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Christie leads Buono, 56-32.

Posted by Anthony Bellano (Editor) , October 30, 2013 at 03:06 PM

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Gov. Chris Christie, left, holds a 24-point lead over Barbara Buono, right, in the most recent Stockton Polling Institute poll on the gubernatorial race. (File photo)

Gov. Chris Christie holds a 24-point lead over Democratic challenger Babara Buono ahead of Tuesday's election, according to a Stockton Polling Institute poll released on Wednesday.

The Republican incumbent holds a 56-32 edge among likely voters, with eight percent remaining undecided and another four percent either refused to answer the question or gave another choice.

A Stockton Polling Institute poll released on Oct. 10 had similar results, with Christie holding a 33-point lead, and in three polls the institute conducted over the fall, Buono never made it as high as 33 percent support among voters, according to pollsters.

Christie holds a lead over Buono in all demographics with the exception of racial and ethnic minorities, and he leads in every county except Essex and Union counties. The race is a statistical tie in both of those counties.

A contributing factor to Christie's lead may be name recognition. While 97 percent of respondents know of Christie, 35 percent are not familiar with Buono. Christie enjoys a 67 percent favorability rating, while only 33 percent of respondents have a favorable view of Buono.

Christie also receives high marks on his performance as governor, with 62 percent giving him a job performance rating of excellent or good and 36 percent rating it as fair or poor.

However, Christie's popularity doesn't necessarily translate well for Republicans running for office in the state. Forty-three percent of those polled said an endorsement by Christie makes no difference in their selection of a legislative candidate, while 27 percent said an endorsement would sway them in favor of voting

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for the candidate. Another 25 percent are less likely to vote for a candidate due to Christie's endorsement.

Election Day is less than a week away, on Nov. 5.

With the government shutdown in the not-too distant past, 44 percent of voters held Congressional Republicans responsible for the shutdown, while 27 percent blame President Barack Obama, 4 percent blame Congressional Democrats and 22 percent holding all of the above responsible.

However, the shutdown has no impact on 36 percent of those polled when it comes to next year's Congressional elections, in which 37 percent of those polled said they would support a generic Democrat and 21 percent showed support for an unnamed Republican.

Fifty-one percent of unaffiliated voters said the shutdown has no impact on their decision, with 22 percent likely to favor a Democrat and 18 percent likely to support the Republican.

Additionally, 55 percent of those polled believe the state is headed in the right direction; 22 percent identify property taxes as the No. 1 funding priority in the state, followed by 21 percent who said jobs; 76 percent said property taxes have gone down a lot or a little; 76 percent support raising the minimum wage from \$7.25 an hour to \$8.25 an hour; and 69 percent support a proposal to allow veterans groups to use proceeds from raffles and games of chance to fund operating expenses.

The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percent, and was conducted between Oct. 23 and 28. Interviewers called both land lines and cell phones while on campus at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

The Stockton Polling Institute is part of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton College.

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