



Sick Of Waiting

Legislative Leaders' Failure To Take Action On Sick Leave And Civil Service Reforms Leave New Jersey Taxpayers Feeling Ill



[WATCH GOVERNOR CHRISTIE CALL ON LEGISLATURE TO ACT BACK IN FEBRUARY](#)

Sick Pay Reform

On December 9, 2010 Governor Christie Conditionally Vetoed Sick Pay Reform legislation in its current form and urged the legislature to act quickly on specific improvements to strengthen the legislation, better protect taxpayers and provide even greater budgetary relief to municipalities:

- Phase out the practice of distributing cash payouts for sick days for state, local government and school district employees.
- Suspend supplemental compensation for any employee under indictment for a crime that involves his or her public office, and mandate the forfeiture of any supplemental compensation if convicted.
- Require that sick days accrued prior to the effective date of this legislation be used before those days accrued after the effective date.
- Expand to all current employees at any point during their employment, not just new hires after the effective date of the bill in the twelve months before retirement, the requirement that a physician provide written verification for use of six or more consecutive sick days
- Require that vacation days accrued prior to the effective date of this legislation be used before those days accrued after the effective date.

Since then the legislature has failed to take any action on Sick Pay Reform, and appear content to pass the burdensome costs of the current wasteful system along to New Jersey property taxpayers.

The Legislature's Failure To Act On Sick Pay By The Numbers:

\$43 Million	Cost to New Jersey taxpayers in 2010 for Public Employee Sick Leave / Vacation Payouts.
\$825 Million	Accumulated sick and vacation payout liability for municipalities statewide.
\$3.25 Billion	Minimum cost to New Jersey taxpayers of the Democrats' proposed \$7,500 sick pay cap based on the current 434,017 state and local employees.
\$250	Average additional taxes for every property taxpayer in New Jersey.
343	Days of legislative inaction since Governor Christie issued Conditional Veto.

Civil Service Reform

Rather than pursue real reform to provide local officials with another tool to restrain spending, the legislature passed a special interest approved 'reform' bill that would do nothing to constrain property taxes. Governor Christie conditionally vetoed the bill and called on the legislature to give municipalities the tools they need to control labor costs:

- Towns, counties and school districts must be given the ability to opt-out of the civil service system.
 - Local governments should not be stuck in a system that they adopted decades ago, even if they find their continued participation in civil service to be unnecessarily burdensome and costly.
- Reform must provide municipalities with greater flexibility to manage their workforces in order to remove barriers to sharing services.
 - Even the legislature's much-touted Local Unit Alignment, Reorganization and Consolidation Commission determined that civil service seniority-protection rules are among the most significant barriers to shared services between municipalities.
- Local governments need the ability to unilaterally institute temporary layoffs.
 - Temporary layoffs are an essential tool for local governments to stabilize their budgets and prevent significant permanent layoffs.

In the **287 days** since Governor Christie's Conditional Veto, the legislature has failed to take any action to address what mayors across New Jersey say they need to constrain property taxes.

Mayors Stephen Acropolis (R-Brick), Richard Gerbounka (I-Linden), Andrew Sarclette (D-Maurice River) and Dawn Zimmer (D-Hoboken): *"These reforms actually get at the root of the problem — uncontrolled costs. Labor costs continue to rise year after year due to an out-of-balance collective bargaining system that fails to consider the impact of a decision on property taxes. When we attempt to engage in cost-saving arrangements through labor changes or shared services, we find a dead end due to out-of-date and overly burdensome civil service rules. Consider this: nearly three of every four dollars in a municipal or county budget is used for labor and personnel costs. A broken, antiquated system leaves us with no recourse to stem these rising costs."* ("Cap 2.5' Reforms Would Get At The Root Of New Jersey's Property Tax Woes," [Star-Ledger](#), 6/15/10)