

Is Larry Hogan the next Chris Christie?

Larry Ottinger

What would a second term under Gov. [Larry Hogan](#) look like? Honestly, it's hard to say. He's stashed away nearly [\\$10 million](#) in his war chest from special interests and is banging the same campaign drum from 2014. But he's been coy when it comes to disclosing details.

With our governor high on political rhetoric and low on substance, we can look to our unfortunate neighbors to the north to find out what we can expect.

Like Maryland, New Jersey is a blue state. And like Maryland, New Jersey elected a Republican governor who concluded his first term with high approval ratings. In February 2013, as [Chris Christie's](#) campaign for re-election geared up, [70 percent viewed his administration favorably, and 73 percent approved of the job he had done.](#)

Mr. Christie campaigned closely to elect his ["good friend"](#) Larry Hogan in 2014. Mr. Hogan said, ["I have a special relationship with Governor Christie."](#) A Christie adviser, who also consulted for Mr. Hogan, said the men were ["two peas in a pod."](#)

Many attributed Mr. Hogan's win to Mr. Christie's political star power. Returning the favor, Mr. Hogan gave Mr. Christie his ["enthusiastic"](#) endorsement, [stumping for him](#) in New Hampshire; even after the horrendous Bridgegate scandal. Mr. Hogan said they were ["kindred spirits."](#)

Yet by August 2017, at the end of his second term, Mr. Christie's star had fallen. Only [16 percent](#) of New Jerseyans approved of the job he was doing. The state's credit rating was the [second worst in the country](#), and when Mr.

Christie left office five months later, New Jersey residents cried a resounding “Good riddance!”

But what about Maryland? Are we following in New Jersey’s footsteps, ensnared by the false promises and belligerent bravado of a “kindred” Republican governor? It’s hard not to draw that parallel when you look at how closely aligned Messrs. Christie and Hogan are.

Take K-12 education, for example. In August 2010, Chris Christie declared war on his state’s largest teachers union. His hubris cost the state [\\$400 million in federal grants](#). During his presidential run in 2015, he doubled-down his schoolyard tactics, saying a national teachers union deserved a [“punch in the face.”](#)

Year after year, Mr. Christie starved and sought to [privatize](#) the state’s public schools. Over his eight-year tenure, state aid to schools increased a pitiful [1.3 percent](#). Not nearly enough to cover inflation and rapid school system growth.

Maryland’s schools under Mr. Hogan haven’t fared any better. In 2016, after once again underfunding public schools, Mr. Hogan faced growing criticism from educators across the state. Taking a page from the Christie playbook, Mr. Hogan responded by calling teachers unions [“thugs.”](#)

In 2017 alone, he cut [\\$20 million](#) from after-school and summer programs, college-readiness scholarships and programs to increase teacher retention. Mr. Hogan robbed the Education Trust Fund of [\\$1.4 billion](#), all while underfunding schools by [\\$2.9 billion](#) annually. And to top it off ideologically, in 2017 he hosted Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to tout their shared privatization schemes for Maryland.

On paid sick leave, Maryland’s [General Assembly](#) had to [override Mr. Hogan’s veto](#) of a bill entitling workers to earn up to five days of sick pay a year. The no-brainer will benefit as many as 700,000 Marylanders.

Similarly, during his disastrous run for president, Mr. Christie stated, “[I don’t believe in making paid sick leave mandatory. I just don’t believe in more regulations that would make us less competitive.](#)”

As to a green economy, Mr. Christie favored industry and fossil fuels, diverting billions of taxpayer dollars away from clean energy projects and removing New Jersey from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, causing the state to lose an additional [\\$279 million in revenue.](#)

Following Mr. Christie’s lead, Mr. [Hogan vetoed the Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2016.](#) Supported by 71 percent of Marylanders, the bill promised to create over 1,000 high-paying jobs in our state. Thankfully, state legislators stepped in to [override](#) his foolhardy veto. By turning his back on the Clean Energy Jobs Act, Mr. Hogan has also turned his back on [wind power, solar power and energy efficiency.](#)

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie joined Maryland candidate for governor Larry Hogan at the Honey Bee Diner in Glen Burnie. Video by Joshua McKerrow, Staff.

If you’re worried Larry Hogan will forsake common sense legislation that will create jobs and protect our environment; that he’ll ignore the needs of our working families; or that he’ll continue to bully teachers unions and underfund our public schools – well, you should be.

Mr. Hogan’s expecting November to be a coronation, but it doesn’t have to be. Let New Jersey’s plight be a cautionary tale.

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