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## ICYMI: “Star-Ledger, liberals wrong on school funding”

Tuesday, July 05, 2016

Tags: [FairnessFormula](#)*In Case You Missed It***“Star-Ledger, liberals wrong on school funding”**

- Governor Chris Christie

### Star-Ledger, liberals wrong on school funding

Governor Chris Christie

Star-Ledger

For 6½ years, I have been able to effectively ignore the liberal, fact-twisting rantings of The Star-Ledger editorial board. But the stakes of this debate on property taxes and urban education are too great to ignore the newspaper's latest emotional screed against my Fairness Formula.

On property taxes, our residents pay the highest in the nation. Why? First, our school funding formula has allocated grossly disproportionate amounts to 31 School Development Authority districts for 30-plus years. Second, urban municipal governments spend disproportionately compared with most other local governments in the state. Third, union dominance of work rules costs taxpayers a fortune.

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The Star-Ledger complains that the SDA districts don't have the money in their property tax base to fund their schools. But let's look at the numbers. The average New Jersey town spends 52 percent of its property taxes on schools; the SDA districts just 26 percent. If the state blindly pays a disproportionate share of operating those schools, then why should SDA property tax payers feel any obligation to pay more? Yet, there is no mention from The Star-Ledger's editorial page about the failure to fairly fund these SDA schools with local property tax dollars.

Furthermore, the editorial page writers complain about higher property tax rates in SDA districts. However, they do not explain that one big reason those rates are so high is that the average amount of property taxes spent on municipal government in the SDA districts is 54 percent. In all other districts, the figure is 30 percent. The higher municipal spending in SDA districts is not just for police and fire costs, although those costs are higher than they should be. Those districts also grow bloated local governments and use them as a patronage mill. As a result, they choose to neglect funding their school systems because they get away with it.

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Liberals like the editorial board of The Star-Ledger continue to believe — 30 years of evidence to the contrary notwithstanding — that pouring money into a demonstrably failed system is an essential element to any salvation for our failed urban education system. They cite Newark charter schools' success sending Newark children to college. Yet they fail to explain how they do it at one-half to two-thirds the cost of the failed traditional public schools without the handcuffs put on them by the Democratic Legislature they endorse or the failed public educators they quote such as

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Newark Mayor Ras Baraka. Layoffs based on seniority rather than merit. A strangling tenure system that requires us to pay awful teachers in the SDA districts not to teach. And those are just two examples of the madness.

And on that charter school success? It is this administration that has focused charter growth on the SDA districts to give parents a choice. It is this administration that has nearly doubled the number of charter school seats to give those urban children a chance to reach their full potential. A real chance; not just more money thrown at failure to assuage liberal guilt. We are proud of that record of empowering poor families to choose schools for their children regardless of their income.

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As for that childish Star-Ledger "dare" that I promote the Fairness Formula in an SDA district, I say this: I have spent as much or more time in Newark and other cities discussing and debating issues that affect our urban centers and our citizens than any governor in recent history, including this past week in Paterson. I will continue to do so.

We have enacted economic incentives that have led to the economic growth we are seeing in our cities like Newark and Camden. We have enacted Renaissance schools to give parents even more choice. We have supported responsible local mayors including Camden's Dana Redd, Union City's Brian Stack and Cory Booker, former Newark mayor, with regular assistance during difficult times. We have increased the earned income tax credit for our working poor to record levels. We have ended a bail system that discriminated against the poor and we have increased the availability of drug rehabilitation and second chances through enhanced prisoner re-entry programs.

The "dare" has already been met by this administration. We have produced real results through bold action — not just inaccurate attacks based on failed liberal orthodoxy and tossed from safely behind a laptop. It must be comfortable never being held accountable for the failures of the very policies you advocate.

Full article [HERE](#).

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