

In Case You Missed It: "Two Governors Find Common Ground"

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"Conventional political wisdom would never put Christie and McGreevey in the same room, let alone sitting side by side praising each other ... But as he has shown previously, most memorably when he praised President Obama's response to Sandy last fall, Christie is at his best when he puts partisan politics aside in favor of the greater good. This was one of those times." – *The Herald News Editorial, May 10, 2013*

Editorial
May 10, 2013
The Herald News

GOVERNOR CHRISTIE long has advocated sending drug offenders to treatment centers instead of jail. On Wednesday, the governor got a glimpse of the type of programs he supports when he visited Integrity House, a substance abuse rehabilitation center at the Hudson County jail in Kearny.

It's not unusual for elected officials to visit treatment centers, but this visit was different.

Christie's host was former Democratic Gov. James E. McGreevey, who has served as spiritual adviser to Integrity House for the last three years. McGreevey warmly praised Christie as doing more to fight substance abuse than any governor in recent memory.

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The governor told inmates they should not be ashamed of their past, explaining, "All of us in our lives fall down and make mistakes."

Christie last year signed a bill creating a pilot program in which non-violent drug offenders are sent to treatment centers like Integrity House as opposed to prison. His plan is for the program to be operating in every county of the state in four years. The justification for the idea is easy to see.

Not only does it give drug offenders a better chance to beat their addiction, it saves money. Estimates are that it costs the state nearly \$50,000 a year to put an individual in jail, but only \$24,000 a year to place that same person in a treatment center.

The governor's thinking is based on the commendable principle that people deserve second chances. That belief certainly made McGreevey's presence richly symbolic.

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Conventional political wisdom would never put Christie and McGreevey in the same room, let alone sitting side by side praising each other. Republicans still condemn McGreevey's time in office for reckless spending, and he is often ridiculed at partisan GOP gatherings.

But as he has shown previously, most memorably when he praised President Obama's response to Sandy last fall, Christie is at his best when he puts partisan politics aside in favor of the greater good.

This was one of those times.

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