

## Poll shows Christie's approval rating drops over his handling of economy

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Governor Christie at Lockheed Martin Thursday.

A new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released today shows slight declines in his popularity among New Jerseyans and of his handling of issues dealing with the economy.

Only 42 percent of voters surveyed approve of Christie's handling of New Jersey's economy and jobs, and only 37 percent approve of his tax policy, the poll found. The ratings come at a time when the popular Republican is seeking a second term. Presumptive Democratic challenger state Sen. Barbara Buono of Middlesex County is already trying to use the state's unemployment rate and high property taxes to gain support from voters.

But the governor is still buoyed by his leadership during Sandy, with an overwhelming 87 percent of residents saying they approve of his handling of the recovery efforts. And 68 percent approve of his overall job performance, the poll found. Christie's favorability fell 6 points from a poll Rutgers released in February. And 26 percent of voters maintain an unfavorable impression of the Republican governor — up 6 points from the February poll.

"Christie still has ratings any governor would love, but all-time highs generally come back toward earth over time," Rutgers pollster David Redlawsk said in a statement. "With Sandy recovery helping drive overall approval and voters all but ecstatic at his efforts there, Christie remains in great political shape."

Rutgers-Eagleton surveyed 923 adults living in the state from April 3 to 7. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.7 percentage points.

Christie's poll numbers reached historic highs in the months after Sandy devastated the state in late October. He continues to receive high favorability ratings from areas hard-hit by the storm.

At the same time, Democrats' approval of the governor dropped 11 points since February to 51 percent. More than 90 percent of Republicans and about 75 percent of independents maintain positive views toward Christie, the poll found.

Yet Redlawsk said Christie's generally high approval ratings make him a strong candidate as his reelection effort heats up later this year.

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