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Gov. Christie: Camden Was A Strikingly Different Place Eight Years Ago Than It Is Now

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Gov. Christie: Camden Was A Strikingly Different Place Eight Year... [video player]

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Transcript:

Governor Christie: When I became Governor all the way back in January 2010, it would have been unthinkable that we would be gathering in a school on this spot, in this city, to celebrate the state of education in Camden. Innovative Renaissance schools like this one, did not even exist. We had yet to pass the Urban Hope Act, one of many reforms to come that would help change the landscape of opportunity that exists today for our children in this city and their families. In 2010, we all know Camden was a very different place than it is now – it was strikingly different. Nearly eight years ago, this City was suffering from a disinvestment, disinvestment not only of money but of spirit and a general lack of faith that others didn't have in the future of this city. Lots of folks in the private sector had written off Camden a long time ago and even some people in government had done the same thing. And many corporations had fled years earlier with little or no desire to invest and develop further in the City. And residents and visitors were afraid to walk the streets without the constant threat of violence and crime that lurked in almost every neighborhood in this great city. But perhaps the worst impact of all of this was its effect on the children of Camden, because they were impacted by the all of the things that I just mentioned and were stuck in a school system that as the Mayor pointed out, had 23 of its 26 schools in the lowest five percent of performers in the entire state. We were failing to educate our children and we were failing to provide them with an opportunity to reach their goals and their dreams. And that hopelessness if you let it seep in is crippling. Describing the climate in the City as one of hopelessness is not an exaggeration – it was a reality. And the state had spent years of misguided in my view, unsuccessful State intervention. Where the State just came in and told Camden what to do and said here's some money but here's the way you have to spend it, this is what you have to do and you have no role or say in the matter at all. Worst of all, it appeared that there were some in Camden because of all these failures that had

stopped believing in Camden themselves. But the same year I entered office, Mayor Dana Redd entered office. She's talked about our alliance and our friendship but I want to tell you that it's rooted not only in a great sense of respect in each other, our honesty with each other, our respect for each other, but it was also rooted in a refusal to believe that Camden could not be transformed. And It's an occasion like this that allows us to talk about all that progress we have made on behalf of all of the people of the City of Camden.

Press Contact:

Brian Murray
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000