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## Governor Christie: None Of This Is Easy

Wednesday, July 23, 2014

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### Governor Christie: None Of This Is Easy


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

#### Transcript:

**Question:** When the Legislature and you get together to decide the fate of these police officers and public employees, know that they have families, know that they depend on them, know that they were out in the middle of the night, in the snow and the rain, and it wasn't just something they did for fun or for the money, OK? That's not it. And I want nothing for nothing. I know at one time the pension system was the second-best in the nation.

**Governor Christie:** Right.

**Question:** And I can remember—not you Governor, but I can remember when the pension system was borrowed from and it wasn't replaced. I know the many, many times that the town didn't pay their pension contributions but I paid mine. No qualm, no standing up saying, you're not paying, why am I paying, OK? We did it, and we provided the service and we did it, what we think is with distinction and honor, and so we're asking for due consideration Governor.

**Governor Christie:** Right. Well, a few things. First of all, thank you for your service and thank you for the courteous way you presented your comments. I appreciate it. Secondly, no one's talking about taking your pension away from you, and in fact someone in your circumstance, no matter what we do, has a vested interest in that pension and what we're talking about is where we go from here in the future. None of this stuff is easy, and none of this stuff is pleasant, and I don't quite frankly love talking about it. But the fact is that someone's got to, and when you're given these jobs you can decide to do it one of two ways, to either try to skate through, keep quiet, keep your head low and hope for the best, or to decide to pick your head up out of the foxhole and speak your mind and sometimes to get shot at. I'm in that mode at the moment and I get that. But I have to do it because to do it any other way would be irresponsible. So I don't want any folks who are sitting out there right now who are public sector retirees thinking that your pension's going to

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change, because the only way it will is if the system goes belly up, and we don't want that to happen, because you're right about what the ramifications will be much broader across the state, our economy, and the government for folks who no longer have it. So let's deal with it. Let's deal with it responsibly, and the younger folks who are in this system now preparing years from now to retire and the ones who haven't even entered yet are going to be the ones who are going to have to shoulder that burden, and that's the way it's going to go, and by the way the taxpayers have to shoulder that burden too and already are and will to an even greater extent going forward. So a lot of irresponsible decisions were made and I don't relish being the one who's got to deal with all the irresponsible decisions that were made from people who were trading votes for benefits that they couldn't pay for, but that's the gig I undertook, and as my wife reminds me all the time, I did it voluntarily. Nobody put a gun to my head. Nobody forced me to run for this job and they certainly didn't force me to run for it a second time. And so I knew what I was dealing with and I decided I was going to step up and try to do it and make it better. It doesn't mean everybody's going to agree with you. It doesn't mean everybody's going to love you. That's not what I'm in this for. I'm in this to try to do the job the best way I can, put my head on the pillow at night knowing that I did the best I could do. It sounds to me like in a much more dangerous circumstance that's what you did for a long period of time, try to acquit yourself every day in a way that when you put your head on the pillow at night you felt good about what you did in your service to the public. I'm trying to do the same thing. And so we're going to work on this problem together. But don't think there won't be a lot of yelling and screaming in the process. There will be, because whenever, whenever you're talking about taking something off the table people yell and scream about it. But that shouldn't be interpreted by anybody that I don't respect what you've done and what others are doing to serve the public. But what it does mean is that if you have the responsibility for making decisions you better make them the right way because when you do it the wrong way then eventually the chickens come home to roost, and that's what's happening now.

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