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Gov. Christie: I Fight For What I Believe In And Make Sure That Government Works For The People

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Gov. Christie: I Fight For What I Believe In And Make Sure That G...


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Transcript:

Bret Baier: Joining me now from Trenton is New Jersey Governor and Republican presidential candidate Chris Christie. Governor, thanks for being here.

Governor Christie: Happy to be with you, Bret.

Bret Baier: The president we're told is going to make a speech that's not the traditional laundry list of items for congress to get through, but one he says is going to be painting a picture for the optimism he sees in the country's future. Your thoughts before this speech about the president and the administration?

Governor Christie: Well listen, Bret, you know I wish tonight the president would stand up and acknowledge the fears and the anxiety of the American people. About our national security position on terrorism and admit to the American people we can do better. We can do better to keeping them safe and that he's going to dedicate the last year of his presidency to making sure that the homeland is secure and that people once again feel safe on their streets and in our country.

Bret Baier: When he talks about foreign policy, he frames it saying, listen they are doing a lot of things and senior administration officials will tell you just like the Ebola situation, how they handled that, eventually it works out, but it may not look like it at the time. What do you say about that?

Governor Christie: What I say is that today there are fewer democracies in the world than there were when Barack Obama became President, that we have Iraq on fire, Syria on fire, Libya on fire, Egypt under martial law, Yemen in the middle of war, we have people in western Europe under siege by refugees from Syria, because of the President's

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failure to keep his word. And we have a sense here at home that both from ISIS and a rebuilding al Qaeda, that we're not safe in the homeland. This picture, the President paints is a picture of the world as he wishes it was, Bret. I see the world the way it is and so do the American people. If that's the picture he paints tonight, he's going to once again seem tone-deaf and completely out of touch with the American people.

Bret Baier: Governor Christie, let's turn to the campaign, you're spending a lot of time in New Hampshire. You're seeing some success there, in New Hampshire, after spending that time. You're seen as a straight-talker, but the front page of the "Boston Globe" today had this story. Chris Christie's shifting positions become fodder for rivals. Here's a quote from that story. 'The New Jersey Chief Executive's record during more than two decades in public life illustrates something else an adaptive politician, whose opinions have shifted often to a remarkable degree depending on the electorate he seeks to win over.' Your reaction to that?

Governor Christie: Completely unfair and untrue. The fact is when people look at my record both as U.S. Attorney and as Governor, what they'll see is someone who is steadfast in their beliefs, but who listens to the people that he serves. I think that's the obligation of every leader. The fact is that as governor I've taken a lot of strong steps that people never thought could be done. We've done them and for those folks who believe that somehow compromise is a dirty word, they're the same folks who are causing gridlock in Washington and causing the anger and the cynicism that people feel when folks don't fight for what they believe in and don't make government operate the right way. I've done both, fight for what I believe in and make sure that government operates and works for the people who pay for it.

Bret Baier: Governor on the issue of guns, I interviewed you back in November about the assault weapons ban, read you a quote from the Star-Ledger in which you said it motivated you to get into politics and you said you didn't think it really sounded like you and you couldn't remember. You told Sean Hannity though, that were you young and that you changed your mind. Which one was it?

Governor Christie: Listen, you gave me a specific quote Bret, that I didn't remember and that's why I answered it that way. But I'll be clear with you, you need to look at my record on guns as governor. I have vetoed the 50 caliber rifle ban. I have vetoed a reduction in the magazine capacity. I've vetoed a statewide gun I.D. system and I've pardoned now six people beginning in 2010 who own their guns legally outside of New Jersey and were arrested in New Jersey and who were facing jail time. I thought it was unjust and wrong and I used my pardon power. I have never once denied that my opinions over the course of time have changed on guns as I've gotten better educated and more experienced. And, you know what? If you don't give people the opportunity to do those things, then you're just going to have people who are stuck in old ideas and the old way of doing things. When I learn something new and it changes my mind, I admit it and believe me, on guns my mind has evolved over the course of time. But look at my actions over the last six years as governor. They have been consistent in protecting second amendment rights, but also making sure that public safety is protected. I'm proud of that record and I'll stand about it.

Bret Baier: Governor Christie, you delivered the state of the state in New Jersey tonight- there is a new poll out today, the Farleigh Dickinson University poll that has your performance in office, 31% approval. 59% disapproval. I've heard you talk about people wanting you to stay in New Jersey and that's how you explain these polls. What's the legislative accomplishment that you want the legislature there in New Jersey to go forward? What are you asking them to do and can you work with them?

Governor Christie: I definitely can work with them and we've worked with them before. In fact, just yesterday we came to an agreement that I negotiated between warring Democratic factions to put a question on the ballot this fall about expanding casino gaming in New Jersey. We are expanding drug treatment in New Jersey, amazingly. Today we announced that we are closing a state prison, closing a state prison Bret, because of our success in lowering the crime rate 20% in the last three years and lowering our prison population by 10%. So now we can close the state prison. And what we're doing with it is we're going to remake it and we're going to make it a drug treatment facility for those people who are in the throes of drug abuse as a disease. Those are the kinds of things that we're going to be working on with Democrats as we move forward. And by the way, I also called on them today to abolish the estate tax. And I hope that they're going to work with me to do that to make New Jersey more competitive and not just one of two states that has an estate and inheritance tax. I've called for its abolition and I hope they will work with me on that.

Bret Baier: Governor Christie, thanks for the time tonight, we'll see you in Des Moines in a couple of weeks.

Governor Christie: Looking forward to it, Bret. Thank you very much.

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