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Governor Christie Announces Departure of Long-Serving Labor Commissioner

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Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today announced the departure of one of his longest serving cabinet members, Labor Commissioner Harold J. Wirths, who has been at the helm of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development since February 2010 and who will leave office next month. The Governor will be nominating Commissioner Wirths to serve on the State Parole Board.

"I am grateful for the dedication and strong sense of public service Hal has brought to my administration," said Governor Christie. "He demonstrated great leadership during an economic downturn when our Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund was bankrupt and the Great Recession hit its peak. Hal's staff introduced re-employment programs that involved private employers, and they launched fiscal reforms and anti-fraud programs to help restore the Trust Fund. Now, as Hal leaves, our Trust Fund is fully solvent, more than 258,000 private sector jobs have been added and the unemployment rate has been cut by more than half. I want to thank Hal for all his good work and wish him the very best."

Executing Governor Christie's reform policies, Commissioner Wirths and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development built a nationally-recognized anti-fraud program designed to prevent Unemployment Insurance benefits from being improperly paid to fraudsters. The programs are conservatively estimated to have saved taxpayers approximately \$800 million since March 2011 and helped to bring the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, which had gone into debt in 2009, back into full solvency by May 1, 2014.

"Serving under Governor Christie's leadership for the last six and a half years has been an incredible honor," said Commissioner Wirths. "Together with the department's talented staff, we have overcome tremendous challenges to make great strides for the people of New Jersey, including cutting the unemployment rate in half and restoring the bankrupt Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund to solvency, triggering unprecedented tax savings for New Jersey businesses. I am proud of our accomplishments and confident in the department's continued success."

Commissioner Wirths lives in Hardyston Township with his wife and two daughters.

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