 3, 2014, Christie indicated that he "unequivocally" had no knowledge of, did not approve, and did not authorize plans to close the toll lanes, and stated that he first found out about the traffic jams from a Wall Street Journal story after the lanes had been reopened.[207] In an interview on ABC, Christie reiterated that he was shocked by the actions of his former aides, stating that "Sometimes, people do inexplicably stupid things." [208] An internal review commissioned by Christie was conducted by Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher. The review cleared him of any wrongdoing in the scandal and blamed senior staffers for orchestrating the traffic disruptions in Fort Lee.[209] Several key officials in the Christie administration who were principals in the investigation declined to be interviewed.[210] Other investigations are being conducted by the United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey, the New Jersey Legislature, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. On September 18, 2014, WNBC reported that unnamed federal sources said the US Attorney investigation had found no evidence that Christie had prior knowledge of or directed the closures.[211][212] An interim report[213] by NJ legislative committee the investigating the closures was released in December 2014. The committee had been unable to determine if Christie had advance knowledge since it was asked by the US Attorney to postpone interviewing certain key witnesses.[214] At a press conference on May 1, 2015, Fishman stated that, based upon the evidence that was available, his office would not bring any more charges in the case.[215] Republican Governors Association[edit] On November 21, 2013, Christie was elected Chairman of the Republican Governors Association, succeeding Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal.[216] Christie campaigned extensively on behalf of Republican governors who are up for re-election.[217] In the first three months of 2014, the RGA raised a record sum for the first quarter of a mid-term election year, and almost double the amount raised by the Democratic Governors Association during the same period.[218] Christie presided over net gains for Republican governships in the 2014 elections, including Bruce Rauner in Illinois, Larry Hogan in Maryland and Charlie Baker in Massachusetts, three states that are overwhelmingly Democrat.[219] Presidential politics[edit] Christie is considered a leader of the Republican Party.[220][221] He was the subject of ongoing speculation that he would attempt a run for President of the United States in 2012 by competing in the Republican primaries. Through 2013 he denied

any interest in launching a presidential bid. In September 2011, a number of press stories cited unnamed sources indicating Christie was reconsidering his decision to stay out of the race. An Associated Press story dated September 30 indicated a decision on whether he would run for president in 2012 would be made "soon".[222] In a late September speech at the Reagan Library, he had again said he was not a candidate for president, but the speech also coincided with his "reconsideration" of the negative decision. One commentator at that time reviewed reported support from David H. and Charles G. Koch, Kenneth Langone, and others for Christie's potential candidacy.[223] Retired General Electric CEO Jack Welch went on the Charlie Rose Show to articulate his and others' support for a candidacy,[224] and Langone went on the interview show October 4.[225] Decision not to run in 2012[edit] On October 4, 2011, Christie acknowledged he had in fact reconsidered his decision but then, again, declined to run.[226] It was "for real this time", as one report put it. "Now is not my time", Christie said.[227] "New Jersey, whether you like it or not, you're stuck with me," Christie added in the one-hour Trenton press conference held to announce the decision.[228] On October 11, 2011, Christie endorsed Mitt Romney for president.[229] The New York Post has cited anonymous sources as saying Christie was not willing to give up the governorship to be Romney's running mate because he had doubts about their ability to win. The Romney campaign was reported to have asked him to resign his governorship if he became the vice-presidential nominee because "pay to play" laws restrict campaign contributions from financial corporation executives to governors running for federal office when the companies do business with the governor's state.[230] A memo from the campaign attributed Romney's decision not to choose Christie as his running mate, in part to unanswered questions during the vetting process regarding a defamation lawsuit following Christie's initial campaign for Morris County Freeholder, a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation of Christie's brother, as well as his weight.[231][232] Activities related to 2012 presidential election[edit] President Barack Obama and Governor Chris Christie talk with local residents in Brigantine, New Jersey. Christie gave the keynote address at the Republican National Convention in August 2012.[233] On October 30, 2012, during a press conference to discuss the impact of Hurricane Sandy, Christie praised the disaster relief efforts of President Barack Obama.[234][235][236] Christie stated he still supported Mitt Romney and was opposed to many of Obama's policies, but thought Obama deserved credit for his help in the disaster reliefs in New Jersey.[237] Christie had campaigned with Romney for much of the election, but stated Romney did not ask him to join him in campaigns for the last week before the election, to allow Christie to focus on disaster relief.[238] Christie faced significant backlash before and after the election from conservative Republicans who accused him of acting to bolster his own personal political standing at the expense of Romney and the party.[239][240] Health and weight[edit] Political commentators debated whether Christie's weight would or should affect his viability as a 2012 presidential candidate, either for medical or social reasons.[241] In 2011, columnist Eugene Robinson applied the term "extremely obese" to Christie, citing medical guidelines established by the National Institutes of Health. Christie himself was reportedly concerned about his weight and its implications for his health, describing himself as relatively healthy overall.[242] The Obesity Society, a nonprofit scientific group, released a statement asserting, "to suggest that Governor Christie's body weight discounts and discredits his ability to be an effective political candidate is inappropriate, unjust, and wrong." [243] Christie underwent lap-band stomach surgery in February 2013 and disclosed the surgery to the New York Post in May of that year.[244] National role after 2012[edit] Governor Chris Christie speaking at the 2014 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in National Harbor, Maryland. In the aftermath of the election, Christie maintained his national profile and continued to clash with conservatives in his party by strongly criticizing House Speaker John Boehner regarding aid for Hurricane Sandy[245] and then the National Rifle Association for their ad that mentioned President Obama's children.[246] Christie was subsequently not invited to speak at the 2013 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), which is largely seen as a stepping-stone for Republicans running for president. The CPAC chair explained that Christie was not invited "for decisions that he made", but that "hopefully next year he's back on the right track and being a conservative." [247] On February 3, 2014, CPAC announced on their Facebook account that Governor Christie would be a speaker at the yearly conference.[248] 2016 presidential campaign[edit]

Main article: [Chris Christie presidential campaign, 2016](#) [/su_spoiler]

In January 2015, Christie took his first formal step towards a potential presidential candidacy when he formed a political action committee (PAC)[249] in order to raise funds and set the groundwork for what Time magazine called "a likely 2016 presidential campaign".[250] On June 27, 2015, Christie launched his presidential campaign website. He formally announced his candidacy on June 30, 2015.

