

Governor Christie: The Shortest Road To Relapse Is No Job, Employers Must Change

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Transcript:

Michael: When I do happen to get a job, they'll sign you up, do a background check, and I get fired. If they don't ask, they say, I lied or said nothing, whatever the case maybe, but I try to be honest with everybody. Now, through these temp agencies, they've been doing the same thing too. Leave your name and social security number, and we'll get back to you. That was like three years ago, and I'm still waiting for them to get back to me. I go to different places, I mean I try everything. I mean I walk in, these guys will tell you, I walked here from Hooper Avenue today to make sure I was here to see you, then I went the wrong way, but I'm here. You know, I try to be a nice humble person, and I've also done a lot of bad decision making. I'm also in drug court. I got my probation officer pushing on me to make sure I get job. I said, you got to understand what I'm going through every day, because I look for work and when I'm done doing that, I still look for work. When I'm done with that, I'm still looking for work. There's nothing opening up for me, and I think it's more or less where a lot of these places they are not insured or they don't have any type of you know things to hire ex-offenders to let us go in and work for them. The temp agencies will do so much, you know, like I said, there's a lot of things that I can do and I was hoping that maybe coming here today you might have the opportunity to speak to companies, not temp agencies but companies. You know have us get the chance to be able to work, not everybody's going to make it –

Governor Christie: Yup.

Michael: But guys like me that have important things they have a son to take care of at home, I'm actually staying at the Oxford House right now and I'm in debt with them, because I'm not working. You know what I mean?

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Governor Christie: Yup.

Michael: Certain times there's cutoffs and they don't want to hear nothing, and then I'll be stuck and then my pride gets in the way and I'm working on that today –

Governor Christie: Sure.

Michael: You know, I don't want to do nothing wrong no more, I'm not trying to go back inside, I can do that all day long when I had to, but it's not a nice place. The same way the drugs are out here they're in there, too.

Governor Christie: Yup.

Michael: You know I sat in a cubicle for 15 months while this guy's shooting up, this guy's sniffing dope, this guy's taking Suboxones, and I'm the only guy that's in there going to work every day doing what I'm supposed to do. So I said when I get out there, which was the worst time I ever did in my life this past time right here because I couldn't talk to my son, I couldn't see my son, and when I came out to see him he's like happier than a pig in poo. He has me every day, I'm there, but now I can't do the dad things like I should do. I'm not taking him out and doing things with him, but again the work is in the way, because I can't work. You know, I work one day to pay last week in this place that I'm staying in cutting trees down – I don't care what it is, you know, I'll do whatever it is to get done, I'm going to do it. I've done security before, I've done so many different jobs, but I'm not getting a chance to stay somewhere. I've delivered sheet rock eight-and-a-half miles down the road to a temp agency, the original owner told me I got to let you go, because he said I know you have a record, I background checked you. I said, I understand, and I left. I turned around and opened up a 7Eleven by myself and the guys that had the money, not me, they had the money, opened it up, I ran it, third shift, 9:00 at night until 7:00 in the morning. I never had a problem, he fired people during the day first and second shift in the morning for stealing, Mike never did nothing. He said I lied on the application, I said it never asked me if I had a record on the application. So when he brought me in there to show me where it said it and it never said it. Well are you saying I can keep the job now that I'm doing great and he said no I still got to let you go. So you know what I mean, I keep going around in big complete circles so like I said, I'm hoping if not you or maybe someone can outreach to the companies that will give us the chance to work and then I don't have to worry about getting fired from here, going to there and I'll just be set.

Governor Christie: Yep, that is one of the things that I talked about yesterday that I'm calling together all the major executives of the big companies in the State, the legal community, all the human resources people who make these decisions. We're going to do that the first week of March and say to them, listen, we've got to change the way you operate with regard to these folks, because it is just a never ending circle for you. You want to do the right thing, and no one is giving you the chance to do the right thing. You want to prove that you got your life back in order, and you want to take care of your child. You want to take care of yourself, and people aren't giving you the chance to do it. And we have to have more employers out there that are willing to have the chance so I'm going to use my famous gentle persuasion on them in March and say to them, I want you to be part of this. You know, everybody tells me when I talk to them about this privately that they, yup, that makes sense, governor. Well now I need them to show it publicly. It is not enough to say it to me privately to get a smile out of me and be my friend. You've got to try to do some things publically now. So now that's, I talked about that yesterday in the speech too that, I said that the shortest road to relapse is no job. The shortest road to relapse is no job. And because it plays into all of what you were saying before, Deb, about feelings of self-worth and all the rest of it and you talked about your ego and all the rest. Well, we all have it. We all have it. Whether you are in the throes of the disease or whether you are not. We all have this sense of well my own sense worth connected to what you do every day. How do you make a living? How do you support yourself? How do you support your family? So, we are going to do that the first week of March, and we are taking time to plan it the right way and get as many people there as we possibly can and then I'm going to put the arm on them. So, it's really important to be done, and it's an indispensable part of this whole thing. If you only deal with parts of it, and this is what we have been doing up until now, is only dealing with certain parts of it. You can fix that part but it doesn't fix the person. Because another problem comes up that leads you back down a bad road. See, I don't want you to go back in again either. It costs me money when you're in. Right? I have got to pay for you in there. So that costs me money, and it's not a good place for you to be anyway and it's awful for your son and it's awful for you. So, we're going to work on that.

Michael: I appreciate that.

Governor Christie: Thank you for walking over here. I appreciate that.

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