

# ABC News Hires Chris Christie, Demonstrates Why America Is in Permanent Decline

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Chris Christie and Donald Trump at the White House on Oct. 26, 2017.

Jim Watson/AFP/Getty Images

ABC News has hired former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie as a contributor.

Leaving ideology and partisanship completely aside, and considering only how he's upheld public-interest values like honesty, integrity, and not being a national embarrassment, Christie's recent record is one of relentless failure:

- The new ABC News contributor's administration created a massive backup on what may be the busiest bridge in the world in a petty attempt to intimidate the mayor of a small town, then lied about what it had done for weeks/months/years. Eventually, one of Christie's top aides and two individuals he'd appointed to top jobs at the Port Authority transit agency were convicted of felony conspiracy charges for their actions; two of those three were also convicted of fraud and have been sentenced to prison terms (which they're appealing).

- The new ABC News contributor's interest in actually governing waned to the point that pretty much every newspaper in New Jersey called for his resignation after he began spending long stretches out of state to launch a presidential campaign that ended, without his having won any delegates, when he finished sixth in New Hampshire. (The highlight of his campaign was probably when he pompously attempted to convey his credibility as a statesman by alluding to an ongoing personal relationship with King Hussein of Jordan, who actually died in 1999.)
- The new ABC News contributor gave Donald Trump a crucial early endorsement and went on to lead the Trump administration's efforts to reduce opioid addiction—efforts that turned out to consist of literally nothing besides White House meetings staged for cameras.
- The new ABC News contributor ordered the closure of New Jersey beaches last July 4 during a dispute with the state legislature—then took a state helicopter to Island Beach State Park, which was opened exclusively to his family, and told a lie about not having gone sunbathing that was later exposed by a news outlet which had gotten a picture of him sitting on the beach in a beach chair.

Chris Christie gets a lot out of being hired by ABC News. Like every other ostensibly independent TV “analyst,” he gets a platform with which to sell himself as a lobbyist and influencer without having to disclose how his on-air statements benefit his personal/financial interests. He also gets a crack at transforming his public reputation. Perhaps, like Sean Spicer, he'll try to pass off his many episodes of bad-faith dishonesty as cute “oopsie” moments. Or perhaps, like George W. Bush, he'll become a quirky national uncle without ever reckoning with the consequences of his tenure in office at all.

ABC News gets something out of the deal too: Christie is a famous face/name, and he talks with the kind of strong, confident tone that registers as compelling, blunt truth-telling even when it's not. (As recently as 2016, Christie said that he would “retreat” after leaving office, promising to conduct himself with “honor and dignity” rather than becoming “a pundit or talking head.” The man's word is his bond!)

What *America* gets out of this arrangement, however, is an open question. It's certainly not a sense that elected officials are accountable for their actions, or that politics is anything other than a binary clash of colorful personalities that occurs on television while decisions of actual importance take place in a space over which a normal person has no control. In past eras, for all their flaws, failure sometimes had consequences, but that was before television executives recognized that name recognition, the ability to go viral, and the capacity to pop on camera are the only traits any public figure needs. If Nixon had resigned last year, he would have been invited to make a funny cameo at the Grammys. Richard Nixon on Carpool Karaoke—LOL, can you imagine?

## One more thing

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