

# Why Chris Christie Matters

So what happens now to Chris Christie? Will he campaign for the Republican nominee? Will he settle back into New Jersey politics exclusively? Not since William Taft graced the White House in the early 20th century has there been a national political presence like Christie. Larger than life both physically and emotionally, Christie plays the political game like a blitzing middle linebacker: if he zeroes in on you, you'll feel it.

Christie is not yet ready to be president, though, because he lacks enough executive experience. Perhaps the biggest problem President Obama has is a lack of problem-solving experience. Through no fault of his own, Mr. Obama was handed a damaged economy and promptly made it worse because he had no frame of reference in economic matters. He hired a bunch of liberal people who sold him on the preposterous idea that the federal government could manage the private sector. Disaster.

New Jersey is a mess. It's the highest taxed state in the nation, its unemployment rate at 9.4 percent. Unions have a stranglehold on education and public services. The state has run up a \$33 billion debt. In addition, the insidious TV program "Jersey Shore" is now the projected image of the Garden State. Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse than Tony and Carmella, here comes Snooki.

So Governor Christie should do what he's been called to do—solve difficult problems. As a federal prosecutor, he successfully nailed a variety of bad guys, including gang members, child pornographers, and the terrorists who tried to attack Fort Dix. Christie is a tough guy who brooks no nonsense. Most Americans admire that.

There is a sea change going on politically in this country. Barack Obama is a cool, composed guy who inspired hope,

especially among minorities and younger Americans. The president's confidence is still on display, but his record speaks for itself. A new ABC News/Washington Post poll says 55% of Americans now want a Republican in the White House.

That Republican will not be Chris Christie, but someday it could happen. We are living in a complicated, dangerous age and many folks are confused. The nation needs direction and a clear pathway. Christie is blunt. He describes the problem, tells you what he's going to do about it, and also tells you to go nuke yourself if you don't like it. As long as the problems get solved, he can get away with that kind of presentation. But, as Barack Obama has learned, if things don't improve, it gets mighty hot under the Christie collar.

I've never met the governor, but I have deep roots in Jersey. I don't like what has happened to the state. If Christie can turn things around, the next stop may well be Pennsylvania Avenue. That would be quite a change for that venue. But one that may be needed.