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Gov. Christie: This Proposal Needs To Be Fair To The Hospitals, Fair To The Municipalities, And Fair To Local Taxpayers

Friday, March 18, 2016

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Gov. Christie: This Proposal Needs To Be Fair To Hospitals, Muni...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1XemaelFQY>

Transcript:

Governor Christie: I appreciate the Legislature's quick action to address the urgent needs of the nonprofits last year, but the issue deserves in my mind a lot more thoughtful deliberation and discussion than it got in that short period of time that the legislation was passed, so working with legislators and stakeholders from across the state I'm pleased to announce a solution that will end uncertainty on property tax exemption for New Jersey's community hospitals for the next two years, and end the costly patchwork of litigation that has begun to appear across the state, so I'm announcing a new legislative solution that will create a nine-member Property Tax Exemption Study Commission to be composed of an expert group of industry leaders, stakeholders, and policy experts to study the complex issue and to make recommendations then to both the executive branch and to the Legislature. The commission will provide for a comprehensive review of the property tax exemption statute and develop proposals for consideration by the executive branch and the Legislature that will address the tax exemption in a manner that is fair to the hospitals, fair to the municipalities, and most of all fair to local taxpayers. It will work in the Department of Treasury and we propose the composition to be the state treasurer who will serve as the chairperson, the commissioners of Health and Community Affairs, the Secretary of Higher Education, since Higher Education is so interwoven with so many of these hospitals, the executive director of the New Jersey Health Care Facilities Authority, HCFA, and four members appointed by the Governor with expertise in the field of property taxes, one recommended by the Senate President, another to be recommended by the Assembly Speaker, one who is a mayor of a municipality with a nonprofit acute care hospital or property tax exempt institution of higher education in their municipality, and one representative of a nonprofit acute care hospital or property tax exempt institution of higher education. At the same time while the commission does its work, this solution would allow for a two-year freeze on property tax assessments, and so it would preserve the status quo for all hospitals in those currently tax exempt institutions through till January 1st of 2018. The pause will ensure the

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commission can conduct its review and its analysis without the threat of litigation, the cost of litigation, and the uncertainty that that will cause for the nonprofits. Municipalities at the same time would not have to incur those costs as well by participating in litigation and will have a voice for them to be heard in this commission so that we can come up with a determination that's fair to everyone. It gives us time to come up not just with a solution but with the right solution, and that's what we should be looking to do because 62 hospitals in these communities need to know with certainty what their costs are going to be so that they can in fact make the proper planning if that's the course it goes, and municipalities need to know as well without having to have the intervention of courts throughout the state, so this is our job. Our job is when problems arise, whether they're created by circumstances on the ground from a business perspective or whether they're created by the decision of a court, the elected officials of the people of the state are the ones who are empowered and should take the responsibility for fixing these problems.

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