



WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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Christie's Bridge Scandal Isn't Going Anywhere

As it becomes more clear that Chris Christie's Administration sought retribution against the Mayor of Fort Lee by shutting down lanes on the George Washington Bridge, Christie is under heavy fire from both parties.

Today, DNC Communications Director, Mo Elleithee, put out a memo on Christie's most recent polling numbers, and the negative light it shines on Christie's future. Read an excerpt from that memo below:

Looking at the polling, there is no question that Christie has taken a hit – maybe not politically fatal, but definitely real. What the numbers also show, is that he had some tough hurdles to overcome in the first place, and this whole episode didn't make it any better.

- **Christie's approval rating has taken a big dip.** According to Quinnipiac, Christie's approval rating in New Jersey has dropped to its lowest point in 16 months. In fact, over the past 11 months, he's seen a [19-point drop in his overall approval rating](#). In the Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press poll, Christie's approval [has fallen six points](#) since the election, and his disapproval rating has nearly doubled since last February.
- **He's losing Democrats...** One of Christie's top talking points was his ability to attract Democratic voters. The latest [Quinnipiac poll](#) shows a 20 point drop in approval among Democratic voters over the past year.
- **... and he's taken a hit with Independents.** According to the Monmouth/APP poll, Christie has taken an 11-point hit in his approval rating among Independents since last month.
- **A lot of people see him as a bully.** According to the Q poll, forty percent of New Jersey voters consider their Governor a bully. Let that sink in for a moment. Four in ten of his constituents think he's a bully.
- **A lot of people think he's lying....** According to the [Q poll](#), more than four in ten New Jersey voters said they believe he knew what his aides were doing. According to a Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press poll, [about half](#) of New Jersey adults believe he knew about his staff's actions before the emails became public, and [51% believe he has not been "completely honest" about what he knows](#). That's a lot of people who believe their governor – who they have gotten to know over four years – is lying to them. Nationally, [the Reuters poll](#) shows that [only 28% of Americans believe the Governor's story that he had no advance knowledge](#).
- **... and that there should be consequences.** A whopping 65% of New Jersey voters in the Q poll believe that if he *did* know, he should be removed from office and/or prosecuted on criminal charges.
- **He's seen as a political opportunist not the "straight-shooter" he claimed to be in his reelection.** According to the Monmouth/APP poll, 47% of New Jersey residents think he is more concerned about his political future than governing – up from 38% in September.
- **People believe this hurts his political future.** According to the Q poll, 56% of New Jersey voters believe that the scandal damages or ends his chances as a 2016 contender.
- **And it's undermined his "electability" argument.** For months, Christie supporters have argued he'd be the most electable candidate in 2016. But now there's reason to question that. A month ago, NBC/Marist had him trailing a hypothetical presidential general election matchup by 3 points. [This week, that same poll has him trailing by 13 points!](#)

As Chuck Todd put it yesterday morning on the TODAY Show, "A month ago it was basically a dead even race. Now it's a 13-point lead. All of a sudden, Chris Christie is polling no better than any other generic Republican candidate. And because he already had problems with conservatives, *if he doesn't have electability on his side, this is how this bridge mess has had a real impact on his future.*"

Read the full memo [here](#).

DNC Chair Responds to the Senate GOP's Irresponsible Actions, Hurting the UnemployedDNC

After Senate Republicans rejected a bill to extend unemployment insurance to 1.3 million Americans struggling to get back on their feet, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz released the following statement:

"Today, Republicans failed to extend a lifeline for Americans who are working to find jobs. These are Americans with skills, a desire to work, and in many cases, a family to support. Unemployment benefits make it possible for them to pay their bills and put food on the table. But because of Republicans' refusal to extend unemployment insurance benefits, millions of job-seeking Americans face a harsh and uncertain future.

"For all the recent talk by Republican leaders about reducing income inequality, today's vote reveals the emptiness of that rhetoric. And this is only the most recent rejection of the essential social safety net by a Republican Party that has a shameful record when it comes to encouraging economic mobility and reducing income inequality. The GOP has opposed Democrats' efforts to raise the minimum wage, and said no to Medicaid expansion through the Affordable Care Act, which has extended the promise of health care to millions. The failure to extend unemployment insurance benefits has the potential to cost the nation's economy 240,000 jobs in the year to come.

"Adding insult to injury, Republicans' opposition to extended unemployment benefits is bad policy. In 2012, unemployment benefits kept 2.5 million people out of poverty, including 600,000 children. Democrats will continue to fight to restore these crucial benefits until American workers are back on their feet. We need our friends across the aisle to join us."

View the statement on the DNC's website [here](#).

DNC Wishes The First Lady a Very Happy Birthday

Today, First Lady Michelle Obama Celebrates her 50th birthday. Leading up to the big day, the DNC sent several clickable birthday cards to supporters to help make the First Lady's birthday extra special. Click on the [picture below](#) to sign the card.



President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama Speak on Expanding College Opportunity

On Thursday, President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama hosted an event at the White House on expanding college opportunity. The event featured college and university presidents and leaders from nonprofits, foundations, state governments and businesses across the country.

The President and First Lady both focused on the importance of a higher education for the students and the country's economic mobility. The President's plans include assistance for low-income and disadvantaged students.

The First Lady said, while she is proud of the President taking action, that education "is a two-way bargain" where students should also take an active role in their own success. She said, "So my hope is that with this new effort, that instead of talking about our kids, we talk with our kids. I want to hear what's going on in their lives. I want to inspire them to step up and commit to their education so they can have opportunities they never even dreamed of."



The President focused the new plan to help students attaining college degrees by making sure they are prepared for college entry exams like the ACT and SAT, keeping college admission application fees low, and guaranteeing disadvantaged students are able to catch up once they get onto college campuses.

Read the President and First Lady's remarks [here](#).

President Obama Nominates Maria Contreras-Sweet to lead the Small Business Administration

On Wednesday, President Obama nominated Maria Contreras-Sweet to lead the Small Business Administration. The organization works to promote and support small businesses that are crucial to creating jobs and supporting communities across the country.

Contreras-Sweet founded ProAmerica Bank, the first Latino-owned business bank in California in more than 30 years, and served as the Secretary of the California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.



President Obama attributed his confidence in Contreras-Sweet to her strong experience. He said, "She understands the needs of small business owners like herself. She knows how they can lift entire communities, and ultimately how they lift our country. So as we work to keep our economy growing, Maria will be charged with looking for more ways to support small businesses — to help them get that good idea off the ground, to expand, to hire, to sell their products and ideas not only in our domestic markets, but also overseas. And I'm absolutely confident that she is going to do an outstanding job as our Small Business Administrator."