



The State Of The State After 8 Years Of Governor Christie: NJ's Best Economy And Greater Opportunity for All

Creating Record Job Growth, After Prior Decade Of Economic Despair: Governor Chris Christie inherited a nearly 10-percent unemployment rate from the prior administration whose reckless tax-and-spend policies cost New Jerseyans 248,000 private-sector jobs and made it harder to dig out of the Great Recession. Today, New Jersey's economy has never been stronger. Over the past eight years:

- New Jersey's unemployment rate has been cut in half;
- 334,400 new private-sector jobs have been created, after eight consecutive years of private-sector job gains;
- For the third-straight year, a record number of new businesses (108,252) began operating in 2017; and
- 4.3 million New Jerseyans are now employed—more than ever before.

How did it happen? The Governor has delivered on his promise to make the tough state budgetary decisions that have led to job-creating tax cuts and economic growth reforms, such as:

- Enacting broad-based business tax cuts of 2011 allowed employers to pump an extra \$3 billion into job creation, instead of being taxed that much extra to fund a bloated state government;
- Initiating good-government reforms to create a more than \$2 billion unemployment fund surplus that triggered an additional \$400 million in job-creating tax cuts for New Jersey businesses and will protect the fund from being raided again, after it was stolen from and left for Governor Christie eight years ago with a \$2 billion debt;
- Passing the bipartisan Economic Opportunity Act of 2013, which helps make New Jersey attract and retain tens of thousands of private-sector jobs;
- Reducing by one-third regulations that kill New Jersey jobs and prevent businesses of all sizes from relocating and starting here, freeing up resources that put New Jerseyans back to work;
- Vetoing \$7.3 billion worth of job-killing proposals by legislators to increase taxes and spending on New Jersey residents, property owners and employers, including energy tax increases, corporate tax increases, and sundry unfunded legislation;
- Rebuilding New Jersey's small business community after Superstorm Sandy by increasing access to a greater network of loans and grants to a level that Moody's concluded is stronger and more resilient than before the storm, as evidenced by a record \$44 billion in tourism spending in 2017; and
- Initiating a record investment of \$32 billion over the next eight years to repair, replace, modernize, and grow New Jersey's roads, bridges, and mass transit system, while increasing jobs for private-sector laborers. The Governor's bipartisan solution to fix the broke Transportation Trust Fund also delivered the first broad-based tax relief for all New Jerseyans since 1994, including a greater Earned Income Tax Credit for the working poor, a sales tax cut for all consumers, lower state income tax on pension and retirement income for retirees, the elimination of the nation's most-oppressive death tax, and income tax relief for military veterans.

Handing Off A Growing State, Balanced Budget: Perhaps nothing can jeopardize job growth and opportunity like the volatility and unpredictable effects of a state budget in disarray. Eight years ago, Governor Christie inherited a budget with a \$2 billion deficit, riddled with gimmicks, and a projected \$11 billion deficit for the following year.

In stark contrast, last year, Governor Christie signed his eighth-consecutive balanced budget, with a surplus for the incoming administration, the largest-ever investment in both public education and a record payment into the pension system. More highlights through the Fiscal Year 2018 budget include:

- An unprecedented total contribution of \$8.8 billion to New Jersey's public pension system, representing 2.5-times more than the previous five governors who — especially with bipartisan pension and health benefit reforms done by Governor Christie to save \$120 billion over 30 years — could have prevented virtually all current liabilities if they had made similar payments;
- Nearly \$2 billion less in discretionary spending than 10 years ago, with one-shot revenues at 2.8 percent, down from 13.2 percent;
- A reduction of debt issued by state government to 2 percent per year or less, compared to more than 10 percent in the eight years prior to the Christie administration; and
- State aid to more efficient and accountable local governments, thanks to the bipartisan 2-percent cap on property taxes and the 2-percent cap on annual police and fire employee raises, which have cut average annual property tax increases to 1.98 percent in the past seven years, compared to the average annual increase in property taxes of 7 percent in each of the 10 years of Democrat reign prior to Governor Christie. The 2-percent caps have saved New Jersey property taxpayers \$18.2 billion.

Reclaiming Lives: Since the mid-1990s, Governor Christie has been a leading advocate in the fight against the disease of addiction, which has exploded in the midst of this nation's opioid crisis and is now killing 175 Americans per day, equivalent to suffering a 9/11 every two-and-a-half weeks.

In 2017, the Governor devoted more energy and resources and ever to stopping this scourge in New Jersey and beyond, enacting policies, programs, and services here that are national models, including:

- Enacting the nation's strongest limit of five-days for opioid prescriptions, which has already led to a 15-percent decrease in those prescriptions;
- Making Narcan available statewide, opening more treatment beds by obtaining a federal Medicaid waiver, and connecting more patients with more life-saving recovery coaches to prevent repeat overdoses;
- Converting Mid-State Correctional Facility into an in-patient drug treatment facility and providing drug court in every corner of the state to avoid recidivism and help people reenter society as productive citizens and family members;
- Growing New Jersey's Prescription Monitoring Program to now include 15 partner states who share information that prevents deadly doctor shopping and pill mills;
- Expanding Project Medicine Drop to 400 disposal locations, including every Walgreens, for people to rid their medicine cabinets of deadly pills that too often get in the hands of children and the vulnerable;
- Ending the toxic financial quid-pro-quo between pharmaceutical representatives and physicians, which has influenced prescribing habits, by placing strict limits on what doctors can collect; and
- Creating ReachNJ.gov and the associated 24/7 helpline, 1-844-ReachNJ, and increasing access with a \$50 million campaign that is reducing the stigma of addiction and instantly connecting suffering people and their families to addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery resources.

Making NJ Stronger After The Storm: Superstorm Sandy has changed New Jersey forever, especially residents impacted by the 365,000 homes that were significantly damaged or destroyed on Oct. 29, 2012, after which two-thirds of the state was without power and operational water treatment plants. Five years later, Governor Christie's New Jersey is well ahead of New York's recovery from the same natural disaster in history and is nearly fully recovered in half the time it took Mississippi and Louisiana to recover from Hurricane Katrina. The Christie administration's blueprint for recovery included:

- Creating and operating 97 individual new programs focused on housing, schools, insurance claims, small businesses, mental health and social services, local government services, energy restoration, food supply, and fuel supply;
- Facilitating the removal of over 8 million cubic yards of storm debris within 100 days of the storm at half the cost per cubic yard of New York State's \$100 per cubic yard;
- Helping 85 percent of families who applied for housing help to return to their pre-Sandy homes, distributing \$2 billion to those in need;
- Spending over \$100 million to buy homes at pre-storm values from those in flood-prone areas who did not want to return home, providing them a fresh start;
- Developing a \$1 billion coastal restoration project to prevent the Jersey Shore from suffering the devastating effects of another Sandy-type natural disaster;
- Building more than 3,100 new affordable housing units, with 2,600 under construction, and distributing \$350 million in aid for families to help pay mortgages, rent, and repair costs;
- Providing \$133 million in grants for municipalities to fund essential services without having to increase property taxes; and
- Reconstructing the destroyed, critically important Route 35 in Ocean County into a state-of-the-art standard of storm resilience and accessibility, hardening energy infrastructure with \$200 million for projects that, for instance, will keep hospitals and gas stations operational during storms, investing over \$500 million to make wastewater treatment centers more resilient, and administering \$1.25 billion for NJ TRANSIT resilience projects.

Ensuring Justice For All: Bipartisan reform led by Governor Christie has positioned New Jersey as having a top-ranked criminal justice system. The Christie administration worked tirelessly with bipartisan partners in the legislature to ensure a fairer, intelligent, politically balanced, and fully staffed judicial system by reforming bail policies and resolving the unlawful political imbalance and slew of empty court rooms left behind by the previous administration. Consider:

- Release from jail pending trial in New Jersey is no longer based upon how much money people have in the bank, but on the seriousness of the accusations, their criminal record, and public safety threat;
 - No longer can repeat violent offenders be released and terrify their victims or old neighborhood, because they have millions of dollars in cash from drug and gun deals.
 - By the same token, people will not have to stay in jail for a minor offense longer than they would have to serve if convicted, because their family doesn't have \$500 for bail.
- Many nonviolent crimes can now be expunged for youths in three years and adults in six years, resulting in the closing of two state prisons and a 17-percent decline in the county prison population, which are saving millions of dollars for taxpayers and helping more people return as productive members of society;
- Violent crime in New Jersey is down by 5.1 percent since the Christie administration's criminal justice system reforms and over 25 percent during its eight years;
- Today, there are more judges on the bench, 451, than ever in New Jersey's history, with just 11 seats available, alleviating costly and potentially dangerous judicial delays and case backlogs that had impacted people across New Jersey; and
- What was an imbalance of 31 more Democrat seats is now a virtual balance, with only five more Democrat seats, setting a standard for the next administration and legislature to uphold.