

# Governor Christie: I'm Not Willing To Let Gridlock And Politics Stop Our Progress

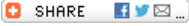
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Governor Christie: I'm Not Willing To Let Gridlock And Politics St...

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**Transcript:**

**Governor Christie:** Pensions and health benefits already present the largest burden on our budget. Increased pension, employee health benefits, and debt service together account for an astounding 95% of the growth of this budget. You heard correctly, 95%. On pensions, we are proposing to make a \$1.9 billion contribution to the State's pension funds. This is \$550 million more than last year, and in fact, it's the largest contribution in New Jersey history. Our overall commitment to the State pension system is bigger than any previous administration. With this payment, my administration will have made more than \$6.2 billion in pension payments. That is nearly double the total of the last five Governors combined. Now, the problem is a broken system created by unsustainable giveaways given by politicians to their special interests patrons. The reality is that continuing to bury our heads in the sand only grows the problem and diminishes those with the courage to take on this challenge. I know you have the courage to make hard choices. I know you do because we've made them together in the past. For our children and grandchildren, we simply cannot move in the wrong-headed and backwards direction of locking in platinum-plated benefits into the constitution, at the expense of hardworking, taxpaying families of our State. Now at the same time, I'm not willing to let gridlock and politics stop our progress on this issue. In order for the State to be able to afford this pension payment and protect valuable priorities for the rest of our citizens, this budget calls for \$250 million in savings from public employee and retiree health costs. Through reasonable reforms such as requiring the use of generic drugs when available, modest increases in co-pays to discourage unnecessary emergency room visits, and establishing new delivery methods for primary care services, we can continue to provide quality care, but with important savings. Absent any reforms – get ready for this. The State costs for government worker and retiree health insurance would increase this year by \$487 million. That's the increase. \$487 million. And it is a comparable rate moving forward if you lock in these benefits. We simply cannot afford this. Let me be clear, none of you can afford this type of spiraling growth, no matter who stands behind this podium. ###

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