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Governor Chris Christie Calls on Legislature to Complete the Tool Kit to Keep Delivering Relief at the Local Level

Tuesday, November 22, 2011 • Tags: [Other](#)

Governor Cites Princeton Consolidation As Just the Beginning in How Local Municipalities Can Achieve Taxpayer Savings

Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today held a conversation with Princeton Township Mayor Chad Goerner, Princeton Borough Council President Kevin Wilkes, and local residents to discuss the taxpayer benefits of the voter-approved consolidation effort in Princeton and the Christie Administration’s ongoing efforts to achieve local government savings and property tax relief. The Princeton consolidation vote followed Governor Christie’s steps to further promote locally driven municipal consolidation efforts with proposed legislation to allow municipalities to spread the upfront costs of consolidation over five years and state grants to cover 20 percent of the one-time costs of consolidation. Governor Christie has also secured passage of critical reforms to provide local government budget savings, and has called on the legislature to go further by passing all of his property tax tool kit to provide additional savings to property taxpayers statewide.

The voters in Princeton Borough and Princeton Township overwhelmingly approved a November 8 ballot question to move forward with the long-considered consolidation of the two municipalities. This move will mean a streamlining of services and significant projected savings of approximately \$3.2 million annually. Upfront costs associated with the merger are estimated at not more than \$1.7 million.

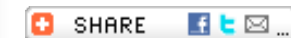
“The residents of Princeton Township and Princeton Borough seized an opportunity to streamline their local

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governments and capitalize on significant savings by approving a sensible merger to benefit residents of both municipalities,” said Governor Christie. “Through locally driven efforts like this and continued assistance from the state through proposals like real sick pay and civil service reform, municipalities will realize the savings they need to hold down and ultimately lower property taxes while operating under the 2 percent cap.”

Governor Christie’s agenda to provide property tax relief by controlling the huge increase in local government spending is already having results for Princeton and municipalities all across the state. In addition to placing a hard 2 percent cap on property tax growth, Governor Christie also secured passage of critical reforms to drive down the cost of government, including historic, bipartisan pension and health benefits reforms and a 2 percent cap on interest arbitration awards.

Governor Christie’s Agenda to Offer Real, Long-Term Property Tax Relief Delivers Results for Princeton

- Over \$505,000 in combined 2012 savings for Princeton Township and Princeton Borough from the Governor’s Historic Pension and Health Benefits Reform
- \$3.2 million annual savings anticipated from the consolidation of the two Princetons, supported and incentivized by Governor Christie.
- Princeton Township and Princeton Borough have \$1.94 million in accumulated sick and vacation pay liabilities on the books. Governor Christie’s reform proposals will end the practice of sick day cash outs and limit vacation day carry-forward for one year only.

Since enacting a 2 percent cap on property taxes and achieving historic pension and health benefit reform, Governor Christie has continued to advocate aggressively for common-sense reform proposals to achieve significant additional budget savings for local governments, including the enactment of real sick and vacation pay reform and civil service reform.

Critical Tool Kit Reform Bills Continue To Languish In The Legislature

- A2220 (CV) Eliminates future accrual of payments for unused sick pay
- A3590 (CV) Civil service reform including local option to opt-out of civil service, removing barriers to sharing services and permitting furloughs
- S3123/A4348 Addresses abuse of accidental disability pensions by better defining the standards for qualification and making PFRS and SPRS earnings tests match those used in PERS and TPAF
- A-1646/S-1781 Directs that one sample ballot shall be delivered to each residence address where at least one resident thereof is registered to vote.
- A-2951/S-2174 Eliminates eligibility for State retirement systems for non-government groups and associations.
- A-2958/S-2012 Allows gross income tax refunds to be credited against a taxpayer’s delinquent local property taxes.
- A-2953/S-2024 Permits layoff plans as substitute for employment reconciliation plans for joint meetings or shared service agreements under certain circumstances.

- A-2955/S-2135 Employee Discipline Reform. Limits right of appeal of disciplinary action taken by employer against certain public employees.
- A-2960/S-2043 Concerns collective negotiations for school employees; repeals law prohibiting school boards from imposing terms and conditions of employment.
- A-2961/S-2025 Authorizes executive county superintendent of schools to require implementation of shared services arrangements and to approve school district collective negotiations agreements prior to execution of agreement.
- A-2962/S-2027 Concerns collective negotiations for public institutions of higher education.
- A-2963/S-2026 Amends State college law to remove certain employees from civil service system and allow boards of trustees to conduct collective bargaining.
- A-2964/S-2172 Authorizes the establishment of probationary periods for non-tenured faculty members at State colleges.
- A-3219 Amends State college law to allow boards of trustees to conduct collective bargaining.
- A-3220 Amends State college law to remove certain employees from civil service system.

“The bipartisan pension and health benefit reforms we achieved this year are a critical component of that, resulting in \$267 million in local property tax savings this year alone, but we can go further to give tax relief to our citizens. We must continue to promote shared services and consolidation where they make sense like the effort here in Princeton,” continued Governor Christie. “It is also past time for the legislature to act on civil service and sick pay reform, and finish the rest of the tool kit measures as they promised, before the end of this session to take down impediments to shared services and give back more direct savings to property taxpayers.”

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