

## N.J. race for governor: Why I can't join 'we' in buying the Republicans' spin

Posted by [kheyboer](#) July 30, 2009 05:23AM



WILLIAM PERLMAN/THE STAR-LEDGER Republican candidate

Chris Christie

It is impossible for me to write honestly about this year's gubernatorial election without receiving multiple protests from loyal Republicans.

The typical Republican will tell me that "we" need to stick together to make sure **Chris Christie** defeats **Jon Corzine** in November.

Let me get this out of the way long in advance of the election: There is no "we." My job is not to advance the interests of one candidate over another. My job is to apply a set of standards, admittedly standards unique to me, to all candidates and then to see who lives up to those standards.

I realize this point of view is unpopular in the debased internet era into which we are descending. The blogosphere is populated by propagandists, people whose motive for writing is to advance candidate A over candidate B. They openly despise what they often call "pundints," by which they mean those of us who sit above the battle like the gods of Olympus, throwing thunderbolts down on those who displease us.

If I've been throwing a lot of [bolts at Christie](#), it's because [he deserves them](#). Corzine, for all his flaws, is at least what he pretends to be, a liberal who will tell you openly that he desires to move New Jersey to the left. Christie, on the other hand, has revealed himself to be devoid of any political beliefs whatsoever. He is a man who will adopt any pose for the sake of attaining power.

I recognized that the moment his campaign began. On his first swing through the state in early February, Christie unveiled his stump speech. It contained a reference to "zero-based budgeting," a fraud that was first popularized by **Jimmy Carter** back in 1976 and soon discounted. The speech also included a theatrical flourish in which Christie waved a pen and pretended that he could solve the state's budget woes through the line-item veto. This is nonsense but it fooled the audience.

Just for the fun of it, I listened to a recording of that speech the other day. It was even more dreadful than I had imagined. Consider this line that followed an attempt to create a nautical metaphor involving the state budget.

"The first thing you have to do when you're trying to right a ship that has gone off course is to put your fiscal house in order first and foremost," he said.

A ship that needs to be righted is not off-course. It is capsized. And no ship, whether upside-down or right side up, has a "fiscal house" on it.

My point here is not to mock the candidate's lack of nautical knowledge or his mixing of metaphors. My point is that a politician who says such a thing does so not because he has something to say but is saying it poorly. He says such things because he has nothing to say other than that he wants power. And he will say anything to get it.

That was proven when I came upon this passage, which I had forgotten but which is interesting in the light of subsequent events. First Christie made a joke about his inability to do math. Then he cited New Jersey's bad business climate and compared our tax rates to those of Pennsylvania.

"When you look at our high income tax rate of 9 percent versus our neighbors in Pennsylvania of three percent, even I could do that math," he said.

This was an excellent analysis. And two weeks later Christie's opponent, former Bogota mayor **Steve Lonegan**, not only endorsed it but turned it into a concrete proposal. If elected, said Lonegan, he would lower New Jersey's tax rate to 2.9 percent, for the express purpose of providing a more attractive business environment than that of Pennsylvania.

At this point, if he were being intellectually honest, Christie might have said, "Hey! That was my idea!" Instead, he attacked Lonegan for acting on the very problem Christie had been citing just days before. He even made those attacks the centerpiece of his campaign.

Politicians pull such tricks all the time. Again, one needs something of an Olympian perspective to see through them. Thanks to my long years observing New Jersey politics, I can't help dissecting Christie's speeches as I hear them and dismissing them on the spot as spin handed to him by his handlers. And those handlers come out of that GOP mainstream consisting of politicians who have long ago dismissed the possibility of delivering on such key issues as property-tax relief.

So no matter who [wins this election](#), you and I will not be receiving those property-tax reductions that were promised 33 years ago when the income tax was introduced. And in that, we truly do have something in common.

Categories: [Must-see stories](#), [Politics](#), [Statehouse](#)

## Comments

### ImMencken says...

Paul,

Just a quick heads up... I think you hit "submit" too quick or something. The interesting part of this column seems to have not been published.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 6:48AM

**happygram says...**

ImMencken, that argument is so vague, even I don't get it. You might try having this discussion closer to earth so we can all join in. Thanks.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 7:10AM

**learn3drive says...**

Corzine has failed. Why does Corzine deserve another shot? Let someone else step in. If they fail, vote them out too.

Signed,  
Fiscal Conservative, Social Liberal

Posted on 07/30/09 at 7:20AM

**yeshiva says...**

this article is just plain stupid, PM get a life.

The whole, "If I don't get 100%, I'm not happy" routine breeds extremism.

I think I like what Koch said, "If you like 4 out of 5 things I stand for then vote for me. If you like 5 out of 5 things, go see a psychiatrist. "

Being honest about being bad doesn't make you good, as PM claims about Corzine, it just makes you self realized. Being good and not communicating that properly doesn't make you bad, as Christie is apt to do.

Save New Jersey - vote Chris Christie!

Posted on 07/30/09 at 7:23AM

**jacki62 says...**

I am sorry Christie will not come in on his white horse and save us. I always say if you can't fix it the first time I am sure you can fix it the second time.. I am giving Corzine another chance.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 7:30AM

**dirtbody58 says...**

AMEN

Posted on 07/30/09 at 7:32AM

**roberto188 says...**

Wow....you psoters must be the stupid block of voters that selected Christie as the GOP candidate. If you you

REALLY think his fat flip flopping self is going to make any REAL change in NJ then you are living in a fantasy world. The only difference between Chris Christie and John Corzine is about 150lbs. Both are political machine puppets who pander for power and votes. Neither has had an original, inspiring, or smart proposal in the history of either of their careers! Thanks again NJ...when it comes time to elect a governor I will simply be forced to chose the color (red or blue) of stupidity again!

Posted on 07/30/09 at 7:43AM

**jacki62 says...**

Ok first lets talk about Christie coming in on his white horse and saving New Jersey LMAO , I admit Corzine has not always done things to please everyone. But do you think putting someone in office who wants to cut programs and cause massive layoff's is the answer .Christie lacks a specific budget blueprint and he is very vague about what cuts and what programs he plans to cut. And most of all while the state is hurting for money how is he going to give businesses tax cuts or anyone tax breaks ... when we need the money for the state to survive. He just knows everyone is disappointed in Corzine and knows he can get his seat because of that. People we want a Governor who is open to us , Who gives us real answers. Christie gives us no answers. Christie says he is meeting with real people ....Does anyone know where that is , because I have not seen him in any of the towns near me. I have seen and heard Corzines blueprint , because Corzine is out there sharing his blueprint in the public , but nothing from Christie. Come on people think about this, do you all want to have regrets later, because you wanted change only to get someone worse. Christie lacks experience. How can you trust an Attorney to come in and use your money? Who is this woman he has running with him ? I never even heard of her. This is my point we know nothing about Christie or his running mate. Wake up New Jersey stick with someone you know.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 8:09AM

**jacki62 says...**

roberto188--- Your half right Christie has not made any proposal...

Posted on 07/30/09 at 8:11AM

**learn3drive says...**

jacki62 says: Wake up New Jersey stick with someone you know.

Yeah lol, even if he has a horrible track record and pulls sleazy political tactics to get votes and has done nothing to make NJ a better place for businesses or those who work for a living.

viva la corzine~

Posted on 07/30/09 at 8:16AM

**McLovin1234 says...**

"Corzine, for all his flaws, is at least what he pretends to be, a liberal who will tell you openly that he desires to move New Jersey to the left."

You're a lying sack of sh!t. Tell me where Corzine said anything about moving NJ to the left during his 2005

campaign ? Tell me where he said anything about universal daycare for 3 and 4 year olds, universal HC for children, raising the sales tax, imposing a new tax for "family leave", and on and on ? He said nothing of the kind. All he said back then was he was going to run state gov like a business and lower property taxes. You prove my point daily, you're nothing more than Farmer's Op-Ed page conservative useful idiot.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 8:24AM

**omaklein says...**

So "Corzine, for all his flaws, is at least what he pretends to be"? I never realized that someone can pretend to be what they are.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 8:33AM

**Validqs says...**

Jacki62: Yes, massive layoffs and program cutting IS THE ANSWER. My god, what have been doing for the past 30+ years as the state government has grown into an even bigger, ineffective, monument to waste and corruption (thanks in large part to BB's income tax). There is no evidence (anywhere, ever) that big government works. It fails and that is why California, NJ & other the federal government are failing. - Governments must protect us (e.g. police, military). Governments must supply an infrastructure (e.g. highways) and other basic tools of society. But government in a free society cannot engage in social engineering as one of its primary missions. - Taking money from people (taxes), using way too much of it to build bureaucracies and then re-distributing what is left to other people is not how a free society works. - In a democracy, when the people realize they can vote themselves rewards, the system will fail. - There is no such thing as a society in which the majority of the people are "wealthy" because this is a relative term and there will always be a small group who is better off. In a communisitic world, those are the self-appointed leaders. In a monarchy, it is the royal class. In a free society, it must be those who out-achieve the majority. If this society keeps taking from those who achieve, they will stop or slow down. We will all be reduced to the lowest common denominator. Our country will fail and be taken over by a stronger power. You don't want to see that world. - Corzine has to go because we have to turn away from his silly, immature ideals that we can take away people's success and make everyone happy. - Just say no to socialism; vote Corzine out.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 8:40AM

**lipso says...**

So it all boils down to a choice between the lesser of 2 evils???? This is what politics and government in NJ has become. All candidates try to cater to every interest group and that cannot be done. Where is the candidate that will truly attack what ails NJ??? Someone stated that we should stick with someone we know- I guess that means the someone who BOUGHT a Senators seat and a Governors seat??? But then, we're dealing with NJ voters and most vote on sound bites instead of facts...No wonder so many people sit out elections because they figure it's a lost cause...And if you look at NJ and how some legislators have been on office for a lifetime you can see why it's business as usual and things never change...except for those in the NJ club of politicians...

Posted on 07/30/09 at 8:42AM

**funinmo says...**

It amazes me how consistently Mulshine has attacked Christie as if he had a personal vendetta against him.

Meanwhile, Corzine's policies have failed and he has not lived up to a single campaign promise. Property taxes, income taxes, and sales taxes are higher than ever in our state and yet we're not getting any bang for the buck. More lopsided union contracts negotiated with his ex-girlfriend, billions more given to the School Corruption Corporation with no results, and continued waste and corruption that permeates throughout this state. NJ can't take another four years of business as usual that Corzine offers. If Mulshine spent a quarter of as much time focused on Christie as what's actually happening in this state, maybe the people here would wake up and demand change. Demand that the politicians in this state stop feeding from the public trough and pocketing as much tax revenue for themselves as they can. Stop the no-show patronage positions like Bryant had. He wasn't the only one with it. End the wasteful spending and corrupt practices. Eliminate pensions and benefits for part-time elected officials. Make the unions contribute to health care premiums. Corzine will never do what needs to be done. He's only putting us deeper in debt.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 8:43AM

### **HowieS says...**

Corzine and his administration have proven themselves to be incompetent, ineffective, and corrupt. That's just for starters.

Property taxes are out of sight. Corzine broke his promise to get us off the property tax system of paying for education. He raised sales taxes. His economic policies are driving people and industry out of NJ.

Members of his administration have had to resign due to corruption. I'm waiting for the indictments.

Why in the world would you vote to keep him in office another four years? If he were a doctor or an attorney you would have fired him years ago.

I think the reason you chose Corzine over Christie is because you prefer the devil you know to the devil you don't know.

This is terrible logic. Your logic discusses why you don't like Christie. Look at Corzine's lack of accomplishments and reevaluate your position. Leave your emotions behind and make the right choice.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 9:08AM

### **nocorzine says...**

Mulshine

I "Googled" the word Moron and your picture came up.

You know nothing about Christie or even Corzine.

You attack any little thing you can find, Look up "Metaphor"

If you really did your homework you could write a Column that has some validity.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 9:29AM

### **doctorphil1 says...**

Regardless of whom wins in November, New Jerseyans will be the real losers.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 9:31AM

**KalNJ says...**

Who cares about Christie or Corzine?

People need to get this through their thick heads - there is only ONE party in the US - the Republicrats!

They are all the same. The important issue is that we need to vote ALL incumbents out of office regardless of party affiliation.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 10:05AM

**mpcarrollR25 says...**

"Corzine and his administration have proven themselves to be incompetent, ineffective, and corrupt."

Quite the contrary: they have been wonderfully competent and effective - in raising taxes and bloating government.

One must discount liberals like Jacki: anyone who believes that trimming programs and cutting taxes would be detrimental to the economy needs remedial ed. Eliminating programs, cutting government, reducing spending, and slashing taxes are essential to making NJ affordable and prosperous. Corzine serves as a wonderful Bad Example: employing government to "help", the McGreevey/Corzine cabal made it unliveable. Only those on the dole, and rich liberals, can afford to live here. Even our public employees live in PA.

Corzine is a demonstrable disaster. This election is as easy as ABC: Anybody But Corzine.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 10:06AM

**jacki62 says...**

Wow you people are blind... What is Christie's agenda people? With all due respect, Christie has no plan. Reject stimulus, increase spending, cut taxes. One simple question: how do you fund this? There are many programs out there to help people who need them, so just because you don't need that program Christie should get rid of it ??? Christie has already planned to deny students and small businesses billions in education aid from President Barack Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Christie's purely political refusal to accept federal education funding would be a major blow to New Jersey students who are already counting on this assistance to continue their education, Corzine has been a tireless champion of higher education -- making college affordable, building stronger connections between higher education and grade school, protecting the health and safety of students. Tell me people why hurt your children because you dislike Corzine because he did not make you happy, when he made many others happy, no one can fix all the problems or have time to fulfill all the promises. Corzine is not the only person who runs New Jersey, Corzine has people he has to answer to before he makes any choices which are Republicans and Democrats. I for one am very upset that Christie is against woman's rights, And Christie is opposing paid family leave that allows mothers to take time off and attend to their newborns. Also the school voucher system Christie recommends basically redirects the flow of educational funding, channeling it directly to individual families rather than to school districts. So what ever family gets lucky enough to get a school voucher will get better educated. But what about the rest of the children in lower income family's who don't get those vouchers? Why better educate a hand full when you can better educate them all. Christie's various proposals would blow a hole in the state budget and his refusal to accept \$2 billion in federal funding for education would create a \$2 billion increase in property taxes for New Jersey. Christie will find the money by taking from your children and important programs for the people. Christie don't know what program is important or not, He knows nothing

that has to do with the government . His kids go to good schools, he has no use for any program because he has money and great health care.he don't care one bit about our shores and forest or land , because he wants to get rid of DOP the very ones who take care of the environment. This is only one program he has already said he wants to get rid of. These are the facts , wether you have children or not we all will be affected by Christies ideas.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 10:29AM

**jacki62 says...**

People need to start caring !!!!

Posted on 07/30/09 at 10:30AM

**jacki62 says...**

Wakeup New Jersey

Posted on 07/30/09 at 10:31AM

**ImMencken says...**

happygram...

I wrote it from bed... maybe I was too groggy. Although, your mom was laughing.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 10:38AM

**politburo says...**

Just so it's clear, you only have a 9% marginal tax rate if you make more than \$500,000 in taxable income.

For the rest of us, the top marginal rate is ~6.4% or less.

While PA does have lower income taxes, they have higher gas taxes, higher booze taxes, higher RE transfer taxes, higher estate taxes (not an exhaustive list).. and you also get no exemptions or deductions on the income tax.

Obviously the overall level of taxation is still lower in PA, but my point is that you cannot just look at one tax rate. You have to look at the whole tax system. Luckily there is a group that has done this for the last 30 years.

According to the Tax Foundation, on a per capita basis, PA residents pay ~\$1,300 less in taxes per year. The effective tax rate in NJ is 11.8%, and 10.2% in PA. Quite a bit different than 9% vs. 3%...

Posted on 07/30/09 at 11:15AM

**jacki62 says...**

mpcarot ..... I am not a liberal ,Christie is going to reduce taxes ??? spending, and slashing taxes on businesses

? You really think Christie is capable to do this ? Where is he to get the money? And how is he to fight the unions on state workers. They have contracts that he can't change. furlough isn't enough Christie? There are people who only make 9 dollars a hour for the state., How about them, they will be the first to go, is that fair? They have children and bills to pay. And the job market sucks for them to find new jobs. Why don't the people high in office take a pay cut that would totally take care of the state budget as much as they get's paid , did Christie say he will take a pay cut ?.I am voting for the independent.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 11:24AM

**delpaso says...**

for jacki62: the one line in your rant says it all, "he did not make you happy when he made many others happy". the ones who are unhappy are us taxpayers who are footing the massive taxbills that bearded clown is hitting us with. the happy ones are the slugs who drift along in life enjoying all the perks of corzine's "socialist paradise" while contributing very little to the bill. corzine will lose by a landslide in november just like florio and you can take that to the bank.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 11:25AM

**jacki62 says...**

politburo ---- got info...

Posted on 07/30/09 at 11:26AM

**ephfan says...**

I am convinced that Mulshine is a Democratic Party plant. Has he ever said one positive thing about Republicans or Conservatives? The Star-Ledger should be required to hire a "liberal" commentator, who will then do nothing by criticize the Democrats, undermining their support. The paper remains very disappointing in this regard. Please hire a real conservative voice, and not a crank. There are certainly enough liberals at the paper, reporting the "hard news," on the editorial board, and among the commentators.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 11:34AM

**ephfan says...**

I am convinced that Mulshine is a Democratic Party plant. Has he ever said one positive thing about Republicans or Conservatives? The Star-Ledger should be required to hire a "liberal" commentator, who will then do nothing by criticize the Democrats, undermining their support. The paper remains very disappointing in this regard. Please hire a real conservative voice, and not a crank. There are certainly enough liberals at the paper, reporting the "hard news," on the editorial board, and among the commentators.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 11:34AM

**Bochef says...**

Remember, we were tired of politicians who owed everybody, so we elected a man who paid for his own election - and owed nobody. He promised to clean up the state - as Obama promised to clean up the country. Only problem. Corzine couldn't do anything until he made friends with the legislature. He may be the most

powerful governor in the USA, but he still needs the legislature to pass bills - and he has to give them back something in return. That's how it works. He's learning. Remember, campaign promises are INTENTIONS. They have no power without the legislature's backing. Corzine is a money man. He knows finances. If ANYONE can fix our finances, he's the guy, but if we're stuck with patronage - don't blame him - blame the ones he has to get votes from in order to pass what he wants!  
New Jersey will NEVER be a cheap state to live in. Can't be. Cut taxes? Not until we can clean out the patronage. Corzine can't do it alone, and neither can Christie. At least Corzine doesn't come in with a ton of baggage (nothing personal intended).

Posted on 07/30/09 at 11:41AM

**jacki62 says...**

delpaso--- Corzine made me happy in several things and did not make me happy in a couple things , But all in all he made me happy. Education for one , woman rights for another , gun control to keep hand guns off the street. More police in Trenton and Camden. And many more issues. Stop looking at the bad points and look for the positive things. Lower taxes will come when the state can afford it.

Posted on 07/30/09 at 11:51AM

**jacki62 says...**

Christie makes promises for change , but at what cost ?

Posted on 07/30/09 at 11:53AM

Footer