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PROGRAM: Caucus: New Jersey with Steve Aduato

Interview: US attorney Chris Christie discusses ethics
STEVE ADUBATO, host:

Raising the ethical bar in New Jersey; a conversation with US attorney Chris Christie.

Announcer: Funding for this edition of CAUCUS: NEW JERSEY has been provided by The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey, founded by the Jewish community; Johnson & Johnson, the worldwide health-care products company; New Jersey Natural Gas, proud to support education in our communities; Verizon Communications; and by QualCare Inc., a local managed care company covering 550,000 New Jersey residents.

ADUBATO: There he is, the US attorney in New Jersey, Chris Christie.

Good to see you, Chris.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER J. CHRISTIE (US Attorney): Great to be here, Steve.

ADUBATO: Look, you know, we've talked about these issues on the air, off the air, in public forums, raising the ethical bar in New Jersey. What does it really mean to raise the ethical bar, and by the way, what's our problem in New Jersey to begin with?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Well, the problem in New Jersey is pretty self-evident. We've had 82 public officials in the last three and a half years convicted of corrupting their public office, so that's a problem, and I think everybody in the public...

ADUBATO: What kinds of things have they done? Who are we talking about? What have they done?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Sure. We're talking about everything from taking actual cash bribes to trading..

ADUBATO: Like cash in envelopes?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Cash in envelopes passed across a table at a diner in New Jersey.

ADUBATO: For what?

Mr. CHRISTIE: In return for public contracts, public work with your tax money and my tax money, to businesses that may or may not be qualified to do the work. And it's happened at every level of government--Board of Education, local government, county government, state government. Every level of government has been corrupted by it, and that's our problem in New Jersey and the idea of raising the ethical bar is to try to create an atmosphere and a culture in the state that says this is no longer acceptable. We've had enough. We've had enough of being the butt of late-night TV jokes. We've had enough of being known in the state for political corruption, and we need real people, real voters, who are going to change that by electing better people.

ADUBATO: What kind of voters? I mean, Chris, come on. We're doing this program in the middle of the gubernatorial race and I promised you, because of your position, that we would not get into the campaign. That's not what you're about, and that's fine.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Absolutely not, yep.

ADUBATO: But you know, without getting into the campaign and you commenting on either candidate--and this may air after the election, anyway--how are people supposed to make sense of who the more "ethical" candidate is based on the kind of campaign that's being run? And by the way, this is no different than any other campaign. All they see is 30-second spots with one guy saying the other guy's a crook. The other guy says, 'Well, I'm a crook but he's more of a crook.' And I use that word not to--I mean, you know what I'm talking about.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Right.

ADUBATO: How do you make sense of that?

Mr. CHRISTIE: You--first of all, you can't rely upon 30-second ads that spin a candidate's position either about themselves or about their opponent. You have to go back and spend some time. You have to read some newspapers. You have to go on the Internet, find out what these people's positions are on certain issues, and then try to attempt, in your own way, to determine whether or not this is your type of person.

ADUBATO: What does that have to do with corruption and ethics?

Mr. CHRISTIE: It has a lot to do with corruption and ethics, Steve, because then it's a first step in a process. The next step in the process is to hold them accountable for what they said they would do, because people who don't keep their promises, Steve, are not people of character. And so then you have to inflict upon the elected official the worst punishment they could possibly get.

ADUBATO: Which is?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Not to be re-elected. And when politicians start not being re-elected because they haven't kept their word to you, they haven't put integrity and honesty first, then everybody who wants to be elected to office will start to act in a way that will get them into office.

ADUBATO: All right, all right. I'm going to make this a little bit more philosophical and more difficult for you, because the...

Mr. CHRISTIE: Right.

ADUBATO: ...guy who takes, the woman who takes, the \$10,000 or \$5,000--you actually say sometimes the numbers are less than that.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Oh, \$1,000, \$2,000 bribes, I've seen.

ADUBATO: I mean, to end it all.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yeah.

ADUBATO: End your entire career...

Mr. CHRISTIE: And you're to going to jail, by the way. You are going to jail.

ADUBATO: You're not going to cop a plea on that one.

Mr. CHRISTIE: You're going to cop a plea, but the best plea I'm going to give you is you're still going to jail. Going to jail.

ADUBATO: Because you're trying to send a message here?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Absolutely.

ADUBATO: All right. Well, how about this one? You said that, you know, you don't keep your promises, you--the worst thing that could happen to you is you don't get elected. I have this crazy idea, and I wrote a column one time, that ethical conduct in office sometimes also means, Chris, telling people what they don't want to hear, meaning, 'I know you may not like this but I'm probably going to have to raise taxes because I can't figure out how to fund the schools, to clean up the environment, to protect homeland security, still send you back that rebate check, property tax rebate check, because I can't lie to you, and I'm going to tell you the truth and you're not going to like it.' I say that's an ethical issue.

Mr. CHRISTIE: I agree with...

ADUBATO: And I don't hear that kind of conversation.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Well, I agree with you. I think that is an ethical issue. I think New Jerseyans--and we've discussed this before and now it's to the point where they're ready to hear the truth.

ADUBATO: The real truth, even the part that's painful for them?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Well, listen, and if they're not ready to hear the real truth, then they get the government they deserve. If, in fact, we are going to say that someone who tells us the truth on any one of these issues...

ADUBATO: Right.

Mr. CHRISTIE: ...that you're discussing, is going to be penalized for telling the truth and the panderer is going to be elected.

ADUBATO: The panderer.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yeah, the person who just tells you whatever it is you want to hear.

ADUBATO: Make you feel better.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Right, to make you feel better, everything's going to be OK.

ADUBATO: More services, give you more, no tax--by the way, I'm going to cut your taxes at the same time.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes. Big Daddy's going to take care of everything for you.

That person, if you elect that person, then understand that you've just elected a liar, and if you've elected someone who lies, it's not a far leap for them to become a cheater and a thief, and then in jail. It's not a long road to travel down once they're willing to lie to you in order to get their vote...

ADUBATO: OK.

Mr. CHRISTIE: ...get your vote. You've got to demand more.

ADUBATO: I got to hear you--I hear you, but let me try this. You said that sometimes in a campaign, you get to see who these people are, and if they don't keep their promises you throw them out. I got that part. The McGreevey scandal--was there something about Jim McGreevey that we were supposed to see when he was running in 2001, and before that, in 1997, right, when he ran?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yep.

ADUBATO: Was there something about him we were supposed to see that said, 'Mm, he's capable of hiring someone who he was romantically involved with, this guy, Golan Cipel, to head up homeland security, a position that he clearly wasn't qualified for, wasn't even an American citizen--he was an Israeli citizen--which is clearly unethical conduct...

Mr. CHRISTIE: Agreed.

ADUBATO: ...scandal.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Agreed.

ADUBATO: Were we supposed to see that in this guy beforehand? I've known him for 20 years, you've known him for a long time. Do--are voters supposed to see it?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Let me just suggest this. I mean, I don't want to get too deeply involved in giving my personal opinions about Jim McGreevey, but I will say this.

ADUBATO: But there's a larger issue here beyond McGreevey.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Of course there is.

ADUBATO: And that's what I'm trying to get at, not at him.

Mr. CHRISTIE: And that's what I'm going to get at...

ADUBATO: Go ahead.

Mr. CHRISTIE: ...is this. When you see someone in public life, whether it's Jim McGreevey or anybody else, who you believe--seems to you to care more about being liked than being respected, when you see someone who is almost begging to be loved by the public so they'll say anything that they think you want to hear, so that they like you, that's a person that's very dangerous, in my view, to give power to, whether it's Jim McGreevey or anybody else, because part of exercising power in a faithful way is the absolute obligation to say no, to look at someone who's been your friend, your supporter, your admirer, when they ask you for something, and say, 'No. It would be wrong for me to do

it. No, I can't do it because I don't have the money. No, it's irresponsible.' And I think that we've elected to many people who care more about being liked than about being respected, and who can't say no. Part of exercising power, I think, responsibly, is the absolute obligation to say no.

ADUBATO: Well, now, you said no. You said no recently, and we've talked about this in other conversations and I want to put it in a different context. You're the highest-ranking federal law enforcement officer in the state. The attorney general is the highest-ranking state law enforcement official. You were appointed by President George Bush.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes.

ADUBATO: You had an opportunity to run for statewide office, for governor. You opted not to do it.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Right.

ADUBATO: Did you think to yourself, 'Hey, I'm more powerful over here. I can do better here. I don't want to play in that arena.' I mean, what's going on there? Help people understand that.

Mr. CHRISTIE: It wasn't an issue of power. I'll tell you what it really was, was sitting down and thinking to myself, what do I really want to be doing over the next four years? And I felt like I was having so much fun and enj...

ADUBATO: Fun?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Fun, absolutely.

ADUBATO: Hold on. Now wait a minute.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Absolutely.

ADUBATO: Indicting people, putting these cases together, putting politicians and other corrupt folks in jail, you're having fun doing that.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Oh, listen, if you don't have fun at your job, if you don't enjoy it...

ADUBATO: Which part is the most fun?

Mr. CHRISTIE: The most fun is actually feeling every day like you go to work and you have a chance, a real shot, to make a difference for somebody who will never know you.

ADUBATO: Name one case that you said to yourself, 'I'm having fun doing this.'

Mr. CHRISTIE: I guess the one...

ADUBATO: You've put a lot of people away.

Mr. CHRISTIE: I have. I guess the one case that I would point to that I had the most fun--felt--and by fun, I mean felt the most worthwhile...

ADUBATO: Right.

Mr. CHRISTIE: ...was a human trafficking case, a case where four young Mexican girls, and by young, I mean 14 to 16 years old, were trafficked illegally into this country, smuggled into the country and forced into prostitution in Plainfield, New Jersey. Forced to turn 12 to 15 tricks a day, sleeping on a mattress on a floor, beaten by the people who kept them there and forced to turn all the money they made over to their captors. We caught those people and we put them to jail for 20 years for doing this to these young girls. And we got these young girls out of that circumstance, into a--therapy and education. And they're now going to get special visas from the federal government to stay here and to, hopefully, become American citizens. Those young girls are the most powerless people that you could ever meet. They don't know me from a hole in the wall, and yet my office was able to give them a chance at having a great life out of a tragedy.

It's cases like that that just make you say, 'This is the greatest job in the world. Why would I want to leave?'

ADUBATO: Not the high-profile case that we've talked about many, many times? The Essex County executive at the time, James Treffinger, who was running for the United States Senate. Your office indicts him.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yeah, no...

ADUBATO: He goes...

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yeah.

ADUBATO: He ultimately goes to jail, right?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yeah.

ADUBATO: Big high-profile case. He's taken out of the Senate race. You don't mention that one?

Mr. CHRISTIE: No, because, you know, my definition of having fun in this job...

ADUBATO: By the way, what did he do? Tell folks. Put that into context.

Mr. CHRISTIE: He traded contracts with Essex County for campaign contributions to his United States Senate account. If you contributed a certain amount, you would get a certain amount of a contract in return.

ADUBATO: You contribute to his US Senate race...

Mr. CHRISTIE: Right.

ADUBATO: ...you get a contract in Essex County?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Correct.

ADUBATO: He did that?

Mr. CHRISTIE: He did.

ADUBATO: Did he admit it?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes.

ADUBATO: But I remember--Chris, I have to tell you, when it first happened--and I've known Treffinger for a long time--he said, 'No way, man. I'm fighting this thing. They're not getting me because I'm totally honest. I'm fighting this to the end.' Do you remember that?

Mr. CHRISTIE: I do.

ADUBATO: What happened?

Mr. CHRISTIE: He pled guilty because we had him on tape doing it. And, you know, I say one of the best things about this job is only I know what I know, and you have to have great patience in my job because there will be people who come out publicly, like Jim Treffinger did, and say, 'It's a political witch hunt and the US attorney is trying to make a name for himself and I'll be completely exonerated'...

ADUBATO: Which he did, by the way. He said all of those things and more.

Mr. CHRISTIE: He did. And I had to sit there and keep quiet. I can't respond to that.

ADUBATO: You knew you had the tapes, though?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Of course, I did. But ethically, I have to prove my case in court, not in the press, and I have an ethical obligation to only speak in court or after a case is resolved.

ADUBATO: But the media plays a part in how these cra--these cases play out. And you hold press conferences and announce indictments.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Sure.

ADUBATO: And when there are convictions, you're out there again. How could you say that the media and the public perception part of this is not a critical part of your job?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Oh, it is a critical part of my job, but it is not a critical part of my job to get into a political back and forth with Jim Treffinger or Jim McGreevey when we announced the Dave D'Amiano indictments where Governor McGreevey said the word Machiavelli on a tape...

ADUBATO: This is getting a little too inside. As we go out to this break, set this up.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yup.

ADUBATO: Dave D'Amiano is a guy that McGreevey knew for a long time.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes, he was a friend and a major political fund-raiser for McGreevey who, at the end, attempted to extort money from people who wanted to do business with the county and state government in...

ADUBATO: D'Amiano allegedly said--I shouldn't even say allegedly because, you know...

Mr. CHRISTIE: He said...

ADUBATO: He said to a guy, 'I can get you access'...

Mr. CHRISTIE: 'I can get you access to Governor McGreevey and I can get you access to decision makers that could raise the value of your farm--which he was trying to sell to the government...

ADUBATO: This guy owned a farm.

Mr. CHRISTIE: He owned a farm in Piscataway.

ADUBATO: This guy wanted to get as much as he could for his farm.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Right. And the local government was only offering him something that he thought was inadequate. He wanted to try to do better, and D'Amiano said to him, 'Listen, if you give me \$20,000 in cash and \$20,000 in contributions to the Democratic state committee, I can get you much more for your farm.'

ADUBATO: And where does McGreevey fit into this?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Mr. D'Amiano set up meetings with Governor McGreevey and the farmer to convince the farmer that he had the connections with McGreevey and that McGreevey would help in getting more money for the farm.

ADUBATO: As we go out to the break, and this is a matter of public record...

Mr. CHRISTIE: It is.

ADUBATO: ...what happens is in the meeting with the farmer, D'Amiano and the governor--McGreevey--D'Amiano says to the farmer, 'Let's pick a code word. I'll get the governor to say the code word and once the governor says the code word, then you'll know that he's in.'

Mr. CHRISTIE: Correct.

ADUBATO: And the code word was Machiavelli.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Correct.

ADUBATO: A reference to Niccolo Machiavelli from the 16th century, a great Italian philosopher/politician/journalist, right?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes. King maker.

ADUBATO: King maker?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes.

ADUBATO: McGreevey says Machiavelli?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes, he does. On tape.

ADUBATO: And that's it?

Mr. CHRISTIE: That's not it. Because in the end, we'll never know whether Jim McGreevey said Machiavelli for the reasons...

ADUBATO: OK. Because he may have must been thinking of Niccolo Machiavelli.

Mr. CHRISTIE: No. Or he may have--or Mr. D'Amiano may have--and Mr. D'Amiano, admitted that he, in fact, prompted the governor to say it. We don't know what Mr. D'Amiano said to the governor about why he was saying it.

ADUBATO: It's all on tape?

Mr. CHRISTIE: All on tape.

ADUBATO: Oh, boy. You love your job, huh?

Mr. CHRISTIE: I love this job.

ADUBATO: I love my job, too. But right now I have to go out to the break. We are talking with US attorney Chris Christie about raising the ethical bar in the state of New Jersey. And by the way, no matter where you're watching us all the way along the East Coast, this program is important to you because ethics is an issue in your community. And we'll be right back.

Announcer: If you would like more information on this program or if you'd like to express an opinion, e-mail us at info@caucusnj.org. And visit us on the Web at www.caucusnj.org.

ADUBATO: Welcome back, folks. We are speaking with US attorney Chris Christie who--your area of concentration is New Jersey, exclusively?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Exclusively.

ADUBATO: Now across the river over in New York, Rudy Giuliani used to head up the Southern District of New York, right?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Correct. Yes.

ADUBATO: Not the same. You guys interacted, though. I mean the Southern District and New Jersey interact.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Right.

ADUBATO: And Philadelphia, they have their own, right?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yup, Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

ADUBATO: Who is the biggest influence in your life that caused you to, you know, be the US attorney? A pretty important job.

Mr. CHRISTIE: My parents.

ADUBATO: How so?

Mr. CHRISTIE: My parents--my mom and dad made me believe that I could do whatever I wanted to do if I put my mind to it, that there's no dream that you could have that was too big if you really were willing to work hard and be a good person. And so--and they lived that every day. You know, my dad lives

it every day now. My mom, until she passed away, lived that every day as well. And so there's no bigger influence in my life than my parents.

ADUBATO: When you were sworn in as US attorney, describe the scene. Who was there? What did it mean?

Mr. CHRISTIE: It was an incredible day. We were in the ceremonial courtroom, which is a large, beautiful courtroom in the federal courthouse. I was sworn in by the chief judge at the time, Jack Bissell. Bob Torricelli and Jon Corzine were there, who had played a role in my nomination. Mike Chertoff was there, the current secretary of Homeland Security. He was in the Justice Department at the time. But most importantly, in the front row were my mom and dad and my wife, Mary Pat, and three of my children. And so it was not only a public day, obviously, but it was a day of just incredible emotion for me to be at this point in my life and to have my family all there and friends to watch me.

ADUBATO: How old were you?

Mr. CHRISTIE: I was 38.

ADUBATO: Did you say to yourself, 'I'm not ready for this. I'm 38 years old.'

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yeah, well, I said, 'I hope I'm ready for this'--is what I really said. And I also thought, 'Be careful what you wish for, you might just get it.'

ADUBATO: Was this your plan?

Mr. CHRISTIE: No.

ADUBATO: Did you say, 'Hey, I want to be the highest-ranking federal law enforcement officer in the state.' That's wasn't the plan?

Mr. CHRISTIE: No, it wasn't.

ADUBATO: What was the plan?

Mr. CHRISTIE: There wasn't really a plan.

ADUBATO: I know you went to Seton Hall Law School.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Right. Seton Hall Law School. I was always interested in public life.

ADUBATO: Right.

Mr. CHRISTIE: And so I knew that I'd want to get involved in some way. I ran for elected office in the mid-1990s.

ADUBATO: You were a freeholder up in Morris County.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Correct. And--but then I was deselected in 1997.

ADUBATO: You, too?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes.

ADUBATO: I was deselected...

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes.

ADUBATO: ...in 1985.

Mr. CHRISTIE: I was deselected in 1997.

ADUBATO: Do you know, some of the most talented, charismatic people get deselected?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes.

ADUBATO: That's my version.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Let me tell you something. I'm sticking with it. That's my version as well.

ADUBATO: All right, this isn't about me, even though I'd like it to be. Go ahead. It's about you.

Mr. CHRISTIE: And so after that, I continued in the private practice of law and got involved, in late 1998, helping Governor George W. Bush run for president, and actually went and met with him in January of 1999 in Austin, Texas.

ADUBATO: What was your feeling for him at the time?

Mr. CHRISTIE: I came back from that trip--I had lunch with him for two hours, in Austin, Texas, in January of 1999. My wife picked me up at the airport, and she said, 'How did it go?' And I said, 'I have just had lunch with the next president of the United States.' And I really felt that from the minute I sat down with him, personally, one on one, and talked to him. I felt like this guy was going to be president of the United States, and I worked very hard for him the next couple of years. I was the counsel for the campaign here in New Jersey, and afterwards, I was approached and asked if there--if I was interested in joining the administration, and I said to them, 'I'd love to be United States attorney,' and then went through a very long interviewing and vetting process.

ADUBATO: What do they do?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Oh, you...

ADUBATO: FBI get involved?

Mr. CHRISTIE: FBI, yes.

ADUBATO: Who do they talk to?

Mr. CHRISTIE: They talk to everybody you've ever met in your life.

ADUBATO: They talk to people you dated in high school?

Mr. CHRISTIE: One person I dated in high school they spoke to.

ADUBATO: I'm joking. Are you serious?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes. Yeah, yeah. They spoke to one person I dated in high school, yeah. They might have spoken to more. That's just one that called me and told me that they spoke...

ADUBATO: What kind of things they want to know about you?

Mr. CHRISTIE: They just want to know about your character, what kind of person--would you trust this person with a position of high authority in the federal government? They ask about specific interactions you've had with them. And then you interview with the Justice Department with--I interviewed with a panel of eight people who are interviewing you at the same time, career Justice people, people from the White House. After you get through that whole process and the political ends of the process, I was finally--I was called by the White House on September 10th, 2001, and offered the job of US attorney. And then of course the entire job changed the next day.

ADUBATO: Of course.

Mr. CHRISTIE: So it's been an amazing journey, but it was no plan. It was no plan. It just happened.

ADUBATO: Let me ask you this. You were appointed by a Republican president. I know he's--you're going to--by the way, he's our president, whether you voted for him or not. He's president of the United States. But he's a Republican president, former Republican governor of Texas. You're a Republican.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes, sir.

ADUBATO: How the heck do you keep your politics out of your work as US attorney, and are you convinced that you do that?

Mr. CHRISTIE: First, I am convinced that I do that, and the reason I'm convinced is because I know in my heart that the only way that this job has any credibility with the people of New Jersey is if they know that you keep your politics out of it. And so how do I do it? I make a conscious decision not to do things that look overtly political, and I also make a conscious decision to listen to the professional prosecutors that I have around me, who are career prosecutors and who really don't care about politics one way or another, so that if even in my mind sometimes I start to stray into something that might be partisan, I can tell you that those people keep me there.

ADUBATO: Well, I want to be clear. Down in Monmouth County, New Jersey--and folks, I know you're watching us in a pretty broad viewing area--in Monmouth County, there are a bunch of local elected officials that--like 14, I think?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes, sir.

ADUBATO: What did some of them do? And then I'll get to my question.

Mr. CHRISTIE: These were all local elected officials, some mayors, some council people, some appointees, who all took envelopes of cash in return for steering contracts to someone who turned out to be a cooperating witness with the FBI.

ADUBATO: Most of the 14 were Republicans.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yes, overwhelming majority. I think it was 10 of the 14 were Republicans.

ADUBATO: All right. Without naming names--You can name them if you want, but I know you won't--you got calls from Republicans who you were friends with who said, 'Chris, what the hell are you doing?' How did you deal with it?

Mr. CHRISTIE: I said, 'I'm doing my job, and leave me alone.'

ADUBATO: Come on.

Mr. CHRISTIE: I did. I mean, that's what I said. And...

ADUBATO: You didn't have this much concern that you were hurting the Republican Party in a key Republican county in New Jersey, with people whom you are friends with?

Mr. CHRISTIE: I didn't hurt the Republican Party. These people hurt the Republican Party. I was doing my job. I didn't force them to take envelopes of cash.

ADUBATO: But you don't prosecute everyone.

Mr. CHRISTIE: I ca--prosecute everybody I catch. I just don't catch everybody.

ADUBATO: When there's enough evidence to prosecute, to indict someone...

Mr. CHRISTIE: Right.

ADUBATO: ...and to move forward.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Right. I mean, everybody that I catch, and by 'catch,' I mean everybody who I have enough evidence beyond a reasonable doubt to prosecute, I prosecute.

ADUBATO: Ten of the 14 being Republicans, irrelevant.

Mr. CHRISTIE: In fact, I'll tell you this, and I'm sure that a lot of people won't believe this, but the two days before we were going to ask the grand jury to return charges, I had to go to my public corruption chief, Jim Nobile, who was overseeing this investigation, and I said to him, 'By the way, how many of these guys are Republicans and how many are Democrats?' Two days before, and the investigation had been going on for two and a half years. I don't care. I can't care, and part of the way you keep politics out of it is you don't even ask. I mean, yeah, there's some people who we've investigated, like Jim Treffinger...

ADUBATO: And you know who they are.

Mr. CHRISTIE: ...who I knew they were, but I will tell you, these elected officials, local elected officials in Monmouth County, I didn't know them personally, and I didn't know whether they were R's or D's.

ADUBATO: Republicans or Democrats.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Correct.

ADUBATO: Why don't we do this? Go out for this last break, and we'll talk a little bit more with US Attorney Chris Christie about the question of ethics, and ultimately--I'm not going to say where he'd like to go, because he seems pretty comfortable in the position he's in right now, but other people speculate. We'll be right back, right after this.

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ADUBATO: Welcome back, folks. Got a minute and a half.

Chris, let me just do this, get it out of the way, not the same question I asked you other times, off the air or not. I know you're not going to run for governor because the race is happening as we speak.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Right.

ADUBATO: The race for US Senate is next year. You're not running for that, right?

Mr. CHRISTIE: I'm not running, no.

ADUBATO: But you love public life, and this position does not last forever. Sooner or later you want to pursue elective office, right?

Mr. CHRISTIE: If the opportunity were right for me and it was right for my family at the time and we decided to, I certainly am not averse to it. I've done it before.

ADUBATO: What does your wife say? What's that smile about?

Mr. CHRISTIE: Well, you know, I think my wife would be just as happy if I went back to being a lawyer as opposed to continuing to be in public life. But she understands that this is something that's real important to me, and as with any good marriage--and we've been married for 19 years--you know, we support each other, so...

ADUBATO: What do your kids want?

Mr. CHRISTIE: The kids want their dad home, and that's the hardest part of it. I manage my son--my 12-year-old son's Little League team. I've done that throughout the time I've been the US attorney and made sure I made the time to

do that. But when there was some conversation about me running for governor, and people would do that in front of my daughter, who's nine, she'd cry.

ADUBATO: A few seconds; go ahead. Your daughter cried.

Mr. CHRISTIE: Yeah. She said, 'If you run for governor, we'll never see you. You'll never be home.' That's the hard part, and that's the part that makes running for public office, the idea of it, less appealing.

ADUBATO: Chris, every time we talk--I just said this during the commercial break--we always find a different topic and different angle to cover. Thank you so much. We learned a lot.

Mr. CHRISTIE: It's great being here, Steve. Thank you very much.

ADUBATO: Great job. Excellent.