



Gov. Chris Christie touts bipartisanship during N.Y. speech

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NEW YORK — Ignoring the stalemate with Democratic lawmakers over a proposed tax cut and his judicial nominations, Gov. Chris Christie today repeated his message that New Jersey's model of bipartisan cooperation to reduce spending could work on the national level.

"I suggest we start to get more discriminating," Christie told a Manhattan ballroom packed with travel industry executives at the New York University Hospitality Industry Investment Conference. "They either need to get religion or they need to get out because our country is being harmed."

Although he never mentioned President Obama's policies, the comments by Christie, who has an eye on the national stage, were significant in light of Tuesday's recall election of Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin, for whom the Republican governor campaigned last month.

"Both parties are at fault, not just one," Christie said. "Both parties have contributed mightily to the mess we're in today."

The Republican governor acknowledged that New Jersey lawmakers have berated one another and squabbled publicly, but he didn't refer to a blow delivered last week by Democrats, who rejected Bruce Harris for the state Supreme Court — the second of two candidates nominated in January to get shot down.

The 30-minute talk echoed the theme of "American exceptionalism" that he delivered in a speech at the Ronald Reagan Library in Simi Valley, Calif., last fall at the height of the frenzy over whether he might run for president, and again last month at a Cato Institute dinner in Washington.

Christie said voters elected him because they want to be "the masters of their own destiny," not the "victim of events you cannot control."

While he has demurred when asked if Mitt Romney, the Republican presumptive presidential nominee, might turn to him as a vice presidential running mate, Christie said the country needs to revamp the tax code, rein in entitlement spending and raise the age for collecting Social Security.

"There , I said it," he said. "And I haven't been vaporized. I'm still here and I'll still be here tomorrow."

He added, "America used to be emulated around the world not only because of our economic success but because we had a government that worked around the world and with our citizens to get things done."

Christie, who has made the revitalization of Atlantic City a priority, he never mentioned the troubled resort or the newly opened Revel hotel and casino in his speech to the travel industry executives.

His next stop was the Union League Club, where he attended a fundraising lunch for state Sen. Joe Kyrillos, who is seeking to unseat U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez.