

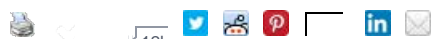


Home > New Jersey > Christie buys \$300K of food & booze with NJ expense account



## Christie buys \$300K of food & booze with NJ expense account

By Mark Lagerkvist / May 11, 2015 / 383 Comments



AP Photo / James D Smith

**FOOTBALL, FOOD & FUNDS:** Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones (left) talks with New Jersey governor Chris Christie before an NFL football game against the New York Giants in 2014 at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. During the NFL's 2010 and 2011 seasons, On 58 occasions, Christie used a debit card to pay a total of \$82,594 to Delaware North Sportservice, which operates the concessions at MetLife.

By Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey Watchdog

Chris Christie's expense account tells a story of appetite and ambition, one that pits government waste against the New Jersey governor's waistline.

Christie spent \$360,000 from his state allowance during his five years in office. More than 80 percent of that money, or \$300,000, was used to buy food, alcohol and desserts, according to a New Jersey Watchdog analysis of records released by the governor's office.

In addition to his \$175,000 a year salary, the governor receives \$95,000 a year in expense advances, paid quarterly by the state. [In the state budget](#), it is listed as "an



### DON'T MISS OUR NEWS

Get the latest on government waste, fraud, and abuse - directly in your inbox.



### FEATURED STORIES



**NJ Watchdog sues Christie to disclose \$800,000 in credit card records**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**New Jersey gas tax proposal stokes highway cost debate**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**\$100,000-plus state pensions double in New Jersey**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**Big ticket: Cost to protect Gov. Christie rises 1,800 percent**

Mark Lagerkvist | Wisconsin



**Three in four NJ sheriffs double-dip millions via pension loophole**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey

allowance of funds not otherwise appropriated and used for official receptions on behalf of the state, the operation of an official residence, for other expenses.”

While Christie returns surplus funds to the state each year, Treasury officials say he does not submit receipts or accounting for the public monies he spends. [The governor’s ledger](#), obtained from Christie under the Open Public Records Act, offers a rare, if partial glimpse of a controversial expense account shrouded in secrecy.

Christie’s most notable spending spree occurred during the 2010 and 2011 NFL football seasons at MetLife Stadium, where the New York’s Giants and Jets play their home games. New Jersey’s governor traditionally enjoys free use of luxury boxes for games and other events at the government-owned venue, but food and beverages cost extra.

On 58 occasions, Christie used a debit card to pay a total of \$82,594 to [Delaware North Sportservice](#), which operates the concessions at MetLife. The governor’s office did not provide any receipts, business reasons or names of individuals entertained, but defended the expense.

**RELATED: Bill to force Christie to disclose \$95K expense account hits Assembly**

“The official nature and business purpose of the event remains the case regardless of whether the event is at the State House, Drumthwacket or a sporting venue,” said Christie’s press secretary Kevin Roberts in a prepared statement.

To avoid a potential scandal that could embarrass their rising political star, the [New Jersey Republican State Committee reimbursed the Treasury](#) in March 2012 for Christie’s purchases from “DNS Sports.” Since then, the governor has refrained from using his expense account at MetLife and other sports venues.

Meanwhile, Christie found other ways to enjoy the allowance.

The governor used it to buy \$102,495 worth of groceries and alcoholic beverages from retail stores. It’s not clear from records whether the goods stocked the pantries and filled the refrigerators at [Drumthwacket, the governor’s official mansion in Princeton](#), or the Mendham house where Christie and his family live. The store addresses were not disclosed.

Christie did most of his serious food shopping at Wegmans Food Markets, where he spent \$76,373 during 53 shopping runs. He patronized ShopRite supermarkets 51 times for \$11,971 in purchases – plus another \$6,536 in seven visits to ShopRite’s liquor stores.

Those grocery bills dropped dramatically in early 2013, shortly after Barbara Walters asked on network television whether Christie was too overweight to be president.

“There are people who say that couldn’t be president because you’re so heavy,” said Walters in an ABC special that aired in December 2012. “What do you say to that?”

“That’s ridiculous,” Christie shot back. “I mean, that’s ridiculous.”

Two months later, the governor underwent Lap-Band surgery in an attempt to lose



**Court orders Gov. Christie to reveal air travel records, not hotel bills**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**Christie’s biggest double-dipper quits on cusp of NJ pension debate**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**NJ Watchdog fights for Guadagno pension probe records in appeals court**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**‘Seven deadly sins’ of NJ pensions add up to \$104 billion debt**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**NJ pension board guns down cop’s bizarre disability scheme**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**40 New Jersey part-time ‘temps’ collect nearly \$6M a year**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



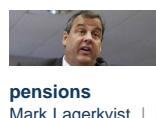
**‘\$100K Club’ of NJ retirees grows 75 percent in three years**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**Meet the ‘Three Stooges’ of New Jersey disability pensions**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**Disabled double-dippers drains millions from NJ pensions**

pensions

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**18 double-dipping NJ lawmakers block pension reform**

Mark Lagerkvist | New Jersey



**1 Food That KILLS Blood Pressure**

Quickly and safely lower your blood pressure with this 1 weird ingredient from the grocery store. [Read More](#)

weight. Nearly two years after the operation to restrict the size of his stomach, Christie boasted he had shed 85 pounds.

It also shrank Christie's supermarket bills.

The governor bought \$64,687 in groceries during the 38 months leading up to the surgery. That tab shrank to \$31,236 for the 26 months after the operation.

On top of those food bills, Christie spent another \$109,133 to hire caterers for official state receptions and special events – expenses more consistent with the stated purpose of the allowance. His favorite vendor was Jacques Exclusive Caterers of Middletown, which received \$74,161 worth of business from the governor.

Other payments included \$35,027 for tents and rental equipment, \$10,786 for printing and office supplies and \$4,338 for candy, cookies and confections.

The records released by the governor's office did not include receipts or descriptions of what was purchased. Such secrecy would change under a bill introduced by Assemblymen Troy Singleton, D-Burlington, and Vince Mazzeo, D-Atlantic.

“New Jersey taxpayers have every right to know where their hard-earned money goes,” said Mazzeo. “Any governor who makes a responsible and appropriate use of this expense account should have no objection to complying with what's required under this bill.”

If enacted, [A-4424](#) would require the governor to disclose expenses with receipts in an annual report to be posted on the State Ethics Commission web site.

“There is a growing sense of cynicism in politics today and it is imperative for those of us in public office to overcome that cynicism by ensuring a more transparent and accountable system,” added Singleton.

As Christie's out-of-state travel increased while he pursued his political ambitions, the governor's state allowance expenditures decreased. During those political journeys, many of the costs have been picked by the state GOP, the Republican Governors Association and his PAC, Leadership Matters for America.

In 2010, the governor spent all but \$2,716 of his state expense allowance during his first year in office. The annual surpluses grew to \$9,882 in 2011, \$21,225 in 2012, \$47,472 in 2013 and \$30,377 last year. Christie returned those monies to the Treasury, [according to records he provided](#).

However, the rising costs of protecting the governor on his sojourns away from New Jersey dwarfed any decreases in allowance expenditures by Christie.

The [travel costs for the state police's Executive Protection Unit reached \\$492,420 in 2014](#). It is 22 times more than the \$21,704 spent in 2009, former Gov. Jon Corzine's last year in office.

During Christie's first five years as governor, EPU travel costs totaled nearly \$1.2 million.

The governor's office has not responded to New Jersey Watchdog's questions about

the expenses. Instead, Roberts pointed to his previous statement: “These are the same standards and practices that every other former governor followed when it comes to their security detail.”

Over the past five years, \$975,000 of those security costs were charged to American Express credit cards issued to the governor’s office. Christie has flatly refused to release the monthly statements, claiming details of past expenditures could jeopardize his safety in the future.

[New Jersey Watchdog is suing Christie in Mercer County Superior Court](#) to force the governor to release the Amex records of EPU charges.



[Click here to LEARN HOW TO STEAL OUR STUFF!](#)

**Mark Lagerkvist**

Mark Lagerkvist is New Jersey Watchdog's investigative reporter. He can be reached at [mark@NJwatchdog.org](mailto:mark@NJwatchdog.org).

**Sign-up for our New Jersey Watchdog email list to receive the latest news and in-depth coverage.**

383 Comments

Watchdog.org

Login ▾

Recommend

Share

Sort by Newest ▾



Join the discussion...



**Gary** • 13 hours ago

Never cared for this Democrat who refers himself as a Republican.

|  • Reply • Share ›



**saffiregal** > Gary • 6 hours ago

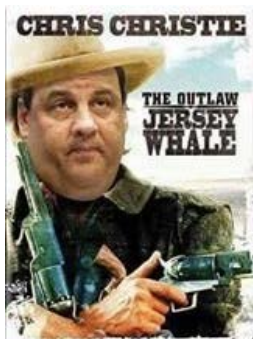
He is No Democrat.

|  • Reply • Share ›



**David Allan Cole** · 13 hours ago

There It Is!!!



□ | □ · Reply · Share ›



**AmericanIcon** · 15 hours ago

Don't see what the fuss is. At current (publicly financed) stadium prices, \$82k barely covers one hot dog and two beers per game.

□ | □ · Reply · Share ›



**tomlargey** · 19 hours ago

Such a big appetite ; why Middletown ? What's Jacque's connection to Big Chris?

□ | □ · Reply · Share ›



**sendnymail** · 19 hours ago

Leave the fat man alone. If you were fat and overweight you'd spend just as much money on food. Imagine him in the white house - he'll do at least 500k. This is ridiculous.

□ | □ · Reply · Share ›



**sendnymail** · 19 hours ago

he could have hired 9 teachers with his food bill alone

2 □ | □ · Reply · Share ›



**MorristownMom** > sendnymail · 17 hours ago

We hire PLENTY of teachers in NJ and most are paid far more than they are worth....

□ | □ · Reply · Share ›



**derse handrich** · a day ago

Hmmm. \$300 grand of food and booze. Wonder how many pounds of shit that results in.

.

□ | □ • Reply • Share ›



**sendnymail** > derse handrich • 19 hours ago

Probably about 300 grand worth.

□ | □ • Reply • Share ›



**NewJersey Boy** • a day ago

Why is it you never mention all the great things he does as the Governor. Saving the state billion by canceling a multi billion dollar over budget Union construction project/ tunnel. Cutting the teacher benefits / pay and then the head of teachers union asked members to pray for his death. Serious the ex speaker a Dem needed a larger private jet so it did not have to stop to pick up fuel. Million plus or 87k extra per flight weekly for the spoiled ex leader. And she complained at auto executives flying privately . Really.. How about Clinton wife who secret service agents called the biggest B of all the First Ladies. She wasn't even the boss and all support staff hated her just imagine her as President. Wow To fix all government. Limit terms in office. Period.. Gov't works for us and we all the people pay the salaries must we NEVER forget..

□ | □ • Reply • Share ›



**David Allan Cole** > NewJersey Boy • 14 hours ago

"The travel costs for the state police's Executive Protection Unit reached \$492,420 in 2014. It is 22 times more than the \$21,704 spent in 2009, former Gov. Jon Corzine's last year in office."

□ | □ • Reply • Share ›



**scott sinclair** > NewJersey Boy • 16 hours ago

all the great things and yet you can only mention two. He is another horrible governor in a long line of governors and once he throws his hat into the presidential ring he can stop being a cancer to this state. Let's mention the high unemployment rate under him, the property taxes, the fact that more people are leaving this state than ever, he's done nothing to bring any type of business to this state...dare I go on??

1 □ | □ • Reply • Share ›



**Joe Hova** > NewJersey Boy • 18 hours ago

it's what the lib/dems do,they have no SERIOUS arguments so they resort personal attacks.

□ | □ • Reply • Share ›



**pchild57** > NewJersey Boy • 20 hours ago

I wouldn't worry about the teachers praying for the Gov's death since prayer doesn't work. It's been five years since this death prayer and he's still alive. How bout all those death threats against President Obama? Speaking of private jets Christie's Port Authority buddy David Samson

had his own United Airlines flight to South Carolina so he could spend weekends with his wife. The "chairman's flight" has since been canceled. As for cancelling the tunnel project Amtrack has warned that it might have to shut down one of the aging tunnels in coming years to repair extensive damage cause by Sandy. One tunnel shutdown would reduce rail capacity between NJ & NY by 75%.- This country is so behind on infrastructure it's embarrassing as is your petty assertion that HRC was called a bitch by secret service. Who cares what the SS thinks - they buy women for sex.

3   · Reply · Share ›



**Bravadu** > pchild57 · 18 hours ago

United Airlines ended its money-losing "chairman's flight" three days after Samson, chairman of the Port Authority, resigned

  · Reply · Share ›



**jamesrettig** > NewJersey Boy · a day ago

Well he is preaching one thing and then does the opposite in his own life.

Teachers are supposed to take a hit on their pensions, but he cant control his appetite. Nice, very nice.

2   · Reply · Share ›



**JoPop55** · a day ago

Another example of government waste. Peanut butter and jelly will be cut from the food stamps list. I often wondered who pays for the military flyovers at NASCAR events?

1   · Reply · Share ›



**oregon\_man** · a day ago

America's version of Kim Jung Un

1   · Reply · Share ›



**OSBuckeye** · a day ago

I know food at sporting events is expensive, but to average over \$1400 per event??????????

1   · Reply · Share ›



**Michael James Cobb** · a day ago

Jesus this guy is a disaster.

1   · Reply · Share ›



**The Goat** > Michael James Cobb · a day ago

means he is fit for President. Tha is how America rolls.

1 · Reply · Share ›



**Nicko Thime** · a day ago

A man who can't govern his own habits is incapable of governing anyone or anything.

1 · Reply · Share ›



**Bravadu** > Nicko Thime · 17 hours ago

Sure you can. He just needs to be able to:

- 1) put on a straight or stern face (aka acting)
- 2) say these words: "Do as I say, not as I do"

1 · Reply · Share ›



**David Allan Cole** > Bravadu · 14 hours ago

Just like Ronnie RayGun, the Great Destroyer!!!

1 · Reply · Share ›



**Nicko Thime** > Bravadu · 16 hours ago

Well, when you put it that way...

2 · Reply · Share ›



**Joe Hova** > Nicko Thime · 18 hours ago

Oh right, like Bill Clinton

1 · Reply · Share ›



**Nicko Thime** > Joe Hova · 16 hours ago

Didn't vote for him. But nice try.

1 · Reply · Share ›



**Wade** · a day ago

This really proves that we need to trim government waist.

7 · Reply · Share ›



**Jim** · a day ago





The governor spent his expense account on things that politicians normally spend their expense accounts on. I'm not sure what the issue is here.

Sure, he's fat. Fat people eat more. Does that have something to do with it?

1 • Reply • Share ›



**map0557** > Jim • 19 hours ago

If he's "expensing" shopping trips to Wegman's and Shoprite, that sounds like personal grocery expenses to me. My job doesn't let me expense my groceries. Why should my taxes reimburse this fat b\*s\*t\*r\*d's??

1 • Reply • Share ›



**Jim** > map0557 • 9 hours ago

I don't know the state's rules, but many high-level politicians are given an expense account for household expenses such as groceries. Of course your job doesn't let you do that, because you aren't a governor.

• Reply • Share ›



**Nicko Thime** > Jim • a day ago

Glutton is the word you are looking for.

1 • Reply • Share ›



**jamesrettig** > Nicko Thime • a day ago

Blowhard is more apt.

1 • Reply • Share ›



**derse handrich** > jamesrettig • a day ago

Undisciplined?

1 • Reply • Share ›



**Stan Gillett** • a day ago

And it shows on him...

2 • Reply • Share ›



**Holy\_Ryu** • a day ago

Why it's always the fat greedy men out here that is the most selfish?

1 • Reply • Share ›



Daniel James

### WATCHDOG IN YOUR STATE

- Alabama
- California
- Colorado
- Florida
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Louisiana
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Washington
- Wisconsin

### NEWS

- Education
- Energy and Environment
- First Amendment
- Health Care
- Labor
- Pensions
- State Budgets
- Technology

Find us on Facebook

New Jersey Watchdog

You like this.

You and 1,843 others like New Jersey Watchdog. 1,843 people like New Jersey Watchdog.

Facebook social plugin

### CONNECT

- Like us on Facebook
- Follow us on Twitter
- Join us on Google+
- Watch us on YouTube