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# THIS WEEK IN TRENTON

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**PUBLIC STRATEGIES IMPACT**  
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS • PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
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**September 18, 2009**

The end of summer generally signals the return of the Legislature in New Jersey but things are often different in an election year, particularly a gubernatorial election year. So this year, in which the Assembly also faces re-election, we don't expect the Legislature to return until after November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Public Strategies Impact will, therefore, provide you with timely information over the next two months, but perhaps not on a weekly basis as we do when the Legislature is in session.

## **Latest Polls show Christie Continuing to Lead Corzine and Daggett.**

Two polls released this week show Republican challenger Christopher Christie leading Governor Jon Corzine and Independent candidate Christopher Daggett in the gubernatorial race. The latest Monmouth University/Gannett News poll, released on September 13, shows Christie leading Corzine by eight percentage points among likely voters – 47%-39% - with Daggett at 5%. Christie leads Corzine by 15 points among independent voters, 45%-30%. Among Republicans, Christie leads 82%-8% while Corzine leads among Democrats, 77%-8%, a 10 point improvement since the summer. The poll was conducted by telephone with 752 New Jersey voters from September 8-10 and has a margin of error of +/- 3/6%.

A poll conducted by North Carolina based Public Policy Polling, released on September 15<sup>th</sup> shows Christie leading Corzine nine-points – 44%-35%- with Independent Christopher Daggett at 13%. Public Policy polled 500 voters between September 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> and has a margin of error of +/- 4.5%.

## **Corzine Announces RETURN-to-Work Program**

Governor Jon Corzine this week unveiled the RETURN-to-Work program which would provide employers with up to \$2,400 to train workers for jobs that pay up to \$15.00 an hour. The state Department of Labor and Workforce Development will spend up to \$8 million from discretionary federal funds to pay for the incentives, which are expected to help 3,000 to 4,000 people find jobs.

The RETURN (Re-Employment Training for Unemployed Residents of New Jersey)-to-Work program will offer "on-the-job" training grants to help employers cover the costs of training newly-hired workers who have been unable to find jobs and who have exhausted all extended unemployment insurance benefits. Private sector employers will be reimbursed for up to \$5 per hour to help defray the extraordinary costs of on-the-job training, for up to \$2,400 per newly hired employee. The jobs must pay at least \$15 per hour and the employer must retain these workers in their jobs for at least six months. Jobs that qualify for RETURN-to-Work grants must increase an employer's total workforce and the new hires cannot displace existing workers.

Individuals who exhaust all of their state and federal unemployment insurance benefits are now being informed of their eligibility for RETURN-to-Work by the Department of Labor and Workforce

Development. This week, more than 40,000 New Jerseyans are receiving program notification.

Employers can access information about the program online at [www.nj.gov/labor/employers](http://www.nj.gov/labor/employers).

### **Republican Policy Committee Holds Second Hearing**

The Assembly Republican Policy Committee, chaired by Assembly Republican Whip Jon Bramnick, held its second public hearing to examine public corruption and how to combat it on Wednesday at the State House in Trenton.

Witnesses included Gregg Edwards, president of the Center for Public Policy, an advocate for an independent, elected state comptroller, Wayne Eastman, a former Assistant District Attorney in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office who investigated and tried white-collar crime cases, Donald Conway, a certified public accountant who specializes in securities fraud, forensic accounting, insolvency and reorganization, and litigation support, and Richard Rivera, a former West New York police officer who was a whistleblower in a corruption case that resulted in the conviction and imprisonment of the town's former police chief, Franklin Township Mayor Brian Levine, and Doug Wicks, a member of the public.

The witness recommendations include: creation of the Office of Auditor General, an elected position that would act as an umbrella for various state law enforcement agencies; establishment of a code of ethics for public officials as a benchmark / standard; required ethics training / education for public officials and monetary incentives for blowing the whistle on corrupt officials.

### **PSI in the News**

Two articles recently appeared in the Bergen Record recognizing the leadership roles of Public Strategies Impact's partners in the gubernatorial campaigns.

Columnist Charles Stile highlighted the fundraising effort of Senior Partner Roger Bodman in Chris Christie's campaign and Stile's also recognized Partner Bill Maer's political leadership in Governor Corzine's campaign. These two were again recognized in last Sunday's Bergen Record.

For your convenience, we've pasted the Charles Stile's column below and attached a copy of an insert that appeared in the Bergen Record on Sunday.

## Stile: Lobbyists have feet in both campaigns



By CHARLES STILE  
COLUMNIST

No one is panicking, though. The grizzled and Gucci-shod veterans have seen reform threats come and go over past election cycles. They've weathered them with a simple strategy that is best summarized this way:

Lobbyists in Trenton are on yellow alert now that both major-party candidates for governor have vowed to expel "entrenched" interests from the State House.

No one is panicking, though. The grizzled and Gucci-shod veterans have seen reform threats come and go over past election cycles. They've weathered them with a simple strategy that is best summarized this way:

Step 1: Make sure you cover your bets — dispatch a staff lobbyist as "adviser" or "strategist" to inner sanctums of both campaigns. Let them be the shoulder for the candidate to cry on, if need be. Provide indispensable advice.

Step 2: Round up clients for summertime "receptions." Make sure they bring checks.

Step 3: Collect everybody's cellphone numbers. They will come in handy once your fellow campaign volunteers become governor's aides next year. And above all, remember this slogan: "It's the Access, Stupid."

Public Strategies Impact LLC, a bipartisan "one-stop shopping" lobbying firm that raked in \$6 million in revenue last year, offers an instructive example. Like rival firms, it has its feet placed firmly in both campaigns.

Lobbyist Roger Bodman, a former Kean administration Cabinet member and the reassuring baritone of moderate Republican wisdom on New Jersey Network, held a fund-raising reception at his home in late June for the Republican Governors Association. The independent "issues" group which is regulated by the Internal Revenue Service, has spent \$3 million in support of Christopher J. Christie, the Republican nominee for governor.

In attendance were Christie; Haley Barbour, the RGA president; and several Public Strategies clients, including the New Jersey chapter of the American Institute of Architects, whose executive director, Joseph Simonetta, is also a Public Strategies lobbyist.

The "intimate gathering" gave architects an "opportunity to educate [Christie] on issues" important to architects, according to the group's Web site. The architects and seven other Public Strategy clients gave \$450,000 to the RGA effort, according to group's June 30 filing with the IRS.

Public Strategies also has infiltrated Governor Corzine's campaign. Democrat Bill Maer, a Democratic earner for the firm, is on leave from the firm to work on Corzine's campaign.

Maer, a former spokesman for the Bergen County Democratic Organization during the reign of Joe Ferriero, was among a crop of Democratic lobbyists-strategists Corzine enlisted in recent weeks to shore up his fumbling campaign.

Public Strategies-represented clients also gave a handsome \$420,000 to the Democratic Governors Association, which helped finance attack ads against Christie during the primary.

None of this activity is illegal or new. Giving to outside groups allows some donors to exceed contribution limits. It's particularly useful for regulated industries, such as insurance or utility companies forbidden from donating directly to state campaigns.

But the status quo activity just doesn't square with the chest-pounding rhetoric of reform we've heard over the past year. In early July, Christie pledged to "take on the entrenched interests and power brokers who have dominated Trenton for too long." Really? When he said "take on" special interests, did he really mean to say that he would have his picture taken with them at "intimate gatherings?"

Maria Comella, a Christie spokeswoman, declined to comment. For his part, Bodman, who said he is "working my tail off" for Christie, defended his role as a necessary counterweight to the unfair Corzine cash advantage.

He watched his personal friend, former Republican Congressman Bob Franks, get clobbered in the 2000 U.S. Senate race by Corzine, loaded with about \$300 million from his abrupt departure from Goldman Sachs. Corzine outspent Franks by a 10-to-1 margin.

It was "ridiculously unfair," Bodman said. "My motivation is to try to level the playing field on a very wealthy guy." Christie has also agreed to take public financing for the campaign, which limits his total spending to \$10.9 million. That makes the RGA help all the more valuable and its donors appreciated.

Corzine, the one-man subsidizer of the Democratic Party machine in recent years, has also ranted self-righteously about reform.

"We have reached a point where New Jerseyans have come to believe that instead of government of, by and for the people, we have a government of, by and for the political contributors," Corzine proclaimed

as he unveiled his comprehensive ethics reforms last September, most of which have vanished into the Legislative ether. "Today, that era ends."

Corzine said last week that Maer is prohibited from lobbying the administration during the campaign, which is a completely meaningless safeguard. Lobbying in the next 60 days is not the issue; it's being first on line in the governor's outer office over the next four years, when the new "era" begins.

But then again, Corzine could lose, which will put Maer at the back of the line of a Christie-controlled State House office — assuming, of course, he's allowed inside. But there is no need to worry — others in his firm, like Bodman, will be at the front of the line. And so will Republicans from the big, bipartisan lobbying firms. Their bets are covered.

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