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# THIS WEEK IN TRENTON

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## **Gubernatorial Race Tightening**

Two polls released this week show the gubernatorial race tightening. The latest Quinnipiac poll, released on Wednesday, September 30, shows Republican challenger Christopher Christie leading Governor Jon Corzine and Independent Christopher Daggett, but by a slimmer margin than shown in previous Quinnipiac polls. Christie leads Corzine 43%-39% among likely voters, with Daggett at 12%. Christie led 47%-37%-9% on September 1st and 46%-40%-7% on August 7th. The latest Monmouth University/Gannett poll, released yesterday, has Christie leading Corzine by a 43%-40% margin with Daggett at 8%.

The Quinnipiac poll shows that among independents, Christie leads Corzine 45%-32% with Daggett at 16%. Christie has an 83%-6%-9% lead among Republicans and Corzine has a 71%-10%-11% lead among Democrats. Corzine runs strongest in Essex and Hudson counties, leading Christie by a margin of 64%-23% with Daggett at 10%. Christie's strongest region is Morris, Somerset, Hunterdon, Warren and Sussex counties where he leads Corzine by a margin of 59%-22% with Daggett at 17%. The race is a statistical dead head in the counties of Bergen, Middlesex, Passaic, Mercer and Union where Christie leads Corzine 41%-40% with Daggett at 10%. Corzine leads Christie and Daggett 48%-35%-11% in the South Jersey counties of Camden, Gloucester, Burlington, Salem, Cape May and Cumberland. In the Shore counties, Atlantic, Ocean and Monmouth, Christie leads Corzine 53%-25% with 14% for Daggett.

In the Monmouth/Gannett poll Corzine is polling at 75% among Democrats and Christie is polling at 86% among Republicans. One group demonstrating a shift over the last month is Independent women. Corzine leads among that category by a statistically insignificant 38%-37%. In August, Christie held a 28% lead among independent women.

Corzine, Christie and Daggett participated in the first gubernatorial debate last night. They will debate again on October 16 and October 22. PSI senior partner Roger Bodman has participated in the Christie campaign debate preparations, playing the role of Chris Daggett in mock debates.

## **Legislative Leadership**

Several developments in the leadership battle in both houses of the Legislature occurred this week. Senate Majority Leader Stephen Sweeney announced that he had the backing of 13 Senators in his effort to unseat Senate President Richard Codey. There are 23 members of the Democratic caucus so with the 13 Senators announced yesterday and his own vote, Sweeney has a majority of the caucus. Senators announcing their support for Sweeney are Fred Madden, Dana Redd, James Beach, Jeff Van Drew, James Whelan, Brian Stack, Barbara Buono, Bob Smith, Paul Sarlo, Nicholas Scutari, Raymond Lesniak, M. Teresa Ruiz and Nia Gill. In a statement released yesterday, Codey indicated that he was still a candidate for Senate President and that he plans to focus his efforts over the next month on re-electing Governor Corzine and campaigning for Assembly candidates throughout the State.

In the Assembly, Essex County Assemblywoman Sheila Oliver has emerged as the favorite to succeed Speaker Joseph Roberts, who will retire at the end of this term. Oliver is expected to have the backing of the Essex and Union county delegations and yesterday secured the backing of the South Jersey delegation. Assemblyman John Wisniewski, who had announced his intention to run for Speaker, withdrew from the race to back Oliver. Assembly Majority Leader Bonnie Watson Coleman has not withdrawn but does not appear to have significant support at this time.

Leadership elections are generally held soon after the November election. The new leaders assume their posts at the start of the next session of the Legislature in January.

**Public Strategies Impact launches new website: [www.njpsi.com](http://www.njpsi.com)**

Public Strategies Impact is proud to present our newly designed website and web address. Please visit us on the web at [www.NJPSI.com](http://www.NJPSI.com) where you will find new and exciting information about our firm. Please see what others are saying about us in our testimonial section, or check out our services and sectors page and see our areas of expertise.

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