



## *New Jersey Governor Chris Christie 'Not Looking to be Loved'*

**By Matthew Larotonda**

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – New Jersey Governor Chris Christie says his record in the Garden State is evidence that divided government doesn't have to mean gridlock, when leaders make the right "tough choices."

At a biannual dinner of Washington's libertarian Cato Institute Friday night, Christie told the crowd it was the duty of lawmakers to tell the truth about the nation's economic problems, or risk lengthening the fiscal fallout.

"When you're looking for love in this job, that's when deficits get run up," Christie said. "When you're looking for love in this job, it's because you can't say no to anything because someone somewhere won't love you if you do."

Christie said he was "not looking to be loved" in his state, recounting his administration's cuts to veterans' programs, education, and public employee benefits; examples of so called "third-rails" in politics. The Republican called the slashed budgets "common sense reforms, but tough ones."

"They said this was going to be impossible to do but we did it," he continued, "And we did it because we went out to the public and we told them why it was so important."

Christie boasted his budget plans eventually drew the support of his democratic-controlled state legislature, including its leadership.

"Don't tell me the American people are not ready to hear the truth. They know our government's out of control, they know our debt and our deficits are out of control. And don't confuse them liking the solution with accepting it."

Christie said when presented with the facts, voters “know in their heart” to accept the right solution.

According to Christie, his administration is set to return \$132 billion in budget savings over 30 years, while delivering the first income tax break for New Jersey residents in over a decade.

Friday’s event dovetails with speculation that Christie could enter the presidential race as a potential running mate for the presumptive Republican nominee, Mitt Romney.

For months, the Republican governor had denied calls to enter the GOP primaries, from supporters hoping to draw on his reputation as an outspoken and frank personality.

Christie repeatedly assured speculators he intended to fulfill the rest of his term, set to end in 2014. But in the last few weeks he’s confessed he was open to the VP slot; most recently on Monday he told a [New Jersey high school](#) class that Romney “might be able to convince me,” to share a ticket. Romney, Christie continued, is a “convincing guy.”

The governor officially endorsed Romney in October and has campaigned with him across multiple states. Christie did not mention the upcoming election during his speech, and only commented on President Obama briefly.

“I remember Barack Obama talking about the lack of hope and optimism around the country in 2008,” he said. “The environment I found myself in, in 2009, was not significantly different. Although he and I find the solutions to that problem in entirely different ways.”

The Cato Institute is a think tank focused on individual liberties and free-market economics. The organization’s gala gathering that night was to award a Chinese activist, Mao Yushi, with their Milton Friedman Prize for his work advocating a Western-style economy in Beijing.

While the governor’s keynote address stayed predominantly on national issues, he did venture into broad foreign policy spurts during his roughly 40 minutes behind the podium. Christie said domestic “political sideshows” threatened to deteriorate America’s standing abroad.

“There’s no better way to prescribe other societies around the world to become more democratic and more market oriented than to show that our democracy, and our markets, work better than any other system,” he said.