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NJ NAACP President: Christmas Came Early, Thank You Governor Christie

Monday, August 11, 2014

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NJ NAACP President: Christmas Came In August, Thank You Gov...


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ileQXYzbM9M>

Transcript:

Richard Smith, NJ NAACP President: This is truly a historic day. I want to thank you, Governor, for the opportunity to be here for the signing of this historic legislation. We realized that the bail bonds system in New Jersey was broken, three-quarters of the people who were being warehoused in our jails were there awaiting trial rather than serving a sentence and their average length of stay is about ten months, today they get relief. Almost half of these defendants are incarcerated solely because they cannot afford often nominal amounts of bail, today they get relief. Those with money could obtain release no matter how serious the crime or how much danger they pose to public safety, while those without money sit in jail for months on end no matter how minor their offense and no matter that they pose no danger to public safety so today they get relief. The relief system stems from a great deal of painstaking work that was done by all involved, this included the Senate, the Assembly, people like Senator Norcross and Senator Sweeney, the NAACP, the New Jersey Black Issues Convention, the Institution for Social Justice, the ACLU, Drug Policy Alliance, and the clergy. I personally want to say a thank you to Senator Rice and Senator Gill for their insight and for having their concerns voiced and heard which ultimately enabled this legislation at its end than it was at its beginning. I want to thank you again, Governor Christie for signing this legislation. I only intended to thank you for the bail bonds reform but now Christmas came in August and you signed the 'Ban The Box' bill, so we're appreciative of that as well. By you signing this legislation, you are making the dream of bail bond reform a reality. It is most certain that we haven't always agreed on every issue and that's okay, but mature leadership is leadership that unites when the legislation is right and when we are jointly doing what is in the best interest of those we serve. That truly should be the top priority of public service. We most definitely are optimistic, Governor, that this joint effort will open the doors for us to engage in long overdue dialogue between your office and our organization to talk openly and honestly about the ways we can improve the lives of those who live, work and yes, struggle, in the state of New Jersey. So, but as for today, Governor, this

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historic day, a good piece of legislation will be signed by you that will reduce the jail population and keep the for-profit bail industry from preying on communities of people of color. Thank you, Governor. Thank you, all of the legislative representatives. God bless you. God bless New Jersey and God bless the United States of America.

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