

New Jersey's Bipartisan Comeback

Monday, July 02, 2012 Tags: [Taxes](#)

Governor Christie Calls On The Legislature To Pass Tax Relief, Building On Two And A Half Years Of Bold, Bipartisan Reform

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"A bipartisan tax cut plan is on all of your desks right now. Let's show our state we can work together and finish the job before we leave for this holiday weekend."

– Governor Chris Christie, Remarks To Special Session Of The Legislature, July 2, 2012

Tenure Reform:

Sweeping, Bipartisan Tenure Reform Unanimously Approved By The Legislature And Sent To Governor

Christie: Governor Christie and legislative leaders have worked to negotiate sweeping reform to the nation's oldest teacher tenure law. By measuring teacher effectiveness and then giving tenure to those with strong evaluations, and taking it away from those whose ratings are unacceptably weak, New Jersey is working to deliver on the promise of a quality education for every child in New Jersey.

Reorganizing Higher Education Institutions:

An Overdue Reorganization of Higher Education in New Jersey: Governor Christie and bipartisan leaders have come together to craft a commonsense and long-overdue proposal to reorganize and strengthen New Jersey's higher education system. This reform – decades in the making, but never previously accomplished – will promote long-term, sustainable economic growth and high academic achievement by creating three hubs of higher education excellence in the north, central, and southern parts of the state.

Expanded Drug Court:

Expanding The Drug Court Program For Non-Violent Drug Offenders: Governor Christie firmly believes that no life is disposable and the Fiscal Year 2013 budget provides \$2.5 million for an expansion of the drug court program for non-violent drug offenders, because everyone deserves a second chance.

Pension Benefits Reform:

Governor Christie Signed Landmark Bipartisan Pension and Health Benefit Reform Legislation: Governor Chris Christie signed into law landmark pension and health benefit reform in June 2011, marking months of hard work, negotiation, compromise and ultimately bipartisan support. The fundamental reforms shake up New Jersey's out-of-date, antiquated and increasingly expensive pension and health benefit systems and bring to an end years of broken promises and fiscal mismanagement by securing the long-term solvency of the pension and benefit systems. At the same time, critical savings for state and local governments are achieved – pension reform alone will provide savings to New Jersey taxpayers of over \$120 billion over the next 30 years, and an additional \$3.1 billion over the next 10 years from health benefits reform.

Governor Chris Christie, Senate President Stephen Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver, Senate Minority Leader Thomas Kean, Jr. and Assembly Minority Leader Alex DeCroce:

"After months of serious discussions, we are pleased to announce that we have reached agreement on legislation to reform our public pension and health benefits systems in New Jersey. ...We all fully support this legislation and will work together to assure its passage by both houses of the Legislature and enactment into law...." ("Statement from Governor Chris Christie and the Legislative Leadership," Press Release, 6/15/11)

New Jersey State League of Municipalities:

"The League applauds the bipartisan efforts of those who can craft such legislation which would accomplish this while protecting our current retirees and grandfathering those eligible for retirement by not breaking our commitment to them. The League commends Speaker Sheila Oliver, Senate President Sweeney and Governor Chris Christie for their leadership championing these bipartisan reforms while achieving an important balance for all the major stakeholders." (New Jersey State League of Municipalities, "League Supports Progress on Pension and Health Reform," Press Release, 6/20/11)

New York Post:

"New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie pulled off something of a miracle this week -- pushing through a package of pension and benefits cuts for government employees that will save the state \$130 billion over the next 30 years. And he did it as the Republican governor of a blue state where Democrats run the House and Senate -- and where unions have long run the Dems. The changes are remarkable." (Editorial, "Christie wins again," *New York Post*, 6/25/11)

The Newark Star-Ledger:

"Compromise. Tackling A Critical Issue...The Deal Saves Money. Billions. And We Applaud It" (Editorial, "Benefits deal puts state on the right track," *Star-Ledger*, 6/17/11)

Cap 2.0:

Ensured Lasting Property Tax Relief with 2% Cap: In July 2010, Governor Christie signed into law a 2% hard cap on property taxes, marking the first significant step toward bringing lasting property tax reform to New Jersey.

Newark Mayor Cory Booker:

"Whether you're leaders in the Senate like Sweeney or the Governor, everybody knows that. It's about how to figure out a path to get there and where Chris Christie is standing up and saying the right things, I'm going to stand with him." (MSNBC's "Morning Joe," 6/28/10)

The Gloucester County Times:

"Certainly, the governor and the Senate president deserve credit for showing that all is not lost in terms of their ability to play well together." (Editorial, "Big cheeses in accord on cap," *Gloucester County Times*, 7/7/10)

Arbitration Reform:

Signed Critical Tool Kit Measure for Local Governments with Interest Arbitration Reform: Working together with Senate and Assembly Leadership, Governor Christie signed into law transformational, long-overdue interest arbitration reform that provides municipalities with the help they need to keep property taxes down for New Jerseyans.

Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney (D):

"This is truly historic reform for New Jersey. ...And I thank the Governor for not only listening, but realizing that through compromise we could produce better legislation and stronger reform than any of us could have come up with on our own. Each of us shared the same goal: to revolutionize the system of binding arbitration, and for the first time, to ensure taxpayers stand on a level playing field with the police and fire unions. By putting aside partisanship, we did it." ("Sweeney: Landmark Arbitration Deal Good for Taxpayers, Towns And Public Employees," Press Release, 12/9/10)

Assembly Speaker Sheila Y. Oliver (D):

"This is a reasonable and commonsense plan that takes a big step toward long-term property tax reform. ...I'd like to thank everyone involved, including Senate President Sweeney and Gov. Christie, for their hard work and cooperation in getting this done." ("Speaker Oliver on Arbitration Agreement," Press Release, 12/9/10)

Assembly Budget Chairman Lou Greenwald (D):

"This legislation is exactly what New Jersey has needed..." ("Greenwald & Quigley Bill Revising Arbitration System to Bring Long-Term Property Tax Reform Advanced By Assembly Panel," Press Release, 12/9/10)

Atlantic City Revitalization:

Set Stage For Atlantic City's Economic Revitalization: Governor Chris Christie signed into law sweeping legislation to enact his reform plans to revitalize the ailing gaming and tourism industries in Atlantic City, and set the region on a new course for economic growth, job creation and prosperity.

Press of Atlantic City:

"A year ago today, Gov. Chris Christie stood on the Atlantic City Boardwalk and announced his plan to remake the resort - and to put the state in charge of a new Tourism District. So how's it going? Remarkably well, especially considering that the new law creating the Tourism District and putting the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority in charge of it was not approved by the Legislature and signed by the governor until Feb. 1. ...We were wary of the governor's plan. It was big, bold and all-inclusive. It can't work, we said to ourselves. Atlantic City is often where grand dreams die. But it *is* working. (Editorial, "Atlantic City One Year Later / Making Progress," *Press of Atlantic City*, 7/21/11)

On Barnegat Bay And The Environment:

Accelerated Work To Improve New Jersey's Environment And Expand Green Technologies: In December 2010, Governor Christie unveiled a comprehensive plan of action to address the short and long term ecological health of Barnegat Bay and to deal with the cooling system at the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant which has threatened the surrounding fish population. By January 2011, he signed legislation that targeted nutrient runoff from lawn and landscape fertilizers, soil restoration, and storm water basin repairs.

Jeff Tittel, Director Of The New Jersey Sierra Club:

"Today is a victory for the environment. ...Without these bills, especially the fertilizer bill, the Bay will die. ...These three bills are three of the most important first steps..." (Rob Spahr, "Christie Signs Barnegat Bay Legislation In Ocean County," *Press of Atlantic City*, 1/5/11)

Dena Mottola Jaborska, Executive Director Of Environment New Jersey:

"Gov. Christie and the Legislature deserve kudos for taking the first steps to deliver for the Shore." ("Tide Starts To Turn: Gov. Christie Takes First Step For The Shore With 3 Bills," Press Release, 1/5/11)

Rick Bushnell Of Reclam The Bay, The Volunteer Shellfish Restoration And Public Education Group:

"I think this is the first time I've seen recognition that it's a multifaceted problem...It seemed in the past politicians always seized on the environmental cause du jour. This is the first time that's all come together." (Kirk Moore, "N.J. Begins Barnegat Bay Rescue," *Asbury Park Press*, 1/5/11)

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