

# The Star-Ledger

## Hurricane Sandy vote shows Gov. Christie's influence has limits

By Jenna Portnoy January 20, 2013

---

TRENTON — Weeks before Hurricane Sandy paralyzed New Jersey, Gov. Chris Christie traveled to Iowa to raise funds for Rep. Steve King, a controversial and conservative Republican seeking re-election.

“We need strong and clear voices on fiscal restraint like Steve King,” Christie said, according to a Sioux City newspaper.

A little too strong, it turned out.

King, one of many Republicans with whom Christie shared his formidable popularity and fundraising prowess, voted against the bill last Tuesday to send \$50.7 billion in emergency aid to New Jersey, New York and Connecticut.

Although Christie made calls and sent texts to House members seeking support for the crucial measure, which eventually was approved 241-180, he got little traction outside of the Northeast and among House Republican leaders.

The vote showed the limits of Christie’s influence — despite his growing celebrity, frequent appearances on national television and last week’s Time magazine cover — and foreshadowed the uphill battle the outspoken governor could face if he seeks the Republican presidential nomination in 2016.

“It’s always possible he’s burned a couple of bridges because he’s been so blunt,” said Michael Tanner, a senior fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute, where Christie delivered a keynote address last year. “People love his bluntness when it applies to President Obama. People don’t love his bluntness so much when it’s applied to his own party.”

Christie was already on thin ice with the conservative wing of his party for a string of statements reinforcing the idea that his most guarded principle is pragmatism.

He lavished praise on Obama for his leadership and compassion after the president visited New Jersey when Sandy struck and trash-talked House Speaker John Boehner, saying it was “disgusting” that he delayed an initial vote on the emergency aid.

And last week, he derided as “reprehensible” a National Rifle Association ad that called Obama a hypocrite for allowing the country to pay for Secret Service agents to guard his two young daughters.