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What They Are Saying...Opinion Makers, Education Leaders, & Businesses Leaders Agree:

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“...in just a year, the governor has gotten changes enacted and started discussions on some groundbreaking, needed reforms that never would have happened in the past.”

Opinion Makers...

Courier-Post, “Our governor has it right...”

“Our governor has it right in putting the entire focus for closing the budget deficit on reduced government spending rather than increased government revenue through higher taxes, as Illinois has opted for [with a 66 percent income tax increase].” (“Cuts are preferable to more tax hikes,” *Courier-Post*, 1/113/2011)

The Record, “We agree” that Governor Christie’s fight for needed reforms “is important”:

“The governor’s dogged determination to achieve his goals is a laudable quality in a chief executive. He said: “I am fighting this fight because we have to be truthful about what we can’t afford — whether it is health and pension benefits which are out of line with the rest of the country, or a tunnel which we can’t pay for.” That was neither the first nor, we suspect, will it be the last time Christie summons the image of “fighter”— for the people, or at least the non-unionized ones — in order to defend his actions as governor. He also invoked it later in the speech, stating that if he has been tough and combative in the past several months, “it is because the fight is important.” We agree the fight is important.” (“State of Christie,” *The Record*, 1/12/2011)

Courier-Post, “...the governor is right to demand a reversal of the decades-old trend in Trenton of allowing government to expand, expand, expand”:

“Overall, the governor is right to demand a reversal of the decades-old trend in Trenton of allowing government to expand, expand, expand. Because the economy is what it is now, because tax revenues are down by billions of dollars and the state constitution requires a balanced budget, the state must either raise state taxes (which Christie has wisely vowed not to do) or cut some programs and kill some positions to reduce spending. ... When Christie says he wants to look at raising the retirement age for public workers and maybe scaling back or eliminating cost-of-living benefits increases, it may not be music to retirees’ ears, but it is an acknowledgment of the reality that doing nothing and maintaining all current benefits only means the overtapped pension fund will run dry in a few years. ... Christie’s third reform plank for 2011 is education. On this front, he laid out a number goals, many of which will spark contentious battles. ... Tenure does give the minority of bad teachers we have the undeserved protection of a job for life, so we think reform is appropriate. So too, we agree with Christie that, when districts must lay off staff, administrators and school boards shouldn’t have to go strictly on seniority but should be able to keep those who shine the brightest in the classroom and are the most valuable and let go of those whose departure would have less of an impact. ... On school choice, the governor is dead on. He said it is “obscene” to lock poor New Jersey children into failing neighborhood schools that are chronically unsafe and unsuccessful. ... Both the vouchers and the charters will help rescue kids who deserve to be rescued, so we stand behind the governor fully on these fights. ... we won’t argue that, in just a year, the governor has gotten changes enacted and started discussions on some groundbreaking, needed reforms that never would have happened in the past. Tuesday, he laid out more proposals that, for New Jersey at least, are radical, but very much needed. We’re eager to see how the fight over these ideas plays out in the months to come.” (“Christie has the right goals in mind,” *Courier-Post*, 1/12/2011)

Asbury Park Press, “Christie ... has reversed the pattern of increased spending and taxing and upended the ‘culture of burying problems instead of facing them’”:

“So, how’s the state of the State of New Jersey? It’s “coming back,” Gov. Chris Christie told the Legislature during his first State of the State address in Trenton on Tuesday. ... For sure, Christie, as he claimed, has reversed the pattern of increased spending and taxing and upended the “culture of burying problems instead of facing them.” And clearly, the fiscal climate has changed in Trenton, mostly for the better — and mostly out of dire necessity. ... We support most of what the governor has been trying to do. (“Miles to go on road back,” *Asbury Park Press*, 1/11/2011)

Daily Journal, “Real change is needed...”:

“[Gov. Christie] thanked Democratic legislative leaders for working with him to implement a 2 percent hard cap on property taxes and a 2 percent cap on certain arbitration awards... That spirit of cooperation and compromise will have to continue through this year and beyond if Christie has any hope of pushing through his ambitious agenda, which includes reforming the schools, fixing the state’s pension and health benefits systems, rolling back taxes on businesses and individuals, and maintaining fiscal discipline as the state faces, once again, a multibillion-dollar budget deficit. ... Real

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change is needed..." ("Cooperative attitude must prevail in N.J.," Daily Journal, 1/13/2011)

The Times of Trenton, "Any observer, no matter what his or her political stripe, would have to agree that the governor's first year in office has been extraordinary":

"Any observer, no matter what his or her political stripe, would have to agree that the governor's first year in office has been extraordinary. ... [The governor's proposed pension reforms] are steps in the right direction, but only the beginning of the enormous task of making sure the pension benefits guaranteed to public workers are in fact there when they retire." ("Recapping," Times of Trenton, 1/13/2011)

The Gloucester County Times, "Christie's vow one year ago to turn New Jersey upside down largely holds up to scrutiny":

"How can anyone disagree with the general course that Gov. Chris Christie laid out for New Jersey's next 12 months? ... Christie also called for ongoing fiscal discipline in general. ... This trend must continue for the state's fiscal stability ... Generally, Christie's vow one year ago to turn New Jersey upside down largely holds up to scrutiny." ("Christie's goals on right course," The Gloucester County Times, 1/12/2011)

Philadelphia Inquirer, "Christie is also right in his assessment that money alone is not the answer to turn around bad schools":

"There are a number of good ideas in Gov. Christie's education reform agenda ... Christie is also right in his assessment that money alone is not the answer to turn around bad schools. New Jersey already spends about \$17,600 per student annually, which is among the highest rates in the nation." ("Poor lesson plan," Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial, 1/14/2011)

Tom Moran, The Star-Ledger, those who do not work with the governor "risk being seen as an obstacle to needed reform":

"Christie's course is clear. He will push for deeper reforms of health and pension benefits, without which the state is basically doomed. And he will push popular education reforms like tenure reform and merit pay ... His reforms are linked by one common theme, the public worker unions hate them. And so Democrats will have another tough choice: Go along with Christie, and anger the party's most powerful constituency during an election year; or fight him, and risk being seen as an obstacle to needed reform." (Tom Moran, "Moran: In new political strategies, Christie scales back hostile tone, N.J. Democrats vow to fight," The Star-Ledger, 1/12/2011)

Kevin Riordan, Philadelphia Inquirer, Governor Christie "correct", New Jersey's education system needs reforms:

"The fact that New Jersey has "100,000 kids like these trapped in 200 failing schools," he continued, is not only unacceptable, "it's obscene." Christie is right about that. He's also correct to point out that money alone is not the solution; we're already spending a fortune on public education in New Jersey." (Kevin Riordan, "Christie turns on the charm in State of the State speech," Philadelphia Inquirer, 1/12/2011)

Education Leaders...

Rutgers University President Richard McCormick, "I was pleased because he singled out higher education":

"... said the governor delivered a "powerful and visionary speech" that strongly highlighted the need for the state to invest in higher education, even in the midst of a continuing budget crunch. "I was pleased because he singled out higher education," McCormick said. "I do believe Gov. Christie understands economic development and educational opportunity in New Jersey rely on investments in colleges and universities, and I think he will do it." (Chris Megerian, "In first State of the State, Gov. Christie reiterates year one talking points," The Star-Ledger, 1/11/2011)

Business Leaders...

New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Senior Vice President Michael Egenton, "Christie's priorities are what businesses have been seeking":

"... said Christie's priorities are what businesses have been seeking. "The governor came into office promising to grow jobs and improve the economic climate of the state of New Jersey — and he has stuck to his guns," Egenton said." (Andrew Kitchenman, "Business leaders cheer Christie's State of State promises," NJBIZ, 1/11/2011)

New Jersey Business & Industry President Philip Kirschner, "I think it's important to the confidence of the business community that the governor is going to stay the course":

"... said Christie correctly focused on building on last year's budget to bring order to state finances. "Providing financial stability to state government will give businesses confidence that they will not face the ruinous tax increases that have plagued the state in the past," Kirschner said." (Andrew Kitchenman, "Business leaders cheer Christie's State of State promises," NJBIZ, 1/11/2011)


"... said Christie delivered a "powerful" address he said will boost the confidence of business owners ... "I think it's important to the confidence of the business community that the governor is going to stay the course." "A lot of the economy is confidence," Kirschner added." (Chris Megerian, "In first State of the State, Gov. Christie reiterates year one

talking points," The Star-Ledger, 1/11/2011)

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