

## Gov. Christie On Ferguson: Let's Not Pre-Judge

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Gov. Christie On Ferguson: Let's Not Pre-Judge

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### Transcript:

**Governor Christie:** None of us quite know yet exactly what happened in Ferguson and what happened to this young man who was killed. And I spent seven years in law enforcement as the chief federal prosecutor in this state and what I learned during that period of time, among other things, was that what you read in the newspapers and what you see on TV is almost always just a fraction of the story. And so, I've been urging people to not pre-judge anything here. We have a really good justice system in this country, is it perfect? No, but it's really good. And, in fact, there's no better justice system in the world than the justice system we have in dealing with folks who are accused of crimes in this country. And so first, I'd say, you know, let's give the justice system an opportunity to play itself out before we make any kind of broad judgments. Secondly, I'm really concerned about the generalizations that we're then making about police officers. The fact is, that the overwhelming majority of police officers in this country are hardworking men and women who put their lives on the line every day to protect us from bad people, violent people, people who mean ill to us. So when something like this happens like it's happened in Ferguson, people already jump to conclusions not only about what happened in Ferguson but also how does that apply to every other police force across the country. There will be plenty of time for us to examine this and to learn lessons from Ferguson as all the facts come out, not just when the TV anchor people are sitting there making a spectacle of this. But when the prosecutors and the investigators both from the federal government and from the local authorities do a complete investigation and I'm confident that if there is someone who needs to be charged with a crime here or more than one person, they will be. And if they are guilty beyond a reasonable doubt they will be convicted by a jury of their peers and will be sent to jail by a judge. If that's what's appropriate, that's what should be done. But I just don't believe we should drawing any generalizations or conclusions yet from what we know after just about ten days of this. We're going to learn a lot more over the period of time that's going to come and then I think we should have an intelligent conversation about whether anything that happened out there is something we need to learn from and apply here in New Jersey. But until we know all the facts, politicians who jump out now and public figures who jump out now and start saying a lot of things, they're just trying to

get their name in the newspaper. I don't think that's the way you should do it. So I'd be reluctant to say anything more than that just because I know I don't know enough. I used to say all the time when I was the U.S. Attorney, privately to our staff like I hear a politician make some comment about a case they thought we were working on or whatever and I'd say you know I hate when these guys who don't know anything, act like they know everything. Now that I'm in public office, I don't want to be guilty of the same thing I used to criticize them for. So until I know more, I think I'm going to give the police the benefit of doubt here in New Jersey and as for Missouri, let's let those guys work it out and then let's learn whatever lessons we need to learn from what happened when we have all the facts. Last thing we should say is this, no matter what happened, those parents have to be in our prayers. They lost their son and no matter what the circumstances were of the death of a child, I can tell you as a parent, it is unthinkable. Unthinkable that one of your children would die before you. And the sorrow and the pain that his parents must feel right now is indescribable. So one of the things that I've been doing and I hope everybody else does is if you take a moment to reflect, if you take a moment to pray, think about those parents because I'm sure that their lives right now are just absolutely in tatters and I wonder how you put one foot in front of the other every day after you get a phone call like that learning that one of your children has passed away. So I think about that too. I think we all should.

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