

Governor Christie: We Need A New Jersey Renewal And An American Renewal

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Excerpts from Governor Chris Christie's 2015 State of the State Address

"We are a nation beset by anxiety. It is understandable. Economic growth is low by post-war recovery standards. America's leadership in the world is called into question because of a pattern of indecision and inconsistency.

"During this time of uncertainty it seems our leaders in Washington would rather stoke division for their own political gain. And this culture of divisiveness and distrust has seeped into our communities and our neighborhoods.

"As I traveled the country over the last year, this anxiety was the most palpable emotion I saw and felt. I saw it on the streets of Chicago and felt it in the suburbs of Maryland. I heard it from farmers in Kansas and from teachers in Colorado. I felt it from veterans in Maine and from workers in Arkansas.

"But the wisest words came from an 82 year old woman in Florida. She grabbed my hand and asked me a simple, but powerful question: "What's happened to our country? We used to control events. Now events control us."

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"Let me be clear.

"We need to address this anxiety head on.

"We need to renew the spirit and the hopes of our state, our country and our people.

"A renewal of our commitment to the hard-working families who are the backbone of our state.

"A renewal of our commitment to the simple belief that our people deserve better than a bloated national government that imposes costs on our states which suffocate our people.

"A renewal of our commitment to the ideal -- and the hard work to make it happen --that New Jersey's best days can lie ahead.

"That we don't have to accept anything less.

"A renewal of our commitment to the belief that New Jersey and its people deserve better from us, those they have chosen to lead.

"We need a New Jersey renewal and an American renewal.

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"We may argue from time to time over the best means to get things done. That's the nature of public debate and I will always be willing to engage in it with you.

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"But our goal, together, should be to make sure that New Jersey remains one place where a better life is possible -- for us, for our children, and for their children -- through determination, hard work, and a commitment to the greater good.

"There is no better example of what we can achieve if we put aside party and pettiness than the results we are seeing in Camden.

"A city devoid of hope five years ago...A city riddled with violent crime five years ago...A city beset by a corrupt and ineffective government five years ago ... A school system that failed Camden's families almost every day just five short years ago.

"Then an outstanding leader stepped forward for mayor.

"A county government stepped in to lead boldly.

"And I asked all of you to support a new vision for Camden.

"Did we just throw money at the problem as has been done before? No. We demanded partnership and accountability and we are getting results.

"Through the economic opportunity act of 2013 a city that has suffered from divestment for decades is now seeing a new tomorrow.

"\$600 million dollars of private investment in Camden in the last year alone.

"In a city suffering from epidemic crime, we acted boldly.

"We terminated the city police department and, partnering with the county, put a new metro division on the streets with 400 officers for the same price we were paying for 260.

"The results?

"Murder down 51%. Firearm assaults down by 1/3. All violent crime down 22%. Police are working with neighborhood groups to bring calm and peace across the city.

"In Camden schools, we partnered with the local groups to bring new leadership to the schools and a renewed accountability to the classroom.

"The Urban Hope Act has expanded opportunity and new schools are being built once again in Camden in a public/private partnership.

"Hope and optimism are up --fear of failure is down.

"In Camden's downtown, a new medical school and new investment by Rutgers University is helping to bring bright new citizens to Camden's neighborhoods.

"No one could have believed it was possible five years ago.

"Today, it is happening because we put action and results ahead of politics, partisanship and a shared failed history."

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