

Now in the Race, Chris Christie Tries to Quell Fears Over Israel Stance

() – New Jersey Governor Chris Christie—who has a somewhat controversial record on issues relating to Israel—on Tuesday said he will run for president, promoting his straight-talking persona and desire for bipartisanship in his announcement. “I mean what I say and I say what I mean, and that’s what America needs right now,” Christie said at an event at Livingston High School, his alma mater. “Both parties have failed our country,” he added. “Compromise is now a dirty word.” The 14th Republican candidate to enter the 2016 race, Christie was once considered a top contender for the nomination, but has seen his popularity decline amid a scandal about the closure of lanes leading to the George Washington Bridge by his subordinates. Former Port Authority of New York and New Jersey executive David Wildstein has admitted that the lane closures were political retribution against the mayor of Fort Lee, N Tries J. Christie, the governor of a state with one of the largest Jewish populations in the country, has at times come under the microscope for his stances on Israel and radical Islam. In 2008, he called Passaic County, NJ, resident Imam Mohammad Qatanani—who was discovered by the FBI to have been previously arrested and convicted in Israel for aiding and abetting the Muslim Brotherhood and the Hamas terrorist group—a “man of great goodwill.” In 2014, during a speech at the Republican Jewish Coalition’s (RJC) leadership retreat in Las Vegas, Christie used the Palestinian narrative’s “occupied territories” descriptor for the West Bank, drawing condemnation from some pro-Israel leaders. Christie reportedly met afterward with prominent Republican Party donor Sheldon Adelson, who hosted the RJC retreat, and apologized for the remark. Later that year, Christie did not mention the word

“Israel” during a speech he gave at the Champions of Jewish Values International Awards Gala in New York City. But more recently, Christie criticized President Barack Obama for his “shameful” policy on Israel. “Our commitment to Israel must be absolute,” Christie said at an event in New Hampshire in May. “Israel is a beacon of freedom in a sea of autocracy and our friendship should be unshakeable. Over the last few years this administration has taken our Israeli partners for granted and it is shameful how the president has treated them.” *Reprinted with permission from .*