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Governor Chris Christie Strengthens and Improves Tool Kit Bill to Stop Sick and Vacation Benefit Abuse

• Thursday, December 9, 2010 • Tags: [Bill Action](#)

Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today issued a conditional veto of Senate Bill 2220, a tool kit bill and element of the Christie Reform Agenda, to strengthen and improve upon the bill and more effectively stop the abuse of sick and vacation benefits, or supplemental compensation. While the bill accomplishes a large part of Governor Christie's reform goals for these benefits, the Governor has identified provisions in the bill that can be improved upon to further assist strained local budgets and help meet the reality of Cap 2.0.

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“This bill represents a good-faith continuation of the public employee benefits reform I signed into law earlier this year that will serve as a critical cost-savings tool for municipalities and school boards that must live within our property tax cap. I applaud the bill sponsors and the legislature for taking action on this critical reform measure. By working together, as we have in the preceding days, we are showing New Jerseyans and the country that real change is possible when to come together to work on real, meaningful solutions, in the public’s best interest,” said Governor Christie. “The changes I’ve put forward for this legislation make common sense and important improvements to strengthen the bill’s provisions and more effectively curb the unreasonable and abusive public employee payouts that come at the public’s expense.”

Governor Christie urged the legislature to act quickly to adopt the substantive changes in the conditional veto, and continue building upon the progress that has been made on critical elements of the Christie Reform Agenda, including comprehensive reforms to the interest arbitration system announced today.

“In these difficult economic and budgetary times, New Jersey taxpayers can no longer be asked to foot the bill for a system that is rife with waste and abuse. Sick days provide time off for employees who are sick, and do not represent an additional form of compensation for employees who are fortunate enough to remain healthy. Whatever rationale once justified this type of abuse, the time has come for the practice to end,” added Governor Christie. “Those individuals who abuse the public trust must not be allowed to further exploit the system for their own enrichment. The changes identified by my Administration and addressed in this conditional veto go further to put an end to these practices. I urge the legislature to continue the important progress we’ve made in delivering real reform to the people of New Jersey by acting quickly to adopt these changes and providing an important element of the tool kit to local governments.”

Governor Christie’s Conditional Veto makes the following improvements to S-2220, to improve and strengthen the legislation, better protect taxpayers and provide even greater budgetary relief to municipalities:

- Strengthen the public trust by suspending supplemental compensation for any employee under indictment for a crime that involves or touches his or her public office, and mandate the forfeiture of any supplemental compensation if convicted;


- Phase out the practice of distributing cash payouts for sick days by prohibiting supplemental compensation for sick days that accumulate after the effective date of the legislation for all state, local government and school district employees;
- Require that sick days accrued prior to the effective date of this legislation be used before those days accrued after the effective date;
- Expand to all current employees at any point during their employment, not just hires after the effective date of the bill in the twelve months before retirement, the requirement that a physician provide written verification for use of six or more consecutive sick days; and
- Require that vacation days accrued prior to the effective date (those not subject to the one-year carry forward provision) of this legislation be used before those days accrued after the effective date (those subject to one-year carry forward restriction).

Governor Christie Conditionally Vetoes S2220

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