

# Governor Christie On Newark Schools: Parents Want And Deserve Something Better For Their Children

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### Transcript:

**Governor Christie:** The only reason those school districts are state run schools districts is because they have been abject failures for the people who live there. That is the only reason. The state does not take them over because we have nothing better to do. The real problem here is, a few things: One, we have local school districts in many urban areas who care more about their union patrons than they care about the families who live in those communities. And the proof of that is, I saw some statement put out by Mayor Baraka today where he is complaining about the effect that charter schools have on the Newark Public School budget. What I would remind the mayor is that the reason charter school enrollment is going up is because families are choosing public charter schools. The second that I would remind the mayor is that charter schools are public schools. They are public schools. So what the mayor wants to do is freeze any new expansion of charter schools, freeze any new development of charter schools so that those families are forced back into the failed schools that drove them to want to make the choice to begin with. This is so illogical that if it operated anywhere else but in New Jersey, under the auspices of the New Jersey Education Association, we would think this is ridiculous. But here we somehow say, well, you know, that is just the way it is. Parents in these school districts are saying, no, we are not going to have that any longer. The second thing is, the mayor complains that they had a \$72 million budget hole that he says is created by these charter schools, that they asked me for \$36 million and that I only gave them an additional \$27 million. Now, this of course, comes from a school district that gets hundreds of millions of dollars from New Jersey state taxpayers every year because of a failed, and I believe, unconstitutional court requirement that we put disproportionate funds into a small number of school districts and the mayor, in the greatest ironic part of his statement, says that this is causing his property taxes to go up. We have him come see Huttle. Ask about his property taxes in Englewood. And what happens because I cannot give him the school aid I want to give him because the legislature and the supreme court says that somehow the only way to improve education in Newark and Paterson and Trenton and Camden, oh and by the way, Hoboken and Union City and Jersey City is to give them more

money. And every time I give them more money from state income tax revenue, it is less money that goes to Huttle. It has got to end. It has got to end. I find the whole thing laughable. And I think that Assemblyman Wimberly, instead of wasting time on press conferences in Trenton, should perhaps focus on having more effective schools in Paterson. And Mayor Baraka who of course drew his paycheck from the public school system before he stopped taking the paycheck from there and took his paycheck from the city hall taxpayers, he does not want any of this to change. He complains in the press release about the teachers that we are not letting into classrooms anymore but we are continuing to pay. He says that is a waste of money, I agree, let me fire them. Because if they are too ineffective to be in a classroom why the hell are we paying them? You know why we are paying them? Because the teachers union owns this state, that is why. Because we cannot fire the least able for goodness sake then they would not pay dues anymore, and then, you know, the head of the NJEA would not make 400 grand a year plus their teacher pension. So you know Michael I have no sympathy at all for urban leaders who continue to sell their constituents down the river because the NJEA writes them checks and that they are scared to death of these people. I have never been scared of these people from the minute I announced for public office and from the time until I leave public office I will not be scared of them and I will call them out. And you know who else is calling them out? Urban parents. Why are there thousands of people still on the waiting list in Newark for charter schools, because they think the public school are doing such a great job? No, because they want something better for their children, and you know what, they deserve something better for their children. My children should not be the only ones who get a great education because we live in a place where they can get one. It is wrong, it continues to be wrong but every time I go to the Legislature about this I hear the same old song, oh we cannot do that. Why? Oh well, you know we cannot do that. We all know why they cannot do that. Bought and paid for, bought and paid for, and there is no other reason not to do it. And there is no other reason not to do it. Everybody knows this stuff is true. And the last piece of this is, public charter schools were set up as laboratories so you can learn what was working there and apply it to the public schools but here is the deal. You cannot apply it to the public schools. You know why? Because they will not change the work rules. They will not give principals more flexibility, they will not have longer school days, they will not have a longer school year, they will not require the things charter schools require of their families and their children. It is an outrage and I am sickened by the fact that they are down there playing the theatre they are playing down there in Trenton but believe me, I am not the least bit surprised, not the least bit surprised. It is the same stupid show day after day after day. And whether you are talking about this thing or Atlantic City, or the Transportation Trust Fund, or any of the other stuff, it is the stupid show every day and people are tired of it. And so am I.

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