



## In Case You Missed It

Thursday, March 18, 2010 • Tags: [Budget and Spending](#)

### Mayor Keith Hartman - "The Governor's Budget Proposal Is A Bold, Responsible Proposal That Makes The Tough Choices Needed To Balance The State Budget..."

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Mar, 17-2010 4:07 pm

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP - Just hours after Gov. Chris Christie's budget address Tuesday, March 16, Mayor Keith Hartman issued a statement supporting the state's chief executive, saying he "continues to demonstrate the leadership New Jersey needs to fix its budget crisis and get back on the path to economic recovery.

"The governor's budget proposal is a bold, responsible proposal that makes the tough choices needed to balance the state budget, while also providing municipalities with the tools we need to hold down costs and mitigate property tax increases," Hartman said.

"The governor's proposed reforms will allow for stability in our budgeting at the local level and slow the growth of local government spending - a critical step in stopping ever-increasing property taxes on our residents."

The biggest tool, Hartman said in an interview Tuesday evening, is Proposition 205 - an all-inclusive cap on bargaining agreements.

"It takes into consideration when we have huge increases in the cost of medical coverage or step increases - the overall agreement is still capped at 2.5 percent," the mayor said. "In the past, arbitrators have forced us to take on big increases. The cap will hold down property taxes and force collective bargaining agreements to be much more efficient."

His statement called the governor's proposal "bold reforms: including a strict cap on property tax increases and local spending, collective bargaining and benefits reform, and civil service reform."

The cap, Hartman said, is the biggest tool in the toolbox, but pension reform and the others will have a trickle-down effect to help municipalities.

"It will provide us the needed flexibility to find cost savings and make it more affordable to live in the state," he said. "The governor has started the painful process that we sent him to Trenton to start. The recognition of the need for collective bargaining reform is refreshing."

The 2.5 percent cap, in conjunction with the tax cap and the levy cap, will force municipalities without the knowledge or wherewithal to accomplish this on their own to lower property taxes, Hartman said.

"Our residents and businesses cannot be taxed anymore," the Republican mayor said. "As elected officials we must make the difficult decisions that we were elected to make. Pushing off our problems to future years with budget gimmicks and one-time fixes can no longer be tolerated. I am once again optimistic in the direction we are heading. It will be a tough road to recovery, but failure is not an option."

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