



## Governor Christie Takes First Steps Toward Long-Term Higher Education Reform by Creating New Jersey Higher Education Task Force

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**Trenton, NJ** - Acting on his commitment to reform New Jersey's system of higher education, Governor Chris Christie today signed Executive Order # 26 establishing the New Jersey Higher Education Task Force. Chaired by former Governor Thomas H. Kean, the Task Force will study the key issues and impediments facing the State's higher education institutions.

"To compete and be prosperous in this 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, we must have a system of higher education that keeps up with the demands of today's changing marketplace," Governor Christie said. "New Jersey's institutions of higher learning are critically important to the economic growth of our state and must be afforded the necessary tools to stay competitive. Today, I am asking Governor Kean to conduct a critical review and assessment that will grow infrastructure, increase accessibility and promote excellence in New Jersey's institutions of higher learning."

"Higher education is an investment in New Jersey's future," said Governor Kean. "Making sure the system is efficient and affordable for our citizens is critical to our economic well-being and I look forward to working with Governor Christie, Task Force members and the higher education community to form a comprehensive strategy for success."

A host of issues have impeded the State's institutions of higher learning from providing accessible, affordable and high quality education opportunities to students. Consider that New Jersey loses more of its resident students to out-of-state colleges and universities than any other state in the nation. In fact, New Jersey's net out-migration of college students constitutes a third of all net-out-migration in the United States, losing about 30,000 students per year. Several other challenges facing New Jersey's colleges and universities include a lack of state capital investment to meet capital needs, outdated regulations as well as increased administrative and tuition costs.

The creation of the Higher Education Task Force is a part of Governor Christie's overall plan for long-term higher education reform to ensure New Jersey's leadership role in higher education and position the State as a home for economic growth and prosperity.

Earlier this week, Governor Christie signed legislation that promotes growth of higher education in New Jersey by easing restrictions on public-private partnerships between higher education institutions and private entities for on-campus construction and building improvements. In addition, Governor Christie is proposing a "toolkit" of legislation that will empower higher education institutions to better control their costs through collective bargaining, risk management and civil service reforms.

Joining Governor Kean on the Task Force are Dr. George Pruitt, President of Thomas Edison State College; John McGoldrick, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Association of State Colleges and Universities and Peggi Howard, Vice President of Administration, Drew University. Additional qualified individuals will be named members of the Task Force.

The new Task Force will consider a variety of factors in developing their recommendations for reform, such as:

- Governance structure and inter-relationship with State government
- Effectiveness of public/private partnerships among institutions
- Capital investment needs and mechanisms for securing capital
- Effective use and promotion of resources
- Relationship between county colleges and other institutions
- Relationship with State workforce needs
- Accessibility and affordability of institutions, including availability of tuition assistance
- Methods for distributing direct state aid
- Effects of State-imposed regulations and mandates
- Methods used for training teachers and the role of higher education institutions
- Review of financial disclosure requirements for governing boards and Presidents

A final report with recommendations is due to Governor Christie no later than December 1, 2010 at which time the term of the Task Force will expire.

New Jersey's 31 public and 32 independent institutions of higher learning serve more than 429,000 students across the state through a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs

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