



NJ Gov. Christie Not Running for President

Though the number of GOP presidential contenders has grown seemingly unmanageable, many Republicans have practically demanded the entrance of another candidate: New Jersey Governor Chris Christie. Christie, though appreciative of the vote of public confidence, has repeatedly declared he would not consider a presidential bid this time around; however, his assertions have seemed to fall on deaf ears. Many continued to point to various statements by Christie thought to be alluding to possible consideration of a run despite his declarations to the contrary. Just moments ago, however, Christie made yet another official statement indicating he would not run for President.



Christie scheduled a press conference in New Jersey so that he could clarify once and for all that he does not intend to seek a 2012 presidential bid. He declared:

I've been adamant about the fact that I would not run for president. My language was clear and direct no matter how many times I've been asked. My job here is my passion ... I'm doing a job I love in a state I grew up in on behalf of some of the toughest and hardest-working people I know.

Governor Christie did admit, however, that he and his wife have spent the last few weeks considering the possibility of a presidential bid because he was moved by the overwhelming number of requests he received to embark on such an endeavor:

We thought, "we better rethink this," and so we did. But in the end my commitment to the state of New Jersey is what overrode everything else. I asked for this job, and it never felt right to me to leave now.

Over the last few weeks, I've thought about what people have been asking of me. I thought long and hard, but in the end the right decision is the one I first made ... Now is not the time. I have a commitment to the people of New Jersey that I will not abandon. I made this commitment to my state first and foremost. People have sent me to Trenton to get a job done, and I am just not prepared to walk away. My loyalty to this state is what it is.

Governor Christie said he has received dozens of letters, from both prominent and average Americans. He explained that he was particularly moved by a letter that was Fed-Exed to his children begging them to have a sit-down with their father and explain to him that they will accept his absence from family events and soccer games if it meant he was fully engaged in a presidential campaign.

Still, Christie repeated throughout the conference that it "never felt right" to leave his post as New Jersey Governor. He joked, "This is not the time to leave unfinished business, so New Jersey, whether you like it or not, you're stuck with me."



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The Governor said he was appreciated the requests he has received over the last few months: "I'm grateful to all the people who have spoken to me over the last few months. I'm grateful for the confidence they have placed in me. It's humbling."

Reporters seemed anxious to provoke Governor Christie into saying something regarding the current field of Republican presidential contenders, but the Governor was unwilling to take the bait. One reporter asked if Christie had any advice for the candidates seeking a GOP nomination, to which he replied, "Any advice I have for the people who are running, I will give directly to the people who are running."

When asked if Christie believed that the calls for him to seek a presidential bid were a reflection of criticism of the Republican field of contenders, Christie said, "I don't think it says anything about the field ... I like to think it says something about me. We've accomplished a lot here and we are making progress."

Likewise, Christie was unwilling to endorse any particular Republican candidate: "I'm not prepared to make any endorsement today ... I'm not in a position today to make that judgment."

He did, however, indicate that the GOP debates need to "get on to the real issues," so that the candidates may address the concerns that are plaguing the American people today.

Christie was far more willing to criticize President Obama than his fellow Republicans. According to Christie, he cares about what is best for America, and what is best for the United States is "making sure President Obama is a one-termer."

He said that the President lacked the necessary leadership to guide this country at a particularly strenuous time. "The President has failed, and more than anything else, what I've learned is that there is no substitute for learning how to lead. Everything else can be taught, but you cannot be taught how to lead and make good decisions. He has failed to lead the American people."

Calls for Christie to seek a presidential bid were not particularly surprising. The New Jersey Governor has gained popularity over the last few months for his disregard for political rhetoric in lieu of direct, straightforward language. Today's press conference showcased this very aspect of the man, as he joked with some reporters, teased other reporters that have been particularly critical of his gubernatorial tenure, and poked fun at himself for his physical heft.

In fact, one reporter asked Christie if he was upset by the various jokes circulating throughout the Internet as well as on television regarding his weight. He replied jovially, "I'm not self-conscious about [my weight]. It's not a newsflash to me that I'm overweight." He explained that as a public figure, he is fair game, and so is the subject of his weight. He quipped that he only hoped that the jokes about his weight were funny. "If they're funny, I can at least laugh at them while they're making fun of me."

Likewise, Christie has shown a willingness to make tough decisions which, though unpopular at times, proved to be good choices for New Jersey, particularly as the state is faced with a deficit crisis. Fox News has described Christie as a "pugnacious chief executive who has taken on the labor unions in New Jersey [and who has] centered his campaign on dealing with severe budget issues that New Jersey faces."

Overall, two things were made abundantly clear by today's conference. First, Christie will definitely not be seeking a 2012 presidential bid. The second item to note, however, is that Christie did use qualifying terms such as "not now" — leaving the door open for the possibility in the future.



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Photo: New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie stands in the Statehouse in Trenton, N.J., Tuesday, Oct. 4, 2011, as he announces that he will not run for president in 2012.: AP Images



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