



Home | Newsroom | Media | Administration | NJ's Priorities | Contact Us

Press Releases | Public Addresses | Executive Orders | Press Kit | Reports

Home > Newsroom > Press Releases > 2010 > In Case You Missed It: Gov. Chris Christie: Vote Against School Budgets That Don't Include Shared Sacrifice

# In Case You Missed It: Gov. Chris Christie: Vote Against School Budgets That Don't Include Shared Sacrifice

Monday, April 19, 2010 • Tags: [Education](#)

By New Jersey Governor Chris Christie  
The Star-Ledger  
NJ.com  
April 18, 2010, 6:55AM

Tuesday is Election Day in New Jersey, and this year's fiscal and economic crisis has created hard choices that demand attention.

I am a product of New Jersey's public schools. I know how good our schools and hardworking teachers are. I owe a lot to my teachers in Livingston for helping to lay the foundation for my success. But the dedication and quality of our teachers is not in question and never has been. Right now, we are addressing the challenge of providing our children the highest quality education while responsibly addressing New Jersey's fiscal mess and crippling taxes.

When fewer resources available, local school districts and education associations are being asked to share in the sacrifice. New Jersey is facing a reality that can no longer be ignored.

I have encouraged the teachers' union leadership to work together in finding savings by implementing a salary freeze for one year. While governments at every level have to do more with less, many public employee unions have continued putting a strain on budgets without regard to changing circumstances. At a time when salary raises are unheard of in private industry across New Jersey and when harmful tax hikes are at the doorstep for many communities, it is unreasonable to have union leadership continue to demand raises from taxpayers. A simple fact: According to the New Jersey Business and Industry Association, during 2007-2008, 40 percent of the workers in New Jersey's private sector had their wages frozen or reduced.

A recent Rasmussen poll found that 65% of New Jerseyans support the idea of administrators, teachers and school workers sharing in the sacrifice. School salary and benefits costs in New Jersey are the highest in the nation and they are rising at over three times the rate of inflation. Unreasonable salary demands in the face of this fiscal reality is irresponsible and costing teaching jobs and student programs.

In the face of these difficulties, we are seeing action take place across the state. Districts and education associations are coming together. Just this past week, the Red Bank Education Association ratified a contract that froze salaries for three years. The Superintendent of the Schools, Laura Morana, acknowledge the collaborative relationship between the district and the association before going on to say, "They recognize these are challenging times and wanted to do what's in the best interest of the kids."

Superintendent Morana's words represent the shared sacrifice of many others across New Jersey. It is the reason why I am proposing to provide additional state aid to school districts that negotiate a salary freeze to the amount equivalent to both the Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes that would have otherwise been paid on the foregone salary increase. The Social Security payroll tax is 6.2 percent of earnings up to \$106,800 and the Medicare tax is 1.45 percent of earnings with no cap. This means that we are able to offer school districts additional state aid amounting to 7.65 percent of the savings achieved from a one-year salary freeze, or \$76,500 on every \$1 million saved. Statewide, if savings of \$500 million were to be achieved through the one-year salary freeze, the additional school aid payments would total \$38,250,000.

When you go to the voting booth on Tuesday, remember that the only way we will get through the challenges of today is by facing them now. Our state, our families and our children can no longer afford government at any level that wishes problems away or stands in the way of necessary change.

There is still time to reopen negotiations and have the teachers union finally agree to reasonable, shared sacrifice — a one year freeze on salaries and a small contribution to health insurance costs. Let us keep our children in the front of our minds.

Send a clear message with your vote. If your teachers union has taken the freeze and your school board had budgeted responsibly, support them with your vote. If they have not, tell them you will not accept higher property taxes to pay for unreasonable raises when all of New Jersey is already sacrificing. Vote against budgets that don't include shared sacrifice.

Chris Christie is the governor of New Jersey.

### Stay Connected with Social Media



### Stay Connected with Email Alerts

### LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.



...

- [View article here](#)

###

**Press Contact**  
Michael Drewniak  
609-777-2600



[Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Legal Statement & Disclaimers](#) | [Accessibility Statement](#) | 

Statewide: [NJ Home](#) | [Services A to Z](#) | [Departments/Agencies](#) | [FAQs](#)  
Office of the Governor: [Home](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Media](#) | [Administration](#) | [NJ's Priorities](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2012  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000