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TWO IRREFUTABLE conclusions can be drawn from Governor Christie's decision to call a special election — an Aug. 13 primary and Oct. 16 general election — to complete the term of U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg:

• Newark Mayor Cory Booker will be the next U.S. Senator from New Jersey, continuing an unbroken string of Democratic victories back 35 years.

• The governor preserved, protected and enhanced his potential for an overwhelming victory — 1 pr.4(s)]y, one suffi Chn bo9 Tc -.009 Tw [(Ch689(i)-177510b)7.1(e

Despite the criticism that rained down on him from Democrats building a publicly financed November ballot and from Republicans — mostly the party's conservative — for failing an election, Christie chose the least distasteful of the options facing him.

His rationale for the decision, that he owed the people of New Jersey to honor the wishes of those who voted in the primary, impressed only the most naive and gullible. A political decision was necessary and a political decision, the ire of those who desired a different but equally political judgment.

Christie's effort to justify his action as a high-minded exercise in democracy was greeted with skepticism by political cognoscenti, as he probably knew it, but he was willing to accept such a judgment.

While New Jersey governors are leaders of state, they are leaders of their party, well aware of partisan ends in mind. Christie in the manner of his predecessors acted in his role as party leader.

Democrats made it clear he faced a court challenge if he tried to issue by appointing a special election. Given the conflict in the state election statutes, the odds were better than even that a court challenge and embarrassment he needed even less.

A decision to add a special election to the Nov. 5 general election was fraught with political implications. Booker as the Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate occupying the spot on the ballot potentially cutting significantly into Christie's hoped-for popularity and possibly damaging legislative districts.

High school civics

He made a political decision and wrapped it in a few pages of high school civics textbook. Democrats, Republicans, bloggers, editorial writers and anyone else with access to a computer.

Faulting Christie for choosing to avoid a protracted and expensive court challenge is misplaced. With its drumbeat of criticism the Democratic Party runs the risk of making itself have become weary and frustrated.

