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NJ voters continue to question Christie's trustworthiness, according to Rutgers-Eagleton poll

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BY JOHN REITMEYER

Governor Christie is still having a hard time winning back the trust of New Jersey voters even as he's attempted in recent weeks to put the controversy over the September lane closures at the George Washington Bridge behind him, according to the results of a recent Rutgers-Eagleton poll.

Only 23 percent of those surveyed by Rutgers-Eagleton said "trustworthy" describes Christie very well, and 35 percent said trustworthy does not describe the Republican governor at all.

In all, Christie's trustworthy rating is down 20 points since October 2013, and remains at an all-time low since he took office in early 2010, according to the poll results released early this morning.

"Trustworthy was one of Christie's hallmarks, especially given voters' normal cynicism about politicians," said David Redlawsk, a political science professor at Rutgers who also serves as director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll. "Losing the trust of voters puts Christie into the category of an ordinary politician."

Christie released a new state budget and has gone back out on the road with a series of town hall-style events in the weeks after The Record published emails linking the bridge lane closures to a former top aide in his administration and a former gubernatorial appointee at The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the agency that administers the bridge.

Christie has denied knowing about the plot to close the lanes — apparently to punish Fort Lee Mayor Mark Sokolich — and has launched an internal investigation even as federal prosecutors and a special legislative committee have begun their own, separate probes.

Still, Christie's general approval rating has remained fairly solid for a Republican in a left-leaning state, Redlawsk said. A total of 49 percent viewed Christie favorably, compared to 40 percent who viewed him unfavorably.

The poll of 842 New Jersey adults was conducted between Feb. 22 and Feb. 28. The survey had a margin of error of +/- 3.7 percent.

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