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## Governor Christie On John Degnan: Well Respected, Distinguished Public Official

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### Transcript:

**Governor Christie:** As you all know, General Degnan is a well respected, distinguished public figure who has served the people of New Jersey in many capacities over the last nearly three decades. I've asked John to take over the Port Authority's Board at an important time when it faces a number of really critical issues, from organizational reform to capital planning to ensuring the competitiveness of the Port and the regional economies. John's leadership ability and his experience is universally respected, both as a professional and as a volunteer when called upon and those experiences make him extremely well-suited to this next challenge. His charge from me is to do what he has always done in public life and that is to bring his best judgment without prejudice towards any conclusions about where this agency needs to go in order to meet its challenges and to serve the toll payers of New York and New Jersey. As many of you know, John is a registered Democrat and worked in the Administration both as Chief Counsel and Attorney General for Governor Brendan Byrne. But over his career, John has shown over and over again that he is willing to put service to the state and its people before partisan politics. And it's on that basis that I'm even more enthusiastic about his willingness to serve. As you may know John is a Harvard Law graduate and has served in a number different roles since 1990 with the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies here in New Jersey, Senior Vice President and General Counsel then as President, Chief Ethics officer and Vice Chairman of Chubb and then ultimately moving now to his current relationship with them on a consulting basis. John's professional success in the private sector never drew him too far though from public service and civic service. He's a Co-Chair alongside a former Justice Peter Veneiro on my safe taskforce on violence prevention, a member of the New Jersey Supreme Court Disciplinary Oversight Committee and the Supreme Court Committee on Attorney Discipline Proceedings, on the board of the RAND Foundation's Institute for Civil Justice, and as Co-Chair with former Gov. Christie Whitman on Gov. Corzine's Committee on Security Protocol for the Governor. He currently serves as member of my Judicial Advisory Panel, on the Board of Trustees of

the Saint Barnabas Medical Center and the Barnabas Health System, on the Board of St. Benedict's Prep School in Newark and also as a fellow of the American Bar Foundation. More important than anything else, at a time when there are significant challenges at the Port Authority both to its mission and to the purpose that it serves for the people of the region, I wanted someone with unquestioned credentials, both politically from a partisan perspective and from most importantly the issue of integrity. When I considered those factors I was thrilled that John was willing to step forward and serve one more time in a very high profile public role. And so I'm going to introduce John for some remarks. As is custom as you know in this state when you nominate somebody for a position of significance like this he will not be taking questions today. I will, because the first questions he'll take will come before the Senate Judiciary Committee. So I thank John for his willingness to step forward and to serve in this very important role. I look forward to a swift consideration by the Senate because we need leadership at the Port Authority. We need a chairman, and we need it as quickly as possible as we confront any number of the problems and issues that we have, so I call on the Senate to give him a swift hearing and consideration, and if they consider the merits of this nomination, which I'm confident they will, they will confirm him and John will be the next chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. John, thank you for your service.

**General John Degnan:** Thank you Governor. Those are very generous words, and I appreciate very much the confidence in me that is reflected in your decision, and I'll do my best to match your expectations as you've set them out for me. I don't have a lengthy speech prepared. Assuming the Senate gives me the chance to serve in this capacity I'll come to the job without any preconceived ideas. Much has been written about what is needed at the Port Authority and much of it sounds reasonable but that is from the outside looking in and all I can honestly say right now is that I am open to the best ideas we have. I have the Governor's mandate to be independent and open minded about the task for which I am very grateful. Governor Christie has set the tone with his positive working relationship with Governor Cuomo and it is one that I intend to emulate with my New York counterparts. There is a lot of work ahead of us and we have an obligation to work together to serve the best interests of the people of the region. I'm eager to get started and I'll do all I can to cooperate fully with the confirmation process as it moves forward. Thank you.

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