



Opinion Round-Up: "We Believe This Tough Love Can Be Effective. Christie's Right."

Tuesday, March 23, 2010 • Tags: [Property Taxes](#)

On Governor Christie standing up to the public workers union...

Star-Ledger Editorial Board, "We are lucky to have a fighter in this office now, a guy who is willing to take on the public worker unions."

Tough Medicine: Gov. Chris Christie's Proposed Cap On Public Worker Costs Is A Must:

In the long run, the most important move Gov. Chris Christie has made to shrink government is not his cuts to mass transit, or higher education, or even the public schools. It is his plan to impose a cap of 2.5 percent on annual increases in labor costs and property taxes. That would bend the cost curve for local government in New Jersey for years to come. It offers taxpayers a chance to gain control over a collective bargaining process that has gone off the rails. Take a hard look at the problem. New Jersey has the nation's highest paid police officers and firefighters, and our teachers are close behind. They earn significantly more than the typical taxpayer. And most of them are getting healthy raises this year, despite the crushing recession... A final word about the governor: We are lucky to have a fighter in this office now, a guy who is willing to take on the public worker unions.

The Wall Street Journal, "Mr. Christie deserves special applause for his willingness to battle government employee unions."

States Of Progress:

Can states balance their budgets without tax increases? America's two newest governors are giving it a valiant try that deserves attention as they cope with record deficits and a slow economic recovery. Republicans Chris Christie (New Jersey) and Bob McDonnell (Virginia) were elected in November in states that had seen years of tax increases and explosive spending growth. Mr. Christie inherited a \$2.2 billion deficit in 2010 and it is expected to grow to \$11 billion in 2011...He is not talking about phony Washington-style "cuts" against a baseline that automatically increases each year. The governor is asking Trenton to spend \$2.9 billion less in 2011 than it did in 2009, shrinking the budget to \$29.3 billion, which he admits will be "painful, but what other choice do we have?"...The Governor's critics moan that cutting education would victimize children, but he correctly points out that schools eat up more than one-third of the budget, and that New Jersey spends a gaudy \$13,600 per student. Mr. Christie deserves special applause for his willingness to battle government employee unions. His office calculates that New Jersey's unionized employees have carved out health-care benefits that are 41% higher than the typical Fortune 500 company offers...He's handcuffed in saving money this year, because predecessor Jon Corzine struck a deal with unions that guaranteed no cuts in salary and benefits to more than 200,000 state employees. That sweetheart deal will cost the state up to \$300 million a year...Both governors are under attack from liberal interest groups and the media for not raising taxes, but the public wants government to restrain itself the way families have already had to do. New Jersey's property tax rates are the nation's highest and its top income tax rate is close to the highest at 8.97%. Mr. Christie will have to negotiate his way through a legislature that is dominated by Democrats who answer to the public unions, but as he told them: This "is what the people sent me here to do."

The Washington Examiner, "New Jersey taxpayers finally understand that they really have no other choice."

Christie Sets Example By Challenging Public Sector Unions:

New Jersey Republican Gov. Chris Christie stood before the Democrat-controlled legislature last week and, like a surgeon explaining a life-saving procedure to a skeptical patient, outlined deep budget cuts to close a gaping \$11 billion budget wound necessary to save the critically ill state from following California into financial meltdown. Like California's, New Jersey's ills were self-inflicted. General fund spending increased 40 percent in five years. The Tax Foundation blames the Garden State's tax-and-spend policies for creating the nation's worst business climate...Christie may have to do just that. Democratic lawmakers immediately denounced his budget plan. In a shockingly frank 24-minute speech that ricocheted around the blogosphere earlier this month, Christie told 200 New Jersey mayors that "at some point there has to be parity ... between what is happening in the real world and what is happening in the public sector world"...But 52 percent of the most overtaxed residents in the nation recently told pollsters they are now willing to swallow the governor's strong medicine. New Jersey taxpayers finally understand that they really have no other choice.

Courier-Post: Bob Ingle, "The NJEA should also heed Christie's call to forestall or give up raises in recent contracts."

Mass. Shows Taxes Can Be Controlled:

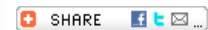
Stay Connected with Social Media



Stay Connected with Email Alerts

Sign Up

LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.



If the NJEA leadership were smart, it would join the chorus calling for elimination of the extra layers of administration in the 604 school systems or consolidation of the 604 districts to one district per county. The NJEA should also heed Christie's call to forestall or give up raises in recent contracts. The union, however, uses the multiple school districts to its benefit, playing them against each other to ratchet up contracts. Too often the union negotiators are professional, the school boards' are amateurs. One statewide contract instead of 604 would serve the taxpayers well.

On the Governor's budget being a change from the failed policies of the past...

The Record: Hank McNamara, "Governor Chris Christie's budget address last week was tantamount to a declaration of war against the status quo."

The Governor's War Against The Status Quo:

THE BATTLE is joined. Governor Chris Christie's budget address last week was tantamount to a declaration of war against the status quo. On one side is Christie, who declared he will lead a reformation in Trenton for taxpayers or die a political death for the effort. Lining up opposite him are detractors whose past fiscal chicanery has, to the new governor's way of thinking, abused taxpayers and nearly bankrupted our state. Chief among them are government workers' unions, past governors and many, if not most, state legislators. The dispute goes beyond policy differences. Christie seeks to overturn an entrenched culture in Trenton long-dominated by special interests and politicians. There are stark stylistic differences too. Christie is nothing if not atypical. He cares less about being liked than about having his way. He is willing to forfeit a second term. His predecessors, looking for two terms, accommodated or appeased the special interests. Before it's over by budget deadline on May 31, there are bound to be political scraped knuckles and bloody noses...There are many who likewise see New Jersey's government culture as so entrenched that it cannot be changed. They predict that Christie will be worn down by "the system." But Christie promised to turn Trenton upside down. As his battle to try to make that happen begins, one thing is for sure: this new governor is a man of his word.

On the need for the legislature to approve Governor Christie's budget...

Asbury Park Press, "Given the severity of the crisis, the Legislature should stay in session until the reforms suggested by Christie are debated, approved and implemented."

It's Up To Lawmakers And The Unions Now:

It didn't take long for the protests, demonstrations and caterwauling from the special interests to start up following Gov. Chris Christie's budget address last week. No surprise there. The proposed budget cuts are deep. But as Christie said, it is now up to the Legislature, municipalities, school boards and public unions to help soften the impact...Given the severity of the crisis, the Legislature should stay in session until the reforms suggested by Christie are debated, approved and implemented. There is no time to spare. If lawmakers sit on their hands, they have no one to blame but themselves for the painful consequences of Christie's budget plan...The public employee unions can help avert layoffs — and send a signal to the taxpayers they have alienated by negotiating contracts that have helped make New Jersey the most heavily taxed state in the union — by signaling a willingness to make immediate concessions...The unions and the Democrats in the Legislature have a choice: They can gripe or they can act quickly and responsibly to ease the crisis they helped create.

On Governor Christie taking the tough, but correct approach towards municipalities...

The Record, "It's a tough love approach that often works with young people grown too dependent on their parents' pocketbooks...We believe this tough love can be effective. Christie's right."

Get Christie 'Love':

TO HEAR Governor Christie tell it, many New Jersey cities that have been used to receiving "extraordinary" or distressed cities aid from Trenton have grown so addicted to it, they have lost the incentive to stand on their own... "We need to get our cities off the heroin of municipal aid," said Christie. "As much as I hate the practice (of distressed cities aid), I knew we could not just let them go cold turkey. That's not practical"...In short, the governor's message to the cities is this: Get your financial house in order. Cities, he seems to be saying, must learn to budget for themselves. In the parlance of drug rehab, they must "get clean"...It's a tough love approach that often works with young people grown too dependent on their parents' pocketbooks. And it's an approach that marks so much of the governor's bare bones, 150-page budget briefing. We believe this tough love can be effective. Christie's right. Why should any municipal leaders go to the pains of responsible governing when they know, in the backs of their minds, that at the end of the day, no matter how they act or spend, someone in Trenton will be there to write another check?...But the governor must also deal with fiscal realities for an entire state. And putting the state on the road toward fiscal health means getting municipalities — whether urban centers or suburbs — to be better stewards of the public dime. The Christie administration hasn't ironed out all the details for allocating the "transitional aid" money, but from here, the tough love approach is a fine place to start.

Former Governors weigh in on Governor Christie's budget...

Gov. Tom Kean and Gov. Brendan Byrne: "I think he set the right tone, and it's been overdue."

Was Gov. Chris Christie's Budget Address Too Tough?:

Q: Gov. Chris Christie's budget address took a deliberately tough tone. Was it tough enough? Too tough? Just right?

GOV. KEAN: I think he set the right tone, and it's been overdue. We've been spending and getting deeper into debt. We've been taxing and forcing people to leave the state. This all should have stopped years ago, and now we finally have a governor who has the willpower to take the lead.

Q: The governor directly challenged the teachers' union while attempting to paint individual teachers as responsible good guys. Is this a tenable line to walk?

KEAN: Yes. I love the wonderful teachers we have in this state, but that doesn't mean union leadership has always been responsible. They've often negotiated on behalf of adults rather than children. When public employees are getting benefits that are much greater than those enjoyed by the average worker, you have to question that.

BYRNE: I think this guy is headed in the right direction, and I don't want to discourage him with partisan nitpicking.

New Jersey residents express their support for Governor Christie's budget...

**Courier-Post: Community Editorial Board, "Gov. Chris Christie's budget cuts are severe, but needed."
Governor Needs To Slash:**

BOB HOLT of Mantua: Gov. Chris Christie's budget cuts are severe, but needed.

JON CLARK of Franklinville: This budget is both a reasonable and rational course of action for the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

STEW BOLNO of Pennsauken: Similar to highly skillful sumo wrestler, Gov. Chris Christie is planting his feet on the ground and asserting his big shoulders against the opponents pushing against him and us. Don't put anything past this man. He is giving many of us every confidence that he is willing to grapple with, push against, and toss over those who have helped to get us into the financial mess, that we call the state of New Jersey. Those of us who wish to defeat the gluttonous and selfish opponents need to applaud our warrior, cheer him on, and be his fans in the stands.

MIKE THOMAS of Haddon Heights: Hooray for Christie and his new budget cuts. This state will collapse with its overspending unchecked. With the current economic situation, we all must make sacrifices.

BEN McCARGO of Camden: Tough love from the state -- that's exactly what it is. And I personally don't have much of an issue with it, not only because it had to be done but also because it is what it is.

TOM YARNALL of Cherry Hill: Gov. Chris Christie is making legitimate requests. I will lose my rebate for a year, but I will have to share in the sacrifice.

MARY CORTES of Camden: Through the eyes of an entrepreneur and single-parent to six honor and professional students, Gov. Chris Christie is doing what is harshly a "reality" move.

BILL BLAKE of Marlton: How completely refreshing was that! To hear this brave man speak his mind, with a common man logic and an obvious concern for the future of New Jersey was truly exciting.

KATHLEEN WEISS of Mullica Hill: Christie is one of the few realistic and courageous souls out there. Of course people will rebel against the cuts, especially when it hits home, but there is no other course of action at this point aside from hocking our infrastructure to private investors -- and let's not go there.

DONNA CONNELLY of Runnemede: The people, who elected Gov. Chris Christie to bring us back to reality by stopping the incessant spending that has made it almost impossible for many to afford living here, want results. I hope he has the courage to follow through and know that most of the people are behind him.

PAT BENJAMIN of Cherry Hill: Because of the past mishandling of "our money" by free-spending New Jersey politicians, Gov. Chris Christie is forced to cut across the board to balance the July 1 budget.

LEW BERISH of Delanco: The governor declared in his budget speech what he promised when campaigning. Citizens of New Jersey elected him knowing what to expect.

MARK WILKINS of Somerdale: New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie does not have any easy choices. Confession: I did not vote for the man but I do not want our state to fail and I do believe our overall government spending is too high.

JOE CURRY of Deptford: I agree that the level of Gov. Chris Christie's budget cuts is a good start but more needs to be done in the years ahead.

THOMAS LICISYN of Washington Township: Gov. Chris Christie laid out the facts on Tuesday for this coming fiscal year and I am sure those facts and numbers were all verified; therefore, I agree with the governor.

STAN BOOKSTABER: Well, he did what he said he would do. I believe that state Sen. Jennifer Beck, R-Monmouth, said it best, "We have no other option but to make these difficult, horrible decisions."

FRANK SOLIS of Woodbury: Gov. Chris Christie is to be applauded for his approximately 9 percent decrease in the state budget.

MARY RENZI of Pennsauken: Gov. Chris Christie announced his first steps to improve New Jersey's budget crisis.

VINCE CORRY of Marlton: Dieting and reducing the deficit are similar. The only way I know to lose weight is to watch what you eat and cut back on your food intake. Similarly, the only way to lose a deficit is to watch how you are spending and to cut back on the amount of spending. It also means we all must sacrifice across the board. The fix will be a slow and painful. It appears our governor has started us on this diet and I applaud his actions.

MICKIE SHEA of Marlton: Gov. Chris Christie inherited an \$11 billion deficit from the previous administration. The job of cutting it is sure not an enviable one, and the solutions will undoubtedly hurt everyone, for a while at least.

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