

New Jersey governor donated large sums to influential pastor: Corzine then received endorsement

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A politically connected New Jersey pastor received almost \$90,000 in donations last year from incumbent governor Jon Corzine, who is running for re election.

The pastor, Reginald Jackson, who recently announced that he was throwing his coveted support to Corzine, received \$87,000 in donations from the multimillionaire governor last year, Jackson confirmed.

Head of the influential Black Ministers Council of New Jersey, Jackson is a key player in state politics. His endorsement—which has gone to both Democrats and Republicans over the years—is highly sought.

According to Corzine's 2008 tax returns, the governor made a \$50,000 donation to Jackson's congregation, St. Matthew African Methodist Episcopal Church in Orange. Corzine gave another \$37,000 to St. Matthew from his philanthropic foundation, Jackson said. He explained that the smaller sum was contributed early in 2008 and the \$50,000 was donated in July last year, shortly after the governor began raising money for his reelection campaign.

The contributions were the latest in a series of high-priced offerings Corzine has made to Jackson in the decade since the governor left Wall Street. They came to light after Corzine gave the Newark-based *Star-Ledger* access to review his 2008 tax return, filed in mid-October.

Jackson said his endorsement of Corzine had nothing to do with the governor's generosity. "I always support who I believe is the best candidate," said Jackson, who stressed that he has had a long relationship with Corzine's main rival, Republican Chris Christie. *-Religion News Service*