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## Local Government Leaders Agree: "...You Can't Get To The Cap Without The Toolkit."

Friday, October 15, 2010 • Tags: [Property Taxes](#)

### "I Dropped The Bills On This Podium In The First Week Of May. What Have They Been Doing?"

– Governor Chris Christie, 9/30/10

[Local Government Leaders Once Again Urged The Legislature To Act On The Governor's "Tool Kit" Reforms In Order To Control Continuously Rising Municipal Costs...](#)

#### Orange Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr:

"We must have arbitrators that can take into consideration the increases that we have, as well as the tax cap, or we're going to have layoffs across the board, demotions, which will impede our ability to deliver services and potentially make our cities not as clean, not as safe." (Michael Symons, "Mayors impress upon Senate need for 'toolkit' reforms," MyCentralJersey.com, 10/14/2010)

#### Clifton Mayor James Anzaldi:

"New Jersey taxpayers pay the highest median property tax in the country, and New Jersey police officers and firefighters are among the highest paid in the country. There is no coincidence," said Clifton Mayor James Anzaldi. "Binding arbitration is the primary concern and reason for this never-ending rise in the cost of government." (Michael Symons, "Mayors impress upon Senate need for 'toolkit' reforms," MyCentralJersey.com, 10/14/2010)

#### Rumson Mayor John Ekdahl:

"If you're going to award 2.75 (percent) to a third of our workforce, it means the other two-thirds have to suffer in some manner. That would either be through little or no pay raise or layoffs." (Michael Symons, "Mayors impress upon Senate need for 'toolkit' reforms," MyCentralJersey.com, 10/14/2010)

"If we have to pay police 2.75 percent, we have to let some of these other employees go, or give them virtually no raise at all to keep them employed," Ekdahl said. "We've created a privileged class of employees, which, on its face, just does not seem fair." (Adrienne Lu, N.J. lawmakers study 2% cap on raises for public workers, Philadelphia Inquirer, 10/15/2010)

#### Belmar Mayor Kenneth Pringle:

"You would have thought, in the scheme of the economy, the Lehman failure, record foreclosures, a revolution in Trenton, a new governor, a 2 percent cap, that finally we would have gotten a decision out of an arbitrator that reflected some kind of common sense." (Michael Symons, "Mayors impress upon Senate need for 'toolkit' reforms," MyCentralJersey.com, 10/14/2010)

[Local Leaders From Across New Jersey Have Been Calling For The Legislature To Act For Months ...](#)

#### Executive director of the New Jersey League of Municipalities, William G. Dressel Jr.:

"Where are the major tool kit tools that were supposed to help local officials control runaway costs? Where is arbitration reform? Where is civil service reform? Where are the mandates relief measures? State policy makers need to advance management reforms and mandates relief initiatives that will allow municipalities to continue to deliver vital services and programs to their citizens and businesses, despite the caps – and despite continuing cuts in municipal revenue replacement funding. New Jersey citizens are sick of paying the highest property taxes in the nation...State leaders must seize this opportunity to finally deliver significant and sustainable relief and reform." ("Hammer out tool kit reforms," The Times of Trenton, 9/23/2010)

#### Helmetta Mayor Nancy Martin:

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"I believe the 2 percent cap will not work until the Legislature puts the 'toolbox' into place and looks at the state mandates they impose on municipalities." (Jennifer Borton, New 2% tax cap gets mixed reviews," East Brunswick Sentinel, 7/22/2010)

**Hope Township Mayor Tim McDonough:**

"You've heard it time and time again — you can't get to the cap without the toolkit," said McDonough, an independent. "This should be a nonpartisan effort." (Matt Friedman, "N.J. mayors urge Gov. Christie, lawmakers to speed up passage of 'tool kit' measures," NJ.com, 9/30/2010)

**Robbinsville Mayor Dave Fried:**

"Mayor [of East Windsor Janice] Mironov, Mayor [Mayor of Hamilton Township John F.] Bencivengo and I... We've seen the 2 percent property tax cap pass, but not the tool kit that will make it work." (Mayor Dave Fried, "Mayors' suit isn't just about saving the trees. It's about protecting our communities," PolitickerNJ.com, 9/19/2010)

**Gloucester Township Mayor David Mayer:**

"Mayer, a former legislator, supports a tool kit and said civil-service rules have grown so bureaucratic that they handcuff mayors from making decisions even if they would be more efficient." (Maya Rao, "N.J. towns work on budgets with scant guidance," Inquirer, 10/13/2010)

**Evesham Mayor Randy Brown:**

"...said that he was disappointed at how slowly the Legislature had addressed the tool kit..." "I really hope politics doesn't get in the middle of this because at the end of the day, the only people that are going to hurt are going to be the taxpayers," he said." (Maya Rao, "N.J. towns work on budgets with scant guidance," Inquirer, 10/13/2010)

**Woodbine Mayor William Pikolycky:**

"It's very important, now that legislators passed the cap, to see the tool kit go through as soon as possible..." (Juliet Fletcher, "Few tools used from Gov. Christie's budget kit; only one — a cap on tax increases — has been enacted," Press of Atlantic City, 9/21/2010)

**West Cape May Mayor Pamela Kaithern:**

"Towns such as ours who run on bare bones and work with minimal staff, the tools aren't there for us to continue to operate as we do without some help from the state... Kaithern said without additional tools from the state, residents will see a cutback in services and funding for new projects will not be available." (Jack Fichter, "Local Mayors Ask Christie: 'Where's the Toolkit?'," Cape May County Herald, 8/30/2010)

**Lower Township Mayor Michael Beck:**

"Beck told the Herald the result of no toolkit would be devastating to the budgets of all towns in the county. He said many towns supported the 2 percent cap with the provision the state would provide something that would allow towns to live within the new cap." (Jack Fichter, "Local Mayors Ask Christie: 'Where's the Toolkit?'," Cape May County Herald, 8/30/2010)

**Millburn Mayor Thomas McDermott & Township Administrator Tim Gordon:**

"Mayor Thomas McDermott said it's important for those tools to be approved in order to make everything work properly. Without the tools and another source of revenue, it could mean cuts in service across the state, Township Administrator Tim Gordon said. "I'm not sure when, but at some point people would see a reduction in services," he said. Both McDermott and Gordon said capping arbitrators awards on union contract increases is the key item of Christie's "toolkit" that should be approved by state officials. "The cap on arbitrators awards is very important," McDermott said. "(Uncapped award increases is) what can kill us." Gordon said municipal government is labor-intensive. It means services cannot be automated and people need to perform those jobs like police, fire, trash collection and others. "If we have the cap (on arbitrators awards), it will help," he said. "If they don't pass it and we have the 2 percent cap (on property tax increases) there will be more chaos." (Jennifer Connic, "Township Officials Say Toolkit Needed to Make Tax Cap Work," Millburn-Short Hills Patch, 7/14/2010)

**Westfield Mayor Andy Skibitsky:**

"Skibitsky said the results in the report are an endorsement to the property tax toolkit pending in the state legislature. The toolkit includes proposals for arbitration reform and shared services. Skibitsky and the Town Council formally endorsed the toolkit earlier this summer. "It shows the importance that we get the toolkit passed," Skibitsky said of the report." (John Celock, "Moody's Downgrades Town Bond Rating," Westfield Patch, 8/31/2010)

**North Bergen Township Administrator:**

"Pianese said Christie's "tool kit," 33 bills that are intended to help local governments cut costs, will be needed to conform with the new cap law." (Tricia Tirella, "NB working on budget woes," Hudson Reporter, 7/11/2010)

**Lawrence Township Municipal Manager Richard Krawczun:**

"Civil service reform also calls for capping the sick leave payout when an employee retires, he said. The toolkit proposes capping the sick leave payout at \$15,000... Without those reforms, the municipality will be placed in a position where residents will not only be concerned about the level of taxation, they will be concerned about reductions in services that would be needed without the relief that comes in the municipal toolkit, he said. If the savings cannot be obtained, municipal officials will have to make some "hard choices about reducing services," he said, adding that the township must maintain a certain level of police and public works services, purchase new technology and train employees. "Without the toolkit, it will accelerate and exacerbate the problem," Mr. Krawczun said." (Lea Kahn, "LAWRENCE: Council supports Christie 'tool kit,'" The Lawrence Ledger, 9/29/2010)

**West Milford Township Council:**

"The Township of West Milford Council on Aug. 18 adopted a resolution calling on the State Legislature...to enact property tax reform with through the "Municipal Toolkit"...The resolution calls for immediate passage of the "Toolkit" reforms and mandates relief, including, but not limited to, interest arbitration reform, civil service reforms, public employee pension and benefits, disciplinary procedures, school and special district elections, reforms to the Fair Housing Act and the Council on Affordable Housing and mandates relief." (Ann Genader, "Council passes governor's toolkit resolution," Aim West Milford, 9/27/2010)

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**Press Contact:**  
Michael Drewniak  
Kevin Roberts  
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000