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Governor Christie: Treatment Is Impossible For Someone Who's Died

Wednesday, April 2, 2014

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Governor Christie: Treatment Is Impossible For Someone Who's ...


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_1Wpp8W79Hg

Transcript:

West Long Branch Police Chief Larry Mihlon: As a police officer, you never really think about that this is going to hit you at home. Well, April 13th of 2013, the Long Branch Police Department responded to a call of a 22-year old young man who had stopped breathing and had no pulse. That young man was in my house because it was my son. The reason why I put myself out here and I relate this story in public is that I think it's extremely important for people to realize that the heroin epidemic and the deadly nature of heroin doesn't care who you are. It doesn't care what your father does. It doesn't care whether there are good parents or bad parents. It doesn't care if you're a good kid or a bad kid. It just kills you. This rollout of Narcan, in my eyes, is another fantastic tool for law enforcement to do the other mission that law enforcement has and that is to save peoples' lives.

Governor Christie: The war on drugs has failed. Well intentioned, conceived out of hope and faith and the fact that it could work, but incarcerating people exclusively for drug-related problems, especially non-violent folks, has been an abject failure. We incarcerate them at the cost of \$49,000 a year here in the state of New Jersey. We don't give them treatment. Drugs are smuggled into our state prisons, despite our best efforts, and our county jails. And people go back out onto the streets after their release, still drug addicted and somehow we're surprised that they continue to commit crimes to support their addiction. The fact is, the only way to solve this problem, or even put a dent into it, is through treatment. Treatment is impossible for someone who's died. Simple statement, but true. And that's why today's initiative is part of the fabric we're trying to put together to try and deal with this problem in a more proactive way in our state. There will always be jail cells for violent sociopaths who may have drugs as part of their problem as well. And for those people who commit violent acts it will always be my firm belief that they deserve to be taken off the street. But for those who do not and whose crimes are non-violent and motivated by drug addiction, we need to try to save them.

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Because each and every person that we get into treatment has no guarantee of success, but what they have is a chance. An opportunity for themselves, first and foremost. And then that person can become, hopefully, a better mother or father. A better sister or brother. A better son or daughter. A better citizen in our state and our country, that will hopefully contribute once again to the economic and social fabric of our state. If we continue to do what we've done, we're guaranteed a failure. And so today is just another one of those steps that we're going to take to promote that philosophy. It is time to stop stigmatizing those who have fallen to an illness. An addiction. It's one that we should continue to work very hard to try to prevent them from starting in the first place. But most people start this through a mistake. A mistake of judgment. And who among us haven't made those? And so we need to not consider those people disposable because of the mistake they made. We need to reach our hand out and try to help them help themselves. And through programs like this and others that we've instituted over the last four years, we're attempting to do that. I spent seven years as the chief federal prosecutor in this state. I have absolutely no hesitation of putting the guilty in jail and putting them in jail for a long time, when they deserve it. But also, part of the responsibility we have as public officials is towards the greater social good. And the greater social good is not always served by jail time. And so we need to continue to talk about this issue out loud. I want to commend the Chief for his extraordinary candor in sharing with the public so personal and difficult. He's an example of what we need to be doing. Because the more we have people in every part of our society talking about how this illness has affected them, it takes more people out of the shadows where we can see them. And given how compassionate a state this is, once we see them, we're going to help them. And so to all the folks out here today who have had this touch their lives, we're trying to help. For those people here who are part of the treatment community, thank you for the hard work that you're doing to try to make a difference in peoples' lives. Those in the law enforcement community, thanks so much for coming onboard which is so consistent with your mission to protect and serve. This is consistent with that mission. And so in New Jersey, for as long as I have the privilege and honor of being Governor, we're going to continue to move in this direction, down this path. And I hope that all of you will be vocal cheerleaders for it because there are those who do not yet understand. I don't think they oppose it knowingly. I think they just don't understand it and they react reflexively. Our stories will to make them understand, as painful as it is sometimes to relate them. I think you sharing your experiences, where appropriate, will continue to destigmatize what we need to do to accomplish what we all want to accomplish, which is better lives for our children and grandchildren. So thank you all for being here today. I appreciate it. All the local officials who are here and participating, I thank Monmouth and Ocean County for being the pilot project here. I suspect that this is one that we'll be extending to the entire state very quickly based upon the results we see here. But, it's always tough to be the first. And so to the local officials and the law enforcement folks here in Monmouth and Ocean County, I thank you for your willingness to be out there and be first, allow us to learn from your experience. So for the sheriffs that are here, for all the elected officials who are here, thank you for your willingness to stand with us on this and do the job in the best way that we can. And I wish you all good luck and you have my pledge of continued support, both financially and through my voice. Appreciate it. Thank you all very much.

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