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## Governor Christie Signs 7th Consecutive Budget Without Raising Taxes On New Jersey Families

Thursday, June 30, 2016

Tags: [Budget and Spending](#)



### *Continues Commitment To Fiscal Responsibility*

Through the use of his veto pen, Governor Christie today signed a seventh consecutive balanced budget that protects taxpayers and critical services through the responsible management of state resources while making the difficult choices to prioritize and fund the essential services on which New Jersey's residents rely.

For Fiscal Year 2017, Assembly and Senate Democrats once again presented an irresponsible spending plan that favors increasing expenditures for select programs without any meaningful and intellectual consideration for how the state will fund their proposals. But this year they have become uniquely reckless and deceptive, relying on phantom finances, irresponsible gimmicks and unrealistic assumptions to fund hundreds of millions of dollars of new spending.

- Their plan is based on impractical expectations that the State will collect **\$129 million** in additional revenues than projected in the Governor's revised May budget recommendations and **\$301 million** more than the May revenue projections prepared by their own Office of Legislative Services.

Additionally, the legislative majority wants to thoughtlessly spend down the State's surplus by \$160 million. Worse, however, is their shameless inclusion of a **\$250 million** savings in public employee and retiree health care costs which the Governor called for in February, but which the Legislature did absolutely nothing to embrace, negotiate or achieve. As it stands, the savings is penciled in on paper, but completely nonexistent.

Rather than enact responsible policies to continue New Jersey's economic recovery, Democrat leaders remain committed to an unsustainable path designed to protect special interests instead of hardworking New Jerseyans. The taxpayers of this State cannot afford it. Real leadership requires confronting problems and making difficult decisions. It is time to focus on the real issues, like school funding reform and providing real property tax relief. It is time to adopt a transportation spending plan that protects our infrastructure without continuing to overburden our overtaxed residents. It is time for politicians to work for their citizens and not special interest groups.

#### **Governor Christie's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget:**

Governor Christie's budget includes **\$34.5 billion** in State appropriations, a **2.1%** increase over the fiscal year 2016 budget. This will accommodate the reasonable spending necessary to provide stability for New Jersey's economy while meeting the state's fiscal obligations.

- Contains **\$2.3 billion less in discretionary spending** than the fiscal year 2008 budget and no new taxes or tax increases.
- Includes the largest pension payment in New Jersey history with a **\$1.9 billion** contribution to the State's defined benefit funds.
  - o This will bring total contributions by the Christie Administration to **\$6.3 billion**.
  - o That will be nearly double the total contributions of every other governor combined since 1995.

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- Includes a sixth consecutive year of the highest amount of School Aid supporting Pre-K - 12 education in New Jersey history. The fiscal year 2017 budget proposes spending more than **\$13.3 billion** on education, an increase of **\$526 million** from fiscal year 2016.
- Continues the Governor's commitment to higher education in New Jersey. Overall, higher education funding is maintained at a total of **\$2.2 billion** in fiscal year 2017.

**Providing Tax Relief For Our Citizens.** Governor Christie has fought for and won tax relief that is making New Jersey more competitive as a place to live and work.

- **Over \$3 Billion in Business Tax Cuts and Reforms** – Beginning with the fiscal 2012 budget, Governor Christie tackled New Jersey's business tax climate with tax cuts and reforms that had stalled in Trenton for years. Among the tax reforms included were: long-awaited changes to a single sales factor formula that incentivizes businesses to invest in New Jersey; income/loss netting and loss carry-forward reform; a 25% reduction in the minimum tax on S-corporations, which is how many small businesses file their taxes; research and development incentives; and elimination of the Transitional Energy Facility Assessment.
- The Governor's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget continues to provide this essential tax relief for New Jersey businesses of all sizes, fully phased in and unchanged.
- **Increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit** – In the summer of 2015, Governor Christie proposed and enacted into law an increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit from 20% to 30% of the federal benefit. Approximately 500,000 Garden State households will benefit from this tax relief, with the credit for an average working family rising by 50% from approximately \$420 to \$630. The Governor's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget continues this critical tax relief for working families at this expanded level.

**Historic Higher Education Funding.** Maintains the Governor's commitment to higher education in New Jersey. Overall, higher education funding is maintained at a total of **\$2.2 billion** in fiscal year 2017. Among Governor Christie's highest priorities has been strengthening New Jersey's higher education community.

- **Tuition Assistance Grant Program (TAG)** – To ensure an affordable in-state college education is available to all, TAG grants are available at 56 public and private institutions across New Jersey. Since taking office, Governor Christie has increased State funding for the TAG program by over 60%, to a total of \$403.6 million in fiscal year 2017. Approximately 68,000 students, or one-third of all full-time undergraduate students attending school in New Jersey, will receive support from TAG.
- **Governor's Urban Scholarship** – The Governor's Urban Scholarship program will add a fifth class, and will now support an estimated 635 scholars in targeted school districts.
- **College Readiness Now** – Funded at \$1 million in fiscal year 2017, this program will help students prepare for college level course work before they graduate high school. Funding will fully support partnerships between the county colleges and at least 60 high schools throughout the state, with at least one in each county.

**Preserving Vital Programs For Our Most Needy And Vulnerable Populations.** Advances the Governor's efforts to take a smarter and more effective approach to how the State supports individuals with mental health and substance use disorders. Governor Christie has consistently advocated for the need to change the way society views drug addiction and the misconceptions about who it impacts, how it affects lives, and how we deal with it. In the fiscal year 2017 budget, Governor Christie continues to provide unprecedented leadership on this issue by taking concrete actions to build on this commitment by providing an additional \$6 million for statewide post-incarceration services through reentry and recidivism programs.

- **\$127 Million Investment In Substance Use & Mental Health Treatment** – The Governor is making a historic financial commitment to raise reimbursement rates and increase access to substance use and mental health treatment. A combined State and federal investment in fiscal year 2017 of more than **\$127 million**, will expand access to high quality health care providers for individuals with substance use and behavioral health needs.
- **Inmate Drug Treatment Program** – Continuing his commitment to help all individuals with substance use disorders, Governor Christie is investing **\$2 million** to re-open Mid-State Correctional Facility in 2017 as an institution dedicated to the treatment of inmates. The new Mid-State Correctional Facility substance use disorder treatment program will be licensed by the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).
- **Focusing On Treatment** – Governor Christie has followed through on his commitment to take a smarter and more effective approach focused on treating drug-addicted offenders by signing into law landmark legislation to put in place a statewide, mandatory Drug Court Program. The fiscal year 2017 budget includes nearly **\$64 million** in funding to support the Drug Court program.
- **Recovery Coach Program** – As a direct result of the Facing Addiction Task Force's work, the Recovery Coach program launched in Monmouth, Ocean, Camden, Essex and Passaic counties. In fiscal year 2017, the budget provides an additional **\$1.7 million** in funding to expand this program into six more counties.

**Fundamentally changing the way services and programs to support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.** Governor Christie is committed to moving away from a system that has historically focused on institutionalization to one that emphasizes home and community-based services and supports. To this end, resources have been refocused to provide people with intellectual and developmental disabilities with the ability to live as independently as possible with the proper supports. Governor Christie's determination to provide services in the

community includes funds to develop additional community placements and services that divert admissions to developmental centers.

- The fiscal year 2017 budget provides **\$48.8 million** of new State and federal funding to create community placements and services, including Olmstead.
- Further, included in the fiscal year 2017 budget is a one-time community provider increase for a combined State and federal investment of **\$10 million**. These funds will allow providers that serve individuals with developmental disabilities to make the infrastructure improvements necessary to transition to fee-for-service.

#### BILLS SIGNED:

**S-993wGR/A-2777 (Vitale, Pou, Gordon/Wimberly, Vainieri Huttie, Sumter, Oliver)** – Permits DHS to request waiver of time limits for certain Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients under certain circumstances

**S-2377/A-4001 (Sarlo/Schaer)** - Makes fiscal year 2016 State supplemental appropriations and amends language provisions

**S-2456/A-4017 (Smith, Bateman/Andrzejczak, McKeon, Spencer, Pintor Marin, Dancer)** - Revises State's open space, farmland, and historic preservation programs; implements 2014 constitutional dedication of CBT revenues for certain environmental purposes

**A-3417wGR/S-1462 (Pintor Marin/Ruiz)** - Designates portion of State Highway Route No. 21 as "Roberto Clemente Memorial Highway"

**A-3617/S-2390 (Green, Rible, Mukherji, Houghtaling Mazzeo/Sarlo, Kyrillos)** - Extends expiration date of certain permits for one year in Superstorm Sandy-impacted counties

**A-4002 (Schaer)** – Revises priority schedule for issuance of converted tax credits under Business Employment Incentive Program

#### BILLS VETOED:

**S-17/A-4000 (Sarlo/Schaer) – LINE ITEM** - Appropriates \$34,800,995,000 in State funds and \$15,706,712,000 in federal funds for the State budget for fiscal year 2016-2017

**S-1017/A-1963 (Weinberg, Greenstein/Pintor Marin, Lagana, Jasey, Mukherji, Downey) – ABSOLUTE** - Provides Medicaid coverage for family planning services to individuals with incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level

**A-30/S-1829 (Prieto, Muoio, Oliver, Schaer, Holley, Mukherji, Quijano/Vitale, Whelan) – ABSOLUTE** - Increases amount of benefits under Work First New Jersey program

**A-1657/S-2168 (Schaer, Vainieri Huttie, Lampitt, Mosquera, Sumter, Wimberly/ Cruz-Perez, Turner) – ABSOLUTE** - Establishes "breakfast after the bell" incentive fund

**A-3410/S-1854 (Muoio, Vainieri Huttie, Mukherji, Oliver, Gusciora/Vitale, Rice) – ABSOLUTE** - Repeals family cap in Work First New Jersey program

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