



It's become, however, a test of whether the "Jersey attitude" still resonates or whether it's grown stale and repetitive, lost the appeal it once had and whether Christie is increasingly being seen as mean-spirited or spiteful.

At Christie's recent town hall event in Belmar, his smackdown of a 17-year-old high school student from Newark who had asked why he hadn't scheduled one of his forums in that city drew a cry of "rude" from a member of the audience and a shouted reminder from another that Christie was a father of four children.

The spontaneous response was clear: Smacking one of his political opponents was understood, but dissing a teenager who'd posed a