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## What happened to Chris Christie?

Submitted by Ironman on Tue, 10/27/2009 - 06:38

I really hate it when [I go out on a limb](#) and the guy whom I'm for saws it off behind me.

I have to admit utter disbelief at the polls showing that [Corzine has drawn even with Christie](#) in the NJ governor's race. Basically, what I suggested would be a futile endeavor may have been accomplished by the relentless Corzine money machine.

But that means that a rather large number ( 17% +/-) of NJ voters who already have rejected Corzine will need to decide Christie would be even worse

Sadly, this year's NJ Republican campaign has been run with the sort of panache that makes one wish for a re-run of blandness personified, Doug Forrester. Christie has allowed this campaign not to be a referendum on the incumbent, but has been on the defensive the whole time.

Now there are some factors that explain this away. To a point. Christie saved his resources and while [horrendously outspent in September](#) and early October, is now on TV seriously. Which suggests that maybe he'd have been better to have gone "dark" in the summer instead of "renting" an unsustainable lead in the polls. He's also dealt with the Chris Daggett problem. Daggett, a liberal independent, has been the remainderman for voters disheartened by the major candidates, and has hit 20% in some polls. [The GOP having turned fire on Daggett](#), it's possible his anti-Corzine voters drift back to Christie. And that's the ball game.

So why are we here? And what can we take about this? Christie got boxed on one big issue and he needn't have discussed it. He decided to fix health care.

Oops. So what if it was the "big issue". *No one expected the Governor of New Jersey to fix it.*

Christie proposed "mandate-free" insurance policies. Note to all you CATO institute folks. It went over like a lead balloon. Note to Republican 2010 candidates. Don't propose this pipe dream unless you have the time, money and desire to defend it.

[Corzine made out Christie as an opponent of mammograms](#). That became **the issue**. And my review of various poll internals indicate that even though Christie's Hispanic support would usually ensure a GOP win, he's bled off seniors badly (running weaker than Kean, Jr. in the 2006 senate race) and slumped among women.

I'm a suburban mick lawyer, not some Sun-Tzu wannabe. But wise up. When you have these two things in the political environment.

A) One killer issue (In Christie's case, Corzine's fiscal incompetence)

B) Less resources than the other guy

**Then ALL you talk about is your ONE ISSUE.** Let the press harass you as a single issue candidate. Don't get into the weeds of policy specifics on stuff that a) isn't a voting issue for your race and b) you don't have a decisive advantage on.

The other guy will try and get his issues on the table. Ignore them. Do not engage. Stay on message. Make sure the controversy is on your strongest ground.

If the story line today was "Christie is depicted by the press as a Johnny one-note obsessed with his controversial property tax cut plan", Corzine would still be decisively behind.

I hope NJ gets a better Governor than Corzine, though I've seen little to suggest Christie is much different than the previous GOP governors Kean sr. and Whitman....who weren't huge reformers. [\(This is not a national "cause" race like NY 23, my friends\)](#) I hope Republicans around the country learn the importance of message discipline from this episode, however.

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