



## Christie Ethics Reform Plan: Creating a New Climate that Demands Accountability and Results

Governor Christie has put forward a series of rigorous ethics reform measures that are in step with his commitment to change the culture of government in New Jersey and demand accountability to better serve the people.

These comprehensive reforms are tough, but fair and guided by common sense, which is what the people of New Jersey expect. The proposed measures include:

- **A New, Detailed Annual Financial Disclosure Statement From Both The Executive And Legislative Branches.** Governor Christie issued a conditional veto of, and called upon the legislature to pass, A-2768. The conditionally vetoed bill would set in statute a May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for the filing of financial disclosure statements (FDS) and sets the filing requirements of an FDS in law – making them permanent. The Governor's conditional veto also requires, for the very first time, members of the legislators and their senior staff to file the same FDS as the executive branch.

Governor Christie's conditional veto of A-2768 increases transparency by expanding the statutory requirements of financial disclosures to more closely track federal guidelines. Changes include:

- Expanded value classes for asset and income disclosure (a maximum category of 50M instead of the current 500K);
  - Inclusion of members of the Legislature and the Legislature's professional staff;
  - Filers required to provide detailed disclosure of all assets, real property, and contractual arrangements with former and future employers;
  - Required disclosure of all parties for whom compensation was received to promote, oppose or prepare legislation; and,
  - Codification of all disclosure requirements listed on current state FDS forms as well as certain information presently required to be disclosed on federal disclosure forms (e.g. expanded value classes ranging up to \$50,000,000.00)
- **A Full Ban On Dual Office Holding That Ends Grandfathering.** Governor Christie's plan eliminates dual office holding, and institutes a specific end to the grandfathering period at the conclusion of 2010-2011 Legislature rather than the current open ended grandfathering period that permits dual office holding to persist.
  - **A Ban On Dual Employment For All State, County And Local Officials And Employees.** All employees would be prohibited from drawing a salary at a 2<sup>nd</sup> government position - state, county or local.
  - **An Effective Conflict Of Interest Standard For Legislators.** Governor Christie's plan redefines conflict of interest disclosures for Legislators to require mandatory recusal and strict disclosure of legislative conflicts of interest. This puts an end to self-evaluation of whether a Member of the Legislature "feels" there is a conflict.

- **Real Penalties For Those Who Violate The Public's Trust.** Governor Christie's plan puts in place real consequences for public officials who break the law:
  - Requiring Pension Forfeiture For Public Officials Convicted Of Crimes That Involve Or Touch Upon The Public Office.
  - Requiring Forfeiture Of Campaign Funds For Officials Convicted Of A Crime For First Through Fourth Degree Offenses.
  - Ban On Use Of Campaign Funds For Criminal Defense Costs.
- **Comprehensive Legislation To Fix Pay-To-Play, Effectively Restrict "Wheeling" And Close Loopholes In Restrictions On The Awarding Of Government Contracts.** The Governor's plan includes sweeping legislation that will increase transparency and the integrity of the electoral process by fixing loopholes and shortcomings of current pay-to-play restrictions. Governor Christie's proposals will:
  - Restrict The Practice Of "Wheeling" by imposing contribution limitations on county and municipal committees for committee-to-committee contributions and committee contributions to out-of-county or out-of-municipality candidates.
  - Impose A Uniform Set Of Contract Award Standards on all levels of government and all branches of state government. Governor Christie's proposal would end the "fair and open contract" exception for businesses that make reportable campaign contributions at the legislative, county and municipal levels, yet are able to receive contract awards valued greater than \$17,500 with local governments – a practice that is not permitted at the state/gubernatorial level.
  - Close Pay-To-Play Loopholes by leveling the playing field with changes to law that would make labor unions subject to the same contribution requirements which apply to other entities doing business with the state.

As a complete package, Governor Christie's Ethics Reform plan will increase transparency in government, accountability to the public from elected officials and strengthen New Jersey's existing laws to ensure that the electoral process is conducted with integrity – a critical step in gaining and keeping the public's trust in their government.

Governor Christie has said from the beginning that we need to create a new climate in Trenton that fundamentally changes the way our government is perceived by both New Jerseyans and everyone outside New Jersey. He aggressively began this process in January 2010 by:

- Signing EO-15, directing a comprehensive review of all state authorities, boards and commissions and taking immediate action to reform abusive fiscal practices signed.
- Signing EO-7 which modifies prior Executive Orders implementing "pay-to-play" restrictions.
- Signing EO-8, which orders and directs the Department of the Treasury publish quarterly reports on all State expenditures, which they are already doing.
- Debuting YourMoney.NJ, an online government transparency center and increasing transparency of government priorities and performance with the online Governor's Performance Center.
- Calling for additional, critical reform measures to overhaul the Delaware River Port Authority and bring accountability to the hundreds of boards, commissions and authorities that form the until now invisible and unaccountable layers of government in New Jersey.