

The Republican Party in the Age of Trump

Speaker 1: Thank you

Jeffrey G: everyone for being here. Thank you. Thank you. No, thank you. No, no. Um, uh, what we enjoy my time with you. I, yeah, I am not, not more than I enjoy it with you. Um, welcome to the People's Republic of Aspen, by the way. Um, you're going to have a great time tonight. I always, people lean so far to the left. That's almost right. Um, the, uh, it, uh, it makes a loop. Does everybody's fine? We're all saying this feedback bothering you? What the feedback? Yeah, the feedback. Can we do something on the feedback guys? Little, that'd be hell. Don't, don't make him angry. Cause all I can tell you. Let's start off on a bad foot here. Don't make him angry. I think we already did. Um, Governor Christie, Chris, sorry. Whatever you like Jeff. Yeah. Um, so we're going to, we're going to talk for a while and then we're gonna take some questions from the audience. Paul Ryan didn't take questions from the audience, but Chris Christie from Wisconsin, what does that even have to do with anything? People from Jersey take questions.

Speaker 1: Yeah. All right. So let's,

Jeffrey G: let me, um, let me jump in. And the reason that we were joking a little bit before is that we've known each other a while. We've done this before. It usually devolves into sort of like drive time, sports radio, uh, with a lot of cursing, um, and a lot of Springsteen references and, and just becomes pretty unpleasant. So you're gonna watch that becoming regulations. Yeah. The, uh, so let's, let's just start, um, let's just start with where you are politically now and uh, we'll get to the, uh, we'll get to the issue of the vetting the documents that just came out in a moment. But, um, what I think a lot of people want to know is what you see in Donald Trump that other people don't see. And that was a serious

Chris Christie: question. Yeah, no, listen, first of all, I've known him for 17 years, so my, my perspective on him is a bit broader than, than most people says. But let me start off by saying this, elections are not about who you want to vote for. Elections are about who's left to vote for. And so to be clear, Donald Trump was not my first choice for president. I was [inaudible]

Speaker 1: [inaudible]

Chris Christie: and I, you know, I was at a conference a few weeks ago on in Jeff's old hots on long island and David Stern, the former NBA commissioner, you know, stood up and said he was going to save my soul and list all these things that he doesn't like about Trump and, and when are you going to finally stand up? He said to me, and I said, I ran against it. I mean like the single greatest thing that you can do in a democracy to show that you are opposing something is to run and to try

to beat that person. You're not always going to be successful. And I wasn't. What, what I decided in 2016 after I got out of the race was I saw Donald Trump coming second in Iowa when New Hampshire by two to one margin in a field of 16 people. And then when South Carolina, the next week by 10 points.

Chris Christie: Now anybody else who ran that way would have been declared by the media right at that moment as the nominee. You did that well in Iowa. You won New Hampshire to the one you won South Carolina by double digits. So my wife fair patterns here with me and I sat on the couch that night and I said, well at that time we had been friends with them for 15 years. I said, here's our choice. We just to sit on the sidelines or do nothing and he's going to be the nominee no matter what it's over. No matter what anybody thinks he's the nominee. None of these other guys can fight him and we can try and make them better. Yeah. All right, fine. So and so I'll finish it and then election election comes down. You can correct me all you want. No, you're wrong, but we'll be fine.

Chris Christie: The, the, the election comes down to Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton. I simply, and I would do the same thing today because of the way they both approach issues. I would not vote for Hillary Clinton. I would vote for Donald Trump. Now, this election was one where the post election polls tell us that 20% of the people who voted didn't like either one of them. 20% of people who voted. Forget about what the people never didn't show up thought. So this was a very odd election. I went with my philosophical approach to it, which was I agree more with him on the issues that I agree with her on the issues. He's not my first choice. I was, but he's the guy who's nominated. We got two people to choose from. I'm with him. Let me ask you this though, because what you decided in 2016 is one thing. What we know now in 2019 is something else. There is no learning curve. It doesn't get better. The behavior doesn't get better. We'll eradicate quality and you know from doing, from, from, from being fired, from doing the, the transition. You know what kind of a, I'm just gonna say it. Rolling shit show the whole hiring process was right.

Chris Christie: How could your opinion not change between the election and now given what you've seen? Because he's no different folks just said Jeff, like you know, people like act shocked about the tweeting and the outbursts and the, and you know the, the sense of, of entitlement will hell man, I watched the campaign. That's him. Okay. So he's not changing. But what has happened from a Republican's perspective is that we've had tax reform, that we have lesser regulation, that we have economic growth, that we, that you know, he's done things that Republicans want to see done in the country. I understand that Democrats don't want that, but they lost. So, so if he's doing, I don't agree with everything he does and you know, full well that went and you've heard it and we've talked about this. What, I don't agree with him, I say it and I'm sure we'll get to some of those things tonight, but you're starting off with the broad generalized question and the broad generalized question can only be answered in the context of elections.

Chris Christie: And if the 2016 election were held again tomorrow, I'd vote for him again. Someone be so egregious that you simply sit it out in protest. I don't think that's what democracy is about. No. I think people who sit it out, um, minus, well just not even be American citizens. Our job is to make a choice. You don't like the system, go out and try to change the system. But you know, there are plenty of people who felt the same way about Hillary. And so, you know, no, I don't think sitting it out is an acceptable option because our democracy is based on people participating and our democracy will fail when people stop participants. Here's the thing.

Chris Christie: All right, and so here's the thing. Here's the thing.

Jeffrey G: No, him covered you for a long time. Yeah. I know that during your, when you were governor, there was an incident, uh, in, uh, not an incident. You, a Muslim American was nominated for a judgeship.

Chris Christie: I nominated them. You know, it wasn't just nominated. Well, I nominate. What's it like? It just happened. I did it. Let me use my passive aggressive. No, no, no, no, no. We're gonna talk about this. I nominated to do, I did it great. Hero of the Muslims, Chris Christie nominated fine. And you know what? First, first buzzle American judge ever appointed by the New Jersey. Not John Corazon, that liberal hero or Jim Flare or anybody else. They didn't, by the way, as they say in Mecca, Mazel Tov. I'm like, no, really I wanna I want it [inaudible] and I'm giving you and I'm giving you the credit. Okay, so you weren't, I took it, well, I'm now seating here. I'm seeding the credit to you. Thank you. I brought it up, I brought it up. [inaudible] the opportunity to take the credit. Sorry, we're going to go to commercial and then we'll reset.

Jeffrey G: Donald Trump during the campaign attacks, a gold star family, Muslim American family raises all kinds of nefarious questions about this family that the son is a hero at that point. I guess the question is, I mean this is what I think a lot of people look at. Sensible mid Atlantic, moderate Republican governor who does these things. And by the way, the, the, the full New Jersey story. The full story of that judge is that there was a lot of pushback. There was national push back and right from, from various right wing groups that said, this guy's a secret Muslim Brotherhood, whatever. And, and you very rambunctious said,

Chris Christie: leave him alone. This is my guy. I'm tired of dealing with the crazies. Yeah. So, so you look at Donald Trump, do you disagree with the assessment that Donald Trump is anti Muslim? Do you disagree with the assessment that he behaved in a heinous way toward that Goldstar family? Or let me ask this answer. The second one first. I absolutely think that what he did with the Gold Star family was wrong. And I told them that and I said it publicly and I was the one who was called in by his family when they couldn't get them to stop talking about them and say, you've got to convince him to knock this off. Wait, tell us that story. So incredibly, Jared Kushner, um,

Speaker 1: [inaudible]

Chris Christie: calls me and says, listen, we need your help. He's, he's, you know, off the rails on this con stuff and I think he'll listen to you. And I said, all right, so I just show up on, announced the Trump tower. And I walk into his office and he said, what's up? I said, we need to talk. And he said about what? I said, let me sit down. And I said to him, I'm confused. So we confused about, I said, I thought were running against Hillary Clinton. And he said, we are. And I said, no, no, no, no. We're running against the cons because all you're doing is talking about the cons. And I said, if that's, if we're actually running against the cons, I'm out cause we're going to lose them and I have no interest in, you know, helping you lose. You got to think differently about this.

Chris Christie: They said, what do you mean? This guy said awful things about me. Got on the stage, said terrible things about me. He said, I haven't read the constitution that I said, you're right. He said a lot of awful things about you. I said, but here's what you've got to remember. He did something that you and I pray every day, we never will have to do. He gave his son for this country and you and I are both fathers. We both have children that we love dearly and we would never want to lose one of our children ever. And I said, you know what, that gives them permission to do. He said what? I said, whatever the hell he wants.

Speaker 1: And that's it. And after that

Chris Christie: conversation, you did not hear him talk about the cons again. Now I don't know whether I was providing the service to the country. I don't know whether that would have been better if I hadn't been around. I've been sitting it out, um, you know, holding my breath in my living room in New Jersey. I happen to think that I made it better. N N it doesn't mean that you're, when he, when I was running against him and he said we should have a Muslim ban, I said, that's ridiculous. And I came out and I said, it's wrong. It's, it's absolutely anti with this country is about, and I wouldn't support it. So, you know, I think the idea is when you have the ability to influence someone, you, that also means you take some risks. It's a lovely story, but he hasn't become, he hasn't changed as a fundamental view among other things, Muslims, Mexicans, so on. But Jeff, I mean, you gave him a tactical out, but you didn't actually tactical. And I told him that he was wrong and that those people had the right to say whatever they wanted to say. That's not tactical. That's the truth. I told him the truth. He heard the truth and he stopped. Now, you know, I can't change somebody who has been who they are for 73 years, every minute of the day. But if I can change him in a positive way for an hour a day, that's a positive. Let me ask you this,

Jeffrey G: and we're gonna come to your favorite subject of the Cushner family in a minute. Uh, so hold onto your seats. But, uh, but, but give me other examples of, of, of, of an area in which Donald Trump has grown in office or where you have held on the learning curve.

Chris Christie: Well, forget about me. It's not about me helping on the learning curve. I think, um, I think what you just saw, um, with Aronne on the issue of the military strike is something that he would not have had the guts to do. Uh, whether you agree with it or not, wouldn't have the guts to do that 18 months ago, 24 months ago. Can I ask you a question? When Obama did the same thing on the red line, you didn't praise him for his guts. I don't know. Wait a second. That's an ABS. I'm not saying I agree with the policy. I don't, by the way, I don't agree with what the president did. I would have allowed the strike to go on if I was president, but I think it says something about him that he thought about it and he changed his mind and he was not scared to execute on that no matter who was going to criticize him for it.

Chris Christie: That's growth. That's growth for anybody in a leadership position to have taken a position and feel as if, you know what? I might be wrong about this. I'm having second thoughts. So instead of just doing it and to dying, I have second thoughts. He said, no, stop it. And so I think in the same way that I disagreed with Obama drawing a red line and then not enforcing it, I don't agree with Trump doing that because I think it sends a bad signal to the Iranians. But you asked not that question. You asked about an example for his personal growth and I don't think that's something that he would've done in January of 17. I think he would have just let it happen and then rationalize it afterwards even though he had misgivings. I think that shows some growth from a leadership perspective for for him. And I think it's the most recent example of, let me ask you this, as a supporter of it, the

Jeffrey G: president, uh, there are four, somewhere between 14 and 22 women, including a new allegation the last few days. Um, Donald Trump has, uh, assaulted them, sexually harassed them all the way up to, to rate. What do you think of these accusations? I don't know what to

Chris Christie: make of them. I mean, you know, the, the, the bottom line, I think any of them are credible to, I think any of them are credible. Listen, I think a couple of them may be credible, but I don't know that they're true. And, and I'm not going to defend that. Listen, what? What does it mean? Well, let me tell you from a prosecutor's perspective what that means, that someone, you could listen to someone's story and say, some people you listened to me, you go, that's ridiculous. That doesn't make any sense. That story doesn't hold together. Other people who have a credible story. You said, you know what? That could be true. It could be true. And then the job is to then ferret out the facts and prove whether it's true or not. I, I'm sorry, I have the disease of a prosecutor. That's the core of my career.

Chris Christie: And that's the way I think. Would you call for a comprehensive investigation of Donald Trump and these four? No, because if wouldn't, because the, because as a practical matter, the statute of limitations on all of them is gone. But it's a moral question. But listen, prosecutors, investigators aren't there to in to enforce moral code. They're there to enforce, not asking you as a chapter

radiator, I'm going to see you as a politician, as a leader in the country. What's this comprehensive investigation? Who's doing it? A serious investigation. I don't know. Somebody it who? I don't know. I'm not, I'm not pointing. Don't ask a stupid question. I still have a question I get into serious question. It is a stupid question because, because people who investigate in our system of government, our prosecutors, that's to investigate the FBI state level law enforcement and the prosecutors make decisions about where to bring cases or not.

Chris Christie: Why it should those folks go through an exercise to investigate when at the end, the prosecutors who say to them might be a good case, but the statute of limitations expired 15 years ago. That's a waste of time. A waste of money. Rephrase the question. Do you want to know the truth about [inaudible]? I always want to know the truth, but you know what? I don't believe we're ever gonna know the truth because these things have happened many years ago. If there's a new atmosphere and era in our country now where people are willing to speak out where before they weren't. That's a great thing. And as a father of two daughters, I think women should speak out immediately when these things happen. That was not the culture before. So these women are now in a situation like the woman who just recently came out that this is an incident that happened 20 plus years ago.

Chris Christie: The problem with that is it's very difficult to definitively or even beyond a reasonable doubt, proof things that happened 20 plus years ago beyond a reasonable doubt. And so do I want to know the truth? Of course. I'd like to know the truth, Jeff, like anybody else would like to know the truth, but I don't think we can find the truth in these instances under these circumstances. I don't think you can. The same way you can't find out the truth about Bill Clinton and the women who made allegations against him. You know, you just not going to be able to find out the truth of that. And, and, but for a dress, we would've never found out about the, this stuff with Monica Lewinsky. And I would have the same answer about Bill Clinton than I have about Donald Trump. It doesn't matter. It's not a partisan issue. This is about what, what does our system permit us to do?

Chris Christie: And by the way, everybody in this audience should clean for that because it could be you next. And this system is set up to make sure that we provide justice and justice sometimes is having to walk away from things because you can't prove it or the law prevents you from doing it. Let me come back to this, but I want to ask you, I want to, I want to reframe a question to you. You know, Donald Trump better than probably anyone in this room. I'm going to make that assumption. I think that's a safe assumption. I don't know. You never know. I think it's safe. It's now. Let's start. I, we, you're not going to get to take a poll. Um, but what do people, you obviously see something in him that other people don't. You see, don't you see? You see, you see no. Why you think that he, because you told me that he pursues, no, I didn't.

Chris Christie: I didn't say that. I see stuff told me y'all see positive qualities. I don't know. I said that I understand him in a way that others don't because of the length of my relationship with him. Then go to what? Don't people understand? What are people missing in this, in this mystery. Oh, I, you know, I mean this and you can even talk about it in relationship to the voters, to the people who voted for him. I think it's pretty clear that the people who vote, I'll give you an example of what the voters were thinking when they looked at Donald Trump and his example that involves my wife. When we were campaigning in New Hampshire, Mary Pat was going door to door for me on a regular basis and one day she went up to a door of a Republican voter. They opened the door to an older woman and she says, hi, my name is Mary Pat Christie.

Chris Christie: I said, oh, are you the governor's wife? She said, yes, she was. Come in, come in. So this is a positive sign. So she goes in and she said, Oh, Mary Pat, we love your husband. He is so bright and articulate and direct. I mean, we're voting for Trump, but we love your husband and, and, and we hope that Trump makes it vice president or attorney general and my wife says to the woman, can I ask you a question? If you said, Chris is bright and articulate and direct, why are you voting for Trump? And she grabbed your pants arm, rubbed your arms, said, oh dear, we don't need another politician.

Chris Christie: Now what people saw in Donald Trump who voted for him once they saw it, this functional Washington DC that they didn't believe we're addressing their lives, their concerns, their problems. They were sick of politicians in both parties that were tired of George Bush. They were tired of Barack Obama. They let the Republicans control the Congress for awhile. They like that. They like the Democrats controlled for awhile. They sent it back to the Republicans and they're like, none of this works. So you know what we're going to do? We're going to vote for a guy who doesn't care about Republicans or Democrats who doesn't give a damn about Washington DC and who is brash enough and who is untethered enough to go down there and throw the table over and break all the China. I don't think it's a lot more complicated than that. All right. Donald Trump, I still in the church on a, on a, on a debate stage with Donald Trump in his, at the Reagan library when, um, he was asked a question about the nuclear triad and I was standing next to Jeb Bush and as we listened to Trump's answer, Jeb looked at me and said, oh my God, he doesn't know what the nuclear triad is.

Chris Christie: And I said, no, he doesn't. And if it was obvious to me, and Jeremy was obviously, Rudy was watching, they don't care. They don't care. They figure there'll be people who know what to do. [inaudible] the shit out of you. You know what, to some extent, yes. Right? But also I also understand as do you, that there are mechanisms of our government that had been there for so long and that are so entrenched that it's a, it's a myth that a president can do whatever he wants. And, and so one of the things, and I think the biggest thing that people didn't understand about Trump and the lead up to the election, whether it was the media or pollsters or, or, or, or just commentators in

general, was that he represented something. I didn't understand it, Jeff. I didn't get it. I thought he can't win.

Chris Christie: Come on. He hosted celebrity apprentice. We're not going to vote for the guy who hosted celebrity apprentice. I was wrong because people were so disgusted with what they saw as a Washington DC that didn't work for them. And he has, and he has followed that path since he believes that's what got him there. And he's going to continue to follow that path until that path ends. And so, you know, to me what I see in him, um, from that perspective was somebody who was insightful enough to see that in the voters and read it and no one else did. No one did. And he gets some credit for that. He deserves credit for that because nobody else thought when he came down the escalator on June 15th of 2015 he was gonna be President United States. I mean, nobody including him. I have to correct you on one thing.

Chris Christie: What's that? Presidents do have power, unilateral power to do a lot of damage. They do. I said, actually, he can start a war tonight if he wants. And of course, and that's the, that's the system is failing. I didn't say that the president didn't have strong unilateral power. What I said was there is a myth that a president can do whatever he wants that's different than a president strong, you know, of course, a presence during unilateral power. And we see that over and over again from Republican and democratic presidents who all of whom in my lifetime have acted in warlike fashions without the authority of Congress. Every one of them, going back to John Kennedy, who was president when I was born to Donald Trump, was president today, every one of them has taken aggressive military action and put American lives at risk without Congress's authority. So that's the way it's always been.

Chris Christie: And I've told people, and I see Trump as a disruptive, but you see him on part of a continuum in that, in that limited sense, yes, he is a disruptor in many other ways, but in that limited sense, and I think the Iranian thing is a perfect example that Jeff people have said to me all the time, don't judge, your friends are going to get us in a war. I say no. In fact, it's quite the opposite. I don't think he wants anything to do with it. I don't think he wants anything to do with that stuff. I really don't. And I don't think that's what he ran for president for and what he wants to try to accomplish when he's there. And so I think we're at a much lower risk of being involved in war with him than we are with some other folks who had a different attitude and approach to it.

Chris Christie: Let me ask you this. If there were no tweeting and if they were orderly personnel processes in the white, two big gifts, very big gifts, if those things were different, um, would this presidency in your mind being normal? No, because he, he, he will never be a normal politician, but the presidency would be on the way to a landslide reelection. And the reason in my view that it's close and he may lose his because of his temperament is because of the awful set of people that he's had around him. And you know, that that's just unavoidable, that those the most awful we have all night, nobody's need, that's tough. But

like my personal favorite awful is Mike Flynn. And you know, when the press, when the president started to get his intelligence briefings, which started in June or so of 16, when he became the nominee, apparent, um, the director of national intelligence called me as the director of the transition to set up these intelligence briefings, said he can bring to people with him.

Chris Christie: So I went to Trump and said, you know, you could start these briefings, you can bring two people with you. Who Do you want to bring? And he said, I want to bring you and Mike Flynn. And I had known Flint a little bit before that, but not that, well, I can't talk about what was discussed in the intelligence briefings for what I can tell you is his performance was appalling. Flynn's. And every time we'd come out of one of those briefings, I'd say to Trump, you got to get rid of this guy. He's a train wreck. He's awful. And it culminated in the day after the election. After I ran my first transition meeting post election, I went up to his apartment to brief him on it and I said, listen, one of the things you don't, you shouldn't do is offer any jobs to anybody until you pick a chief of staff.

Chris Christie: The chief of staff should be involved in all of those decision making things because we already offered somebody a job. And I said, who? And he said, I offered the national security advisor. I said, oh, please tell me that you didn't offer it to Mike Flynn. And he said, I did. I said, Mr President Lax, I just want to say for the last time that this is an awful, awful mistake. And this guy is completely ill tempered to be the person who serves as the conciliator between the State Department, the Defense Department, and the intelligence community to coalesce that information and bring it to you in digestible fashion. He cannot do it. And he said, you just don't like him. And I said, you're right, I don't. You want to know why? And he said, yeah. I said, because he's going to get you in trouble.

Chris Christie: So, you know, but the function goes a lot deeper than, of course, when you asked me for my most favorite [inaudible] well, listen, I mean, I don't, you know, let me, let me, y'all Tom Price at HHS, um, Pruitt at EPA. Um, uh, what's her name? The one from the apprentice show? Um, I'm gonna Roast Amarosa. What the hell is Amarosa doing in the White House? I mean, seriously, like she was not on any vetting list that we put together for him. Right. Um, Amarosa and, and, and I think that, you know, you'd go rights. Priebus shouldn't have been chief of staff. I know rights for a long time. I think he's a very nice guy and a very effective national chairman. But he had no experience to be chief of staff. Steve Bannon didn't blog anywhere in the White House. Says Jared Cushner belong in the White House. Not on his merits. No. He's a 35 year old real estate guy.

Chris Christie: No, on the merits. Now when you told Trump this, what did he say? Well, I never told Trump that. What I told Trump was that he should not give his family any official jobs. Their family can always be and will always be in every administration, in formal advisors, and you're gonna be able to get the benefit of their advice. But once you give them a job, it does two things. One, it puts

your family in the political crosshairs in a way that you're not going to be willing to tolerate because you love them and you don't want to see them attacked. And that's what's going to happen for people and official jobs. That's the way Washington works. I said, secondly, you're going to cripple the rest of your staff because everyone's going to walk around on egg shells in front of them and not want to disagree with them in front of you because they know they get to go up to the residence after work's over and get to have the last word.

Chris Christie: And so staff won't be effective for you. So I didn't make it personalized to Jared because I think that any family members shouldn't have official positions in the government of the president because of those two issues. But you think he's competent or otherwise incompetent regardless of the fact that, oh, I answered that question first. I said on the merits, he does not belong to the incompetent. I don't know. Listen, you know the fact of the matter is I haven't worked with them enough to say whether he's incompetent. He certainly a bright person. I've had enough interaction with them to know he's not dumb. He's smart. He's a smart guy, but that's not all you need to be effective at that level. In the White House, you need experience. You need some savvy. You need to have been beaten around a little bit and understand how to get up off the ground.

Chris Christie: I mean there's a whole bunch of assets that you need. If people at that high level who are going to be three doors down from the president. Describe for everyone what happened in the vetting process and why it went south. Well, I mean, without going into morbid detail, I was asked by the president to be the chairman of the transition in May of 16. I left the campaign and went full time on the transition, put together a team of 140 people, mostly volunteers working in Washington DC to put together an entire plan for an administration from personnel to executive orders to white papers on all the topics that he had talked about in the campaign and topics that were going to be left over by the Obama administration. And at the end of that process, um, we presented him on the day before the election with 30 volumes of material, um, on all of those topics, including having vetted for potential nominees for every cabinet position and every senior position at the White House.

Chris Christie: And those, that vetting was done by 10 former United States attorneys from the Bush 43 administration who did it on a volunteer basis because I called and asked them to do it. And so he had a great thing in front of him. Two days after the election, I was fired. And they, and that was Jared. You think? Well, I only know that because that's what Steve Bannon told me. Steve Bannon is the person who actually fired me. Um, but when pressed, he said, listen, it's the kid. He's been taking an ax to your head with the boss ever since I got here. So I don't know. It was Jared. I've been told by the person who terminated me that it was Jared and it makes sense. Um, so it's okay. They fired me. That's fine. I'm one person, but they threw out all the work, literally took the 30 volumes and threw it in a dumpster and started over.

Chris Christie: We 72 days to go to the inaugural. So if you're wondering why, I think the phrase you used was rolling shit-show, which must be a special wall island phrase, but if you wondering why it ended up classy or on the your jersey, you know, that it ended the way it has evolved the way it has. You can't ever come back from that. You cannot ever come back from that because there's not enough time. Well, you had greater, but you had Jim Mattis, you had other people. His, I'm not saying there weren't good people there and there are, I mean I think rex Tillerson was good. I think he was the wrong choice because the president had no relationship with him. And you can't have a situation where the president has no personal relationship with the secretary of state. I think we understand that one. But can you describe from your vantage point what happened to Jim Mattis?

Chris Christie: Jim had a very, very relevant question this week with everything that's going on with the ran. She, Matt has had significant policy differences with the president and he decided to leave. I don't think it was any more complicated than that. And I, and I, I saw secretary Mattis is the president and capable of taking constructive or constructive criticism or descent? No, I, I've seen him take the set and I gave you the example of the, of the cons and I could give you a number of other examples where he will listen to that stuff. I think they just came to loggerheads. I think Madison wanted him to go right and he wanted to go left. And then he's the one who was elected. So he leaves. I don't think it was any more complicated than that. I think that the relationship was one that deteriorated over time because those differences became starker.

Chris Christie: And so as a result, I think what matters finally got to the point that he did on the Iranian issue, he just finally said, well, I can't do this anymore because my counsel is not valuable to you. And so we so fundamentally disagreed that I need to leave. And I think that's, I think that's exactly what I want. Madison and I think Madison deserves a lot of credit for, you know, recognizing that and not just holding onto the job and recognizing that the president has a right to make these decisions. He made them and he disagreed. So with left, let me ask you about 2020. What would the Democrats have to do to win? Um, I'll give you a micro answer and a macro answer. On the micro site. They need to nominate someone who can persuade those 77,000 voters in Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania who won the election for the president.

Chris Christie: It's 77,000 votes in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. And those voters are predominantly, although not exclusively white working class men and women. Uh, if they nominate someone who cannot appeal to those people, that won't win. Do you think Joe Biden is that guy? I think he's the best of the lot of the 25 to to do that. Yeah, because he's from there. He speaks that language. He understands their particular concerns, I think to great extent. And I think he could articulate that. So I think, I think Biden is the most dangerous opponent of the group for the president as we sit today. But I'll give you the macro answer is I don't know. And the reason I don't know is because you've got 25 people, 23 of whom have never been on the national stage.

Chris Christie: Only Joe and Bernie had been on the national stage. And so you don't know what they're going to do. I could tell you like for instance, like Scott Walker at one time was like the front runner in Iowa. He literally sweated himself off the off the out of the campaign at the Reagan Library debate. Couldn't answer was sweating profusely. What wasn't ready. Now you now, this is a guy who's faced up to unions in Wisconsin to put up with a lot of very difficult issues. Whether you agree with them or disagree with them, no one could have predicted that Scott wouldn't perform in that circumstance, but he didn't. What happens when these lights go on in a presidential race and there a thousand times brighter than these lights is? There's only two options. You either shine or you melt. That's it, and if you shine, it doesn't mean you win.

Chris Christie: It means you survive. It's like survivor. You get to stay in the islands for another week. That's it. If you melt the whole country, he's in a lot of these people. Which one do you think, since we're just talking just us. Which one do you think you've got a melt this week? Which one do you think is going to shine? Listen, I will tell you this, I think, and I've said this for weeks before this, I said it on Stephanopoulos show about two months ago, short, Pete, Buddha, judge short him because he's not ready for prime time. And if you watched what happened in south bend in the last couple of days, you know, it was an awful performance and awful bit of leadership on his part and he's going to get up there on that stage and high school. Very Young, very young. So I think that Buddha judge will be a melter.

Chris Christie: Um, you know, there's so many of them that are like, they won't even melt. They'll just never even appear, you know, like, you know Eric Swalwell, you know, like Ooh airs, right? And seriously, like my guess is that his mother is going, what your running for President? Come on Eric. What about your brother? What about your friend Cory Booker? Listen Booker Booker has a here's chance and in the boxing vernacular, which means that he's got charisma and it hasn't shown itself yet to get traction. But booker can do things on a stage and I've seen him do it. We can really persuade people. So poker would be one of those guys who I would say don't count them out because he gets on that stage and the debates, the as a few good moments is coffee cause he's listen, his confidence is hurting right now. I don't know that but I know cause I've been a candidate and I watch and you know he's not getting the reaction he was hoping to get.

Chris Christie: So you start questioning yourself and he needs to have a few good moments. You are one of the 24 and you knew that Biden was the insurmountable object. What would you do to try to move them aside and then debates coming? I wouldn't do anything in these first debates. If you come out too hot in these first debates, you're going to look desperate. Now, some of them are desperate and should be desperate and they're not going to be in the second or the third debate. But I'm talking about the people who actually have a shot here. Bernie, Elizabeth Warren, Corey Booker, Kamala Harris, Amy Klobuchar. You know, some of the people who I think have some talent. Um, my advice that would be

don't go after old uncle Joe too fast because uncle Joe May kill himself right now we've watched two Joe Biden presidential campaigns before and they were not sterling examples of discipline and we've seen in now in the last couple of weeks, say some things were charitable.

Chris Christie: You could say he's kind of put his foot in his mouth. Biden has the capacity to do that. My strategy, if I were one of those who have money, have organization and have a credible case to make to be the dominate, not spooly on Castro, right? Somebody who really could actually be the nominate. I'd lay back a little bit. I try to sell myself and weight because if Biden makes a mistake, he's done. He's not Trump where Trump could do almost anything and it didn't matter. Right? I mean, I, I'll tell you this story about the way it's view. People with Trump made the comment about John McCain, the first one, right? Early in the campaign when he said, you know, I, I don't like people get captured. I like people who don't get captured, right. I was in high, been at that, I will event the day before I flew home, my campaign manager calls me, he reads me the quote, I'm like, he's dead.

Chris Christie: You can't say that about the guy was in the Hanoi, you don't for five and a half years. Like, no, he's, it's over. And I'm saying to Mary, Pat, it's done. Trump's done good. He's out. That's one out of the way, right? Then my, then my phone rings and it's Jeb Bush, and she was like, listen, you start, you heard the McCain thing I said I did. He goes, listen, he's done. It's going to come down to me and you. And he said, so let's just make a commitment to each other that we'll do this in a way that's civilized and smart and we'll have a good debate. Um, you know, over the next number of months and whoever wins wins, like, yeah, okay, sounds good.

Speaker 1: [inaudible]

Chris Christie: but like, it was like a blip or triplets, like chuck that, oh, he didn't apologize. He doubled down. Damn right. He's Outta hero. I can't believe this. All right, Biden, we'll get that break because Biden's a politician. See, Trump got the break because people said it can't blame him for that. He's not a politician. You know any better. He's strong. He says, Shit, who cares? He's going to stir things up though. Any right by them, they're going to go, you've been in politics since you were 29 years old. You now 77. You know, you're not supposed to say stuff like that. You're out. So I would lay back if I were, you know, the second tier I laid back, see how Biden plays it by them is going to commit to this debate thinking they're coming after him. He's going to be prepared for them coming after him. He's gonna be a little jittery about it cause he can't help but be jury, what 20, 30 million people are watching you and you think you're going to be the object of all the, the attack. So lets if I were them, I let the play it out a little bit. There's plenty of time. It's only June. There's plenty of time to lay the wood to Joe Biden if you want to. Um, and see what the results going to be.

Jeffrey G: Let me, we're going to go to questions in a minute. But let me ask you this. You bring up McCain and it, and it's interesting and, and we've talked about this a lot, uh, in the past and it, and it, and it, and I'm saying this very sincerely, I, um, I mean we, I like many of the things you did in New Jersey. We've had a few like me check what? I'm not going to go that far. I'm not, I'm not, I'm not swiping right or whatever that is. I, but, uh, it's okay. No, no, no, no, no. I don't like you that much, but I like, I like you on a personal level cause we like the same things. We're bridging tunnel guys. And that's the way it is. But uh, no, but I've seen you do, I've seen you do interesting things. New Jersey. Uh, I've seen you, uh, look, you've had your bumps.

Jeffrey G: I'm not going to discuss the George Washington bridge, but you've had your bombs, um, you, what's a nice drive by, yeah, I know you could take it though. You could take it. That's right. Uh, and I think about you in the same way I think about, uh, Marco Rubio in this case. Lindsey Graham. Certainly the, the, the way in which, and this is a very sincere question, the way in which people bent toward, uh, the ruler. You know, like you, you know, you know that Donald Trump is in many ways uniquely unfit to be president in many ways. And where is the question? The question is coming. Just this, wait, wait. It's my, yeah,

Chris Christie: the question. The question. I think the surprise in this country, the question, just look at me for a second. What about, wait, I'm just waiting. I'm waiting. No question is the question is that Donald Trump is not that surprising? Is it television reality TV starts fine. The question is how many Republicans bend to the will of a leader who shows authoritarian tendencies? What does that say about our democracy? What does that say about all these democracy? It says he won and when you win you get to be president.

Chris Christie: It doesn't frighten you at all. Jeff,

Chris Christie: you're the one who's living in perpetual fear. No, I'm not scared. I'm sorry. I believe in our democracy. I believe in the firmness and the vitality of our democracy and I absolutely believe that whether it's four years or eight years, America will survive. If y'all are in trouble, you are swaying the second attorney right away. You are us. Try that. No, no. We're not going onto another top in the f. You asked me a question. I'm going to give you the answer. I'm telling you Jeff, I'm not going there. By points you is. You asked a very important question. Republicans agree with much of the policy prescriptions that he's putting forward and therefore they are bending to the policy, not to the personality. And many of us have said publicly,

Chris Christie: many of us, he said publicly that when he,

Chris Christie: he says things what he tweets things when he does those things that that's unacceptable. When he tweeted to think about Charlottesville, I was insistently on vacation and I sit down at tweet saying, that's unacceptable. Okay, so we're not bending to the authoritarian ruler. We are saying we agree with many, not

all, but many of the policy pursuits that he is putting forward and we agree with them more than we agree with Medicare for all. We agree with the more than we agree with the green new deal. Now there's green new dealers in here. I'm sure there's Medicare for all people in here, I'm sure. And you know what? That's fine. You're entitled to your opinion. And Democrats put up with some horrific behavior from Bill Clinton and bent to the ruler and didn't vote. Not One of them vote to impeach him or to discipline him despite what he did because they agreed with what he was doing, his president. That's the way the system works and so I'm not laying in bed at night staring at the ceiling going, oh my God, Jefferson Madison, where's our democracy going to go? I'm not. We'll be fine. [inaudible] any one person, if you are still living

Chris Christie: u s attorney, if you were, if you were saying still

Chris Christie: u s attorney and you saw the attacks on Muller and his investigation, if you saw the attacks on the attorney general and the Justice Department, if you saw the attacks on the FBI, would you have the same reaction? What reaction? The reaction of it's going to be fine. It's all good. Jefferson matters. You can have two reactions at the same rule of law gone. You can have two reactions at the same time. You don't have to wonder what I would've thought I said it at the time. I told, I said publicly that he should never call it a witch hunt. I stood up and said, Bob Miller is a good, decent, honorable man who I thought would run an honest investigation, and I think he did. I think the proof is in the pudding in that report that he did run, and I've said that publicly over and over again.

Chris Christie: I defended Chris Ray in the work that he's done at the FBI to reform the FBI because the FBI needs some reforming and I think we're going to learn more about that. And I stood up even four and incompetent attorney general and Jeff sessions because even someone as incompetent as Jeff sessions didn't deserve to be beaten in public like he was done. Am I like worried about the democracy? Because any of that I am not. Because what we saw all throughout this was molars, that example of the strength of the democracy. Who appointed Bob Butler, Rod Rosenstein, the deputy attorney general of the United States who was appointed by Donald Trump. If there was some grandkids spirits going on here that never would've been of Bob Mohler and rod roses, I would've said that I don't think there's anything here. See you later. And Republicans get called controlled Congress at the time and nothing would've happened.

Chris Christie: The strength of our democracy is in the people of this country, including someone like Rod who when he saw that said, you know what the right thing to do for the country is to appoint someone independently who will look at this and do it in an honest story for a way. And not only did he have the guts to do something that he knew the president wasn't gonna like, but he also appointed someone who is a stone cold killer. Bob Mueller is a stone cold killer as a prosecutor and he appointed him. So that I think proves my point about the fact that our democracy is much stronger and much more vital than any one person.

And that's why I don't lay awake at night. Are you? I'm right now planning on voting for Trump in 2020 yeah, I mean I think I right now, yeah.

Chris Christie: I'm planning to vote for Trump and there any democrat too interested at all. But I'm, I'm interested in the whole process and I will watch all the debates and I will judge all the candidates and in the end I will vote again with, for the person who I think is the best of what's left and it'll be Trump or somebody else and we'll see what happens. But I do, I expect to vote for the president and I absolutely expect to vote for the president, not just because it's him. In fact, predominantly because I believe that the policy prescriptions he will advocate in the 2020 campaign will be more in line with my philosophical thinking than whoever the Democrat is. Maybe I'll be, maybe I'll be surprised if I am, I always have an open mind, but the bottom line is, you know, if you ask me today what you just did, who you've owned for 2020 and voted for Trump.

Chris Christie: Do we have Mike runners? We can't, do we have migrant? Put some lights on. We can't, we can't see out here. So there your pan or if the Mike runner just brings a mic to somebody. Oh, there we are. There's a mic. There's a person right here and I'll ask you to keep your questions in the form of a question if possible. Do you see a case as a prosecutor for obstruction of justice? I go, all the cases, the trials are going on in Congress or the searches. Congress has an oversight responsibility and authority and they should exercise that responsibility in authority as they see fit. Um, so I have no problem with what congress is doing. Um, and the president's got to respond the way the president wants to respond to it. I suspect that much of the water, the being fought out in the courts as to what's valid and what isn't.

Chris Christie: And that's again, the strength and beauty of our system. So that can be one person who gets to decide congress is going to do what they do. The presidents could do what he wants to do. And then we have courts that can resolve the disputes. And no, there is no case for obstruction of justice. And let me tell you two reasons why as a prosecutor. Reason number one is there's no underlying crime. Bob Butler determined that there was no underlying crime. Do I think there? He absolutely did. There was no, the obstruction of the investigation was an investigation of Russia and Russian collusion. Conspiracy with the Trump campaign, molar definitively found that there was no conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia, and not only the Trump campaign, he found the [inaudible]. There's no conspiracy between any American and the Russian operatives who were trying to affect our election.

Chris Christie: So you can't obstruct an investigation to a crime that turns out not to be a crime. Secondly, we're attempts to obstruct by the president that could be argued. But what happened was people didn't execute on his honest directives. So he tells Don McGahn mowers, gotta go Dominic and goes [inaudible] and then these are the offers, and then do it. And let me tell you something that's not unusual. It's not unusual for that to happen with staff. And Henry Kissinger told me a great story that when he finally understood the full depth of

Watergate, that he went to a prominent Washington Wiseman from the Truman administration. And he said, please tell me how could something like this had happened. He said, oh, Henry, it's easy. Some dumps, son of a bitch went into the Oval Office and did as he was told, your guys hearing Trump to Nixon, which I am it by the way, Trump's compared himself to Nixon by saying he didn't fire all those people because he saw Nixon do it.

Chris Christie: It didn't work out too well for him. Trump just said that last week, right? So this is comforting that they will listen if you'll let me finish, I let you executives all the time, governors, presidents get angry, feel like they're being wronged, wronged by the congress, wrong by the media, wronged by other political actors, and they blow off steam. You know what we should do to this guy? We should do this. We should do that. And good staff, smart staff, which Don McGahn was say, okay, what? He comes to me the fourth time on this, then I'm going to have something to worry about. And that happens at every senior executive position, whether it's president or whether it's the governors and you hope that they have good staff. The difference between Trump and Nixon was Nixon didn't have it. Donald, again, he had John Dean who now portrays himself as some saints, but John Dean coordinated the cover up, brought a, took bribes to pay to the witnesses to keep them quiet. Don McGahn when he was told to do something like that. [inaudible] not doing it. That's the difference. And that's why there's no obstruction. There's attempts, but there's no obstruction.

Speaker 5: Hi, Governor Christie, I had you mentioned earlier that um, there was no point doing an investigation to these allegations of sexual assault against Donald Trump because there's no way he could be prosecuted. But what I remember is around about six months ago, when just as I was nominated to the Supreme Court, the Republicans in the Senate decided it was worth having the FBI investigate because it was such an important position that the people deciding whether or not who should be there should have a right to know. So if this

Chris Christie: two totally different situations, because two totally different situations because they had to not get voted on Kavanaugh. They wanted that information as a basis for deciding whether to vote to confirm it to the Supreme Court or not. Did they listen? That's, that's not it's, there's no, you know, macro investigative unit that investigates for you to decide your vote. The Congress has a constitutional authority and responsibility to advise and consent the nominations to the Supreme Court. They then could appropriately ask the FBI to investigate and provide them with information so that they can acquit their constitutional responsibility. There is no such analog to the thing that you just brought up on the sexual assaults. In the end, you know who's going to look into it. The media is going to look into it and you now you're going to be informed by what the media uncovers in the very same way that you only found out about this woman this week because she went to a media outlet and finally told your story and they published it.

Chris Christie: That's the way you'll find out to inform your vote in 2020, you don't believe me, everybody, you don't want to give more power to the government. You want to set up some super investigative authority that any time the person in the White House or some person in Congress is morally offended by something, they can call them the super investigative power to come in and make a judgment. God forbid in this country we ever have something like that because our freedoms will go down the toilet cause you'll be dependent upon then the decision of who's morally offended by a particular action or not. And we know that in our country there are any number of moral issues where people in good faith completely disagree. And I don't think we want to start giving some super investigator opportunity to just go off on a frolicking detour to ruin someone's reputation, uh, whether it's the witness, you know, or the accused as a course record.

Jeffrey G: Thank you. And uh, thank you guys both for being here. Um, governor in your evaluation of the democratic fields, I noticed that you used the vernacular entirely of showmanship and almost nothing on the substance. And it strikes me that it's deeply unfortunate that that's the case. Um, so I wondered first if you would agree that it is unfortunate that we are evaluating the election entirely on showmanship. We can do, wait a second, let me, we're not evaluating. Let me finish the question. So one, I want to hear why you disagree, but if you didn't disagree or if you don't disagree, um, you guys respond to us. So what should we be doing differently in our evaluation of you?

Chris Christie: Well, um, first on the first question, that's the way we're evaluating it now because nothing has happened yet. There are tiny substantive things that are being thrown out there. Proposals that are being threatened, phrases are being thrown out. Medicare for all green new deal today. Bernie Sanders abolish all, you know, student debt. Um, those are just ideas that isn't substance. Substance is how you're paying for that and that and that and that. And why is that good for our country? We'll get to that eventually and people will have will. But in the end, to answer your second question, I think the biggest problem politically in our country right now is that people are demanding absolutism. If I don't agree with you on everything, you're not voting for me now up, he's pro-life. I'm pro choice to hell with it. I'm not voting for him up. They believe in fossil fuels.

Chris Christie: I believe in green energy. I'm not voting for him. Well, let me tell you everybody, that's how you wind up in the, in the polarized situation. We're in everybody in their own corner. I watch Fox News, you watch MSNBC and no one watches CNN. It's like, that's alright. You wanna talk about a drive time right then. I'm pretty good. That's just, and it's so what do you need to do differently? You need to show as voters a willingness to allow people to be honest. Because if the criteria is I only get, cause probably you're right politicians to answer you. And by the way, politicians only become successful politicians if you vote for them. So if in fact you want us to compromise than vote for people with a record of compromising. If you want people to listen to the other side, vote for

people with a record of listening to the other side that would not include Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton.

Chris Christie: They were seeing what a lot of reversing the gerrymandering that has turned districts into these polarized outposts to be a huge, a huge plus. So your, your for reversal of gerrymandering might actually hurt Republican short term chances. Of course I am. Because what's happened is that in congressional races, House races in particular, what's happening is you don't worry any longer about the general election. All you worry about as the primary. So if you're a Republican district, all you worry about as a challenge from your right, so you keep moving further, right? If you're a democratic district, you keep moving further left because all you're worried about, if it's primary channel, no one worries about the general election anymore except in about 70 districts out of 435 that's 70 districts are the ones that determine control of Congress every two years. So I'm absolutely against gerrymandering.

Chris Christie: I think it's toxic to our political system and I think it needs to be, it needs to be eradicated. And the Supreme Court is gonna have a couple of opportunities to do that. Um, both in this term. And I think in the next term, if they take the cases and I, that I think is would contribute to this, but what you need to do, you need to start voting for people who actually have done what you say you want done. Even if they disagree with you on a few things. You know, I mean, Ronald Reagan I think said it really well. The person who agrees with me 80% of the time is not my 20% enemy. He's my 80% friend and we're not doing that anymore in this country. If you don't agree with me on everything, I'm not watching you. I'm not listening to you. And I'm sure as hell not voting for you.

Chris Christie: And that by the way, politicians listen, they've heard you. Okay. Run to the extreme and moderate Republican governors. Thank you know you get him who appoint Muslim judges or who you know or who or who extends, you know, extend in state tuition to um, you know, dreamers. I mean I got pilloried on that stuff in a Republican primary, but majority of people in the country actually agree with that. But where are you? You're holding your breath and sitting it out cause it's too distasteful. You think this is too distasteful. You keep sitting it out and not doing that stuff. It's going to get even more distasteful. So you know, that's what we need to do and that's what voters need to do and no reward that politicians will respond to that. Why? Because we want to win now we'll respond to it. There's a question young man of up here, I don't have time for one or two more if you just raise your hands so we get the mic to, okay, we'll go there next. Are there any women who want to answer the questions? Can we try to get look? Yeah. Do you think or feel that there is a viable political future for, to use your term moderate Republicans? Sure. And I think there's a viable, um, a viable path in the future for moderate Democrats do. You wouldn't know it by looking at it today with either one. But we go through cycles. We go through cycles in this country. We always have. And so, you know, I believe that,

Speaker 6: nope, no,

Chris Christie: people ask for so long were we ever have an African American president? And we had Jesse Jackson run and we had Shirley Chisholm run. And the problem wasn't that they were black. It was that they were the wrong candidate. And when the right candidate came along, somebody who could appeal to a broad spectrum of voters, he won twice. And I think the same thing about philosophical issues, the candidate has to sell it because people are not paying a hundred percent attention to this. You've got lives to run families, to raise businesses, to run jobs to do, you're not going to be paying attention to every word we say. So we have an obligation to highlight the things that we figure important. And so I do think there's a future for it. And I'm just not, I'm an optimistic person. I'm just not one of these despondent people go with God, know the country is falling apart. Let me tell you, man, there is not a place in this world where there aren't people who want to come here.

Chris Christie: And there's a reason for that and it's not just economic. And so I believe we've got the greatest thing going in the whole world. It doesn't mean it can't be better and that we don't want to be better. It should be better. So I think there is a path for those folks, but we gotta sell it. You're pro immigration. Yeah. And you support a president who says the country's all filled up. No more room. Yeah, we disagree on that. How many things can you disagree with him on before you actually choose a Democrat to vote for? No, no, no, no, no. There's both. Because Jeff, that's really pithy, but I don't, I don't agree with university. I don't agree with universal healthcare. I don't agree with the green new deal. I don't agree with forgiving every bit of student debt in this country. And to me, if I, and that's you, just three off the top of my head.

Chris Christie: And if I went through an entire list of things, I disagree with the Democrat, the generalized democratic philosophy, more than I disagree with Trump as he's expressing these, expressing these things now. So that's it. That's, but guess what? That's my right to make that evaluation. I might be wrong, but I have the right to be wrong. And so to you, that's part of what this country is all about. You know, I watch, I love being in front of audiences like this because as I look out at people, I can tell the people who are listening and the people who aren't right? And that's the problem in our country. I did a speech in San Francisco and I said, I think that, I think the tax reform is a good thing. And this woman started hissing me, literally hissing. And I ignored it the first time. And then I said, I think deregulation is a good thing in general.

Chris Christie: She started hissing more and I looked at her, I said, you know what? You're the problem in this country. You're the problem, not me, I'm just up here expressing my opinions. Which by the way are opinions that are held by lots of people you disagree with. It obviously stands up and ask a question. We're just sit there quietly and disagree while I'm in the middle of talking. Right? And then when there's a Q and a period afterwards, tell me your pick full of it and tell me why we're personalizing all this and the, and this is one of the things that I disagree with the president the most. This is personalization of every disagreement. We can have disagreements that are not personal, that don't make you a bad guy or

make me a bad guy. We just don't agree. And I think when I sit in front of audiences like this one, I want to get to a point where everybody listens, where you're not like, God, why did I get this ticket? You know, I don't agree with anything. This guy said, what the hell, right? No, we got to listen to each other. And then we can feel free to disagree. The founders developed this country to be in disagreement.

Chris Christie: The constitution is written in a way that creates conflict. They wanted that because they thought that's the way to keep a democracy. Vital three branches of government, all with different powers, overlapping powers, and the people in the middle of that creating the mayhem they'll create by who the hell they're going to vote for and send it to those positions. America's had argument. But if this becomes personal, really personal, like if you think this, you're bad at. I think what I think so I'm good. Well that's a much greater threat to the country than Donald Trump or anybody who sits in the Oval Office. And so we got to try to listen to each other and if and when we disagree, we disagree and then we move on to the next topic. Well I'm going to uh, take it.

Chris Christie: Here's a woman who had a question. I'm assuming that the turning the lights off cause they don't want their own room back. You paying me to be here? Let's go. All right. You're going to get the last question. I mean like you bring up was a woman, have a question, then the woman raises her hand and you go, oh, well night everybody. No, no, no. She's a conservative here who respects women and this advantage. This is pure theory now. Thank you, ma'am. Now doubt. Destroy

Audience Member: me. Come on, let's do it. Okay. Hit him hard please. Thank you. I'm an McNaulty from Short Hills, New Jersey.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Audience Member: Following up in Jeff's question about immigration. As you know, we have many strong immigrant communities in New Jersey, many of whom are now terrorized by imminent raids. What they're afraid of raids from immigration, from ice, ice. So I'm just curious what your position is, whether or not you call them concentration camps, not so much about the camps in general, but specifically about immigration policy.

Chris Christie: Well, the, the, this, the family separation policy was completely wrongheaded and, and just the wrong thing to do. And that's what happens when you hire stupid attorney general. Okay. Because he, he set the policy. Now the president permitted it, but he said it and he said it in a way where you didn't explain completely to anybody that we didn't have enough holding cells, we didn't have enough lawyers, we didn't have enough judges to be able to process something like that in a reasonable period of time. That's his job to do are the immigration in general. I've always said that I believe that you've got to give people an opportunity. People who are here an opportunity to become legal status. I'm

not so sure about citizenship given the numbers we have now, but I don't think people should be lurking around in the shadows worrying about the things you're talking about them worrying about.

Chris Christie: And that's why when I was governor, I did things like, you know, extended state tuition to dreamers because these are kids who got brought here, not at their own will and we've now in New Jersey, paid to educate them from k to 12 so now we're going to say we paid educated from k to 12 but the college thing, yeah, we got to make it harder for you. Made no sense to me. We've already made the investment in them, so let's continue to make the, make that investment easier for them by giving them in state tuition. Um, you know, those are things that we can and should do. I think on the bigger question of immigration policy broadly, this is one of those issues that is the best example of what I talked about in the last answer, which is everybody's absolute, you know, on the democratic side, if it's not a path to citizenship, forget it on the Republican side, if it's not, you know, kicking them out of the country, forget it.

Chris Christie: I sit during, when I was running for president, the idea that we're going to deport all the people came here illegally. You would start to line the bosses up end to end in Seattle and they would get to between San Diego and Los Angeles. That's the number of buses you would need to bus these people out. It's not practical, but, but I do also understand that if we do that, if we provide a path to legal status for folks, we've got to start enforcing our border in a better way. It is unfair to the people who are standing in line in countries all over the world dying to get here. And then when they come here, I have to wait for legal status and wait for citizenship. It is unfair to them to allow people to come up over the southern border with impunity when they pay coyotes to do it for them and then to say, okay, well you know what?

Chris Christie: We did a lousy job so you can stay and you've got legal status. We have to pay for the lousy job we've done over the last 30 years since Reagan signed the last immigration law. We have to pay the price for that. But part of paying that price has to be setting up a enforceable border on our southern border so that immigration can be done in a, in a way that's fair cause right now you know if, if you're in Poland and you want to come to the United States, you can't just walk here. But if in your Guatemala you can, it's a long walk. But they're doing it as we speak. So we need to put some fundamental fairness into this. And I think we've got to stop having the argument we've been having over the last 30 years about how we got here. Guess what we're here.

Chris Christie: Whatever number of people you want to say, these 10 million, 12 million, 15 million, whatever it is, we're here. And more importantly they're here. The last part of this would be, you know, immigrate immigrants in this country have built this country. Okay. You know, my grandfather was born on the boat between Sicily and the United States. And when he arrived at Ellis Island, they made him an American and he was very, very proud of that, very proud of that. And, but he came to Ellis island, his parents waited for the ticket legally to come. And

then he helped to build as a mason, all so many of the buildings that still stay in the city of Newark where he immigrated to. And so I think the only way to get by this is to elect a leader ultimately, who is gonna say, I am not going to continue the argument of the last 30 years.

Chris Christie:

We need to have a new conversation. And both I'm willing to stop the argument. Both sides are willing to give, but both sides have to be willing to give on this. And if they're not, we're going to be, we're going to have this problem at 18 million or 20,000,006 years from now. Right. So that's the way I feel about it. And, and I, and I, I don't that the rhetoric on both sides is helpful. It's just not a constructive argument to have in the matter. We're having it right now. It's the same thing we were taught before. I believe what I believe. So I'm good. And you believe what you believe to your bad. I don't believe that's true about the Republicans or the Democrats and I think they've put themselves in those corners and we've got to give him permission to get out. Someone's got to give him permission to get out. And I hope that we do.

Jeffrey G:

So, Governor Christie, um, I want to issue an official invitation right now. Oh, for the 2024 Aspen ideas festival. Please come and launch your presidential campaign. Uh, I'm not sure quite which party you're going to be running for by [inaudible] nomination in 2024, but you're more than welcome to come back anytime we, we love having you here. We're very appreciative that you engage in this [inaudible].