

CHRISTIE LEADS BIG OVER BUONO

The Gubernatorial race pitting the star power of incumbent Governor Christie against his Democratic opponent, Senator Buono is well

under way in the Garden State. While Senator Buono has gained a bit of momentum and narrowed her huge spread in the polls, she still trails the fairly popular Governor by 24%, according to the most recent Fairleigh Dickinson poll.

The election is proving to be one where the issues do not matter as much as the perceived strength of the candidates, as very few matters of policy have been debated between the candidates. Voters tend to see Governor Christie as a strong leader who is unafraid to challenge preconceived notions in politics, an attribute that is making him difficult to challenge. The election will be held November 5th.

Governor calls for special election October 16th

Newark Mayor Cory Booker and Former Bogata Mayor Steve Lonegan face off for late Senator Lautenberg's seat

After the death of the five-term Democratic Senator, Frank Lautenberg on June 3, Governor Christie was tasked with determining how to manage the vacancy. His decision was to call a special election to have the people of New Jersey select a new Senator as quickly as possible. In the meantime, the Governor appointed his Attorney General, Jeffrey Chiesa, three days after Lautenberg's death to temporarily fill the vacancy in the interim.

The Governor announced that in addition to an October 16th election, the Senate primary would take place on August 13th. Shortly after making this decision, several candidates from both parties announced their intentions to run. The Democratic Party's race was held between U.S. Congressman Frank Pallone, the candidate that Lautenberg's family endorsed after the Senator's death, U.S. Congressman Rush Holt, N.J. Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver, and Newark Mayor Cory Booker. On the Republican side, former Bogata Mayor, and current director of Americans for Prosperity faced Alieta Eck, a healthcare reform advocate.

Both Booker and Lonegan won their primaries with sizeable victories and are now campaigning for the general election. While Governor Christie has endorsed

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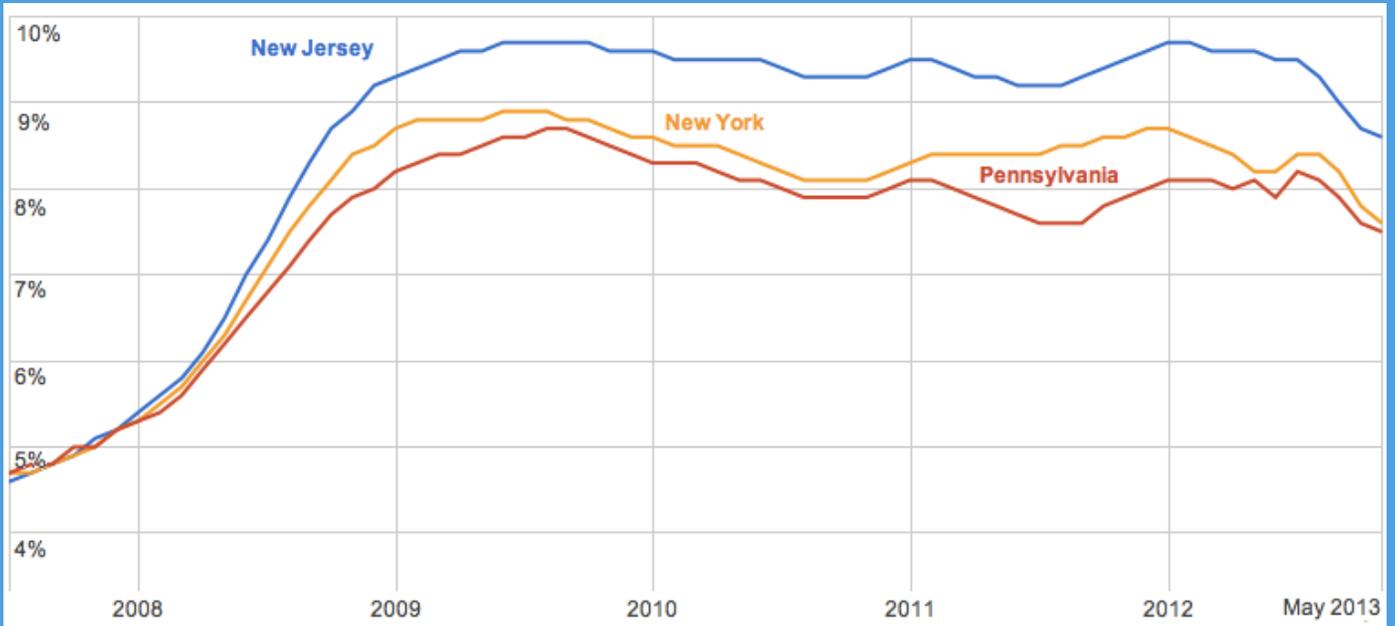
Gubernatorial Race
Booker versus Lonegan
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Republican Candidate Lonegan, polls show Mayor Booker with a double digit lead. The candidates platforms could not be farther opposite of each other, with Lonegan having ties to the Tea Party and Koch brothers and Booker being a surrogate for President Obama.

The special election is expected to cost the State an estimated \$12 million.



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN NEW JERSEY AND NEIGHBORING STATES FROM 2008-PRESENT.



National Organization pushing for Marriage Equality

After the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act as unconstitutional in late June, a coalition of national and state advocacy groups has formed to ensure that marriage equality comes to the Garden State. New Jersey United for Marriage, is composed of founding members Garden State Equality, the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey partnered with the American Unity Fund, Freedom to Marry, Gill Action, the Human Rights Campaign, and Lambda Legal to facilitate conversations between New Jerseyans and legislators.

The group is currently pursuing a two-legged strategy, challenging New Jersey's civil union law in court along with working to obtain the votes necessary to bring successful marriage equality legislation to the state.

Governor Christie signs sexual conversion therapy ban into law

On Monday, August 19, Governor Christie signed a piece of legislation banning the controversial practice of converting young homosexuals through therapy. The bill, A-3771 (Eustace, 38th) and sister bill in the Senate, S-2278 (Lesniak, 18th), both prohibit the practice of counseling and providing

therapy to residents under the age of 18 in an attempt to change their sexual orientation.

Many civil rights groups within the State provided evidence demonstrating that Sexual Orientation Conversion Efforts (SOCE) cause long term harmful effects on individuals undergoing such therapy, while at the same time perpetuates damaging stereotypes that being homosexual is a disease or something undesirable. In his signing statement, Governor Christie explained his concern with limiting parental choice but decided that medical treatment for children is something that must be examined through the lens of experts. As a result of this, and the scientific evidence demonstrating the negative effects such therapy may pose, the Governor signed the law protecting minors.

The American Associate of Christian Counselors and the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality filed suit in federal court to challenge the constitutionality of the law and is currently scheduled for argument on October 1.

Medical Marijuana changes signed into law

Governor Christie signed a bill on September 11 ensuring that sick children would have access to medical marijuana, requiring that two doctors approve the treatment and restricting "medibles" to only minors. The bill was a compromise after a much more lenient bill was initially introduced earlier this year.

Nursing Home Bill of Rights bill heads to Governor

A bill that would require that each resident in a long-term care facility to receive a copy of a disclosure statement listing all rights and responsibilities of a resident, S-2052 (Singer, 30th), passed the Senate in mid-August by a vote of 37-0. In June, the bill passed the Assembly by similar margins and now heads to the Governor's desk. It is predicted that he will sign the bi-partisan legislation that informs and protects residents.

Open Space Vote Fails

After five previous successful attempts over three decades to dedicate funds to secure open space in New Jersey, a similar measure that would have been introduced as a public question on November's ballot failed in late July. Many legislators who had previously voiced support for this bill changed their vote at the last minute. The open space fund is expected to be depleted by early 2014 with no way to temporarily fund it until, at the earliest, the 2014 election.