

[Home](#)[Newsroom](#)[Media](#)[Administration](#)[NJ's Priorities](#)[Contact Us](#)[Press Releases](#)[Public Addresses](#)[Executive Orders](#)[Press Kit](#)[Reports](#)[Home](#) > [Newsroom](#) > [Press Releases](#) > [2013](#) > [Doing The Big Things In A Bipartisan Way](#)

Doing The Big Things In A Bipartisan Way

Tuesday, February 26, 2013

Tags: [Budget and Spending](#)

"Our bipartisan accomplishments in New Jersey have helped to set a tone that has taken hold across many other states. It is a simple but powerful message--lead on the tough issues by telling your citizens the truth about the depth of our challenges. Tell them the truth about the difficulty of the solutions."

– Governor Chris Christie, Remarks at Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, September 27, 2011

WORKING WITH ALL INVESTED PARTIES ON COMMON-SENSE SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE NEW JERSEY'S SCHOOLS

Working With Teachers To Bring Performance-Based Pay To Newark Schools:

For the first time in New Jersey history, teachers in Newark will earn raises and be eligible for additional bonuses based on annual performance evaluations that include measuring the progress being made by their students. This new contract will enable Newark to retain and reward the best teachers and improve the quality of education for their students:

Teachers will receive annual performance evaluations rating them as "Highly Effective," "Effective," "Partially Effective" or "Ineffective."

Teachers who earn a rating of "effective" or "highly effective" will qualify for annual raises while teachers who receive a less-than-satisfactory evaluation will remain frozen at their current salary level.

The best performing teachers will also be eligible to earn bonuses based on performance and need:

Up to \$5,000 for receiving a "Highly Effective" rating on their annual evaluation;

Up to an additional \$5,000 for receiving a "Highly Effective" rating while working in one of the districts lowest performing schools;

Up to an additional \$2,500 bonus a "Highly Effective" rating while working in a hard-to-staff subject;

These awards are cumulative, meaning that a "Highly Effective" teacher, working in a hard-to-staff subject field at one of the districts lowest performing schools can earn a bonus of up to \$12,500.

Historic Bipartisan Changes To The Nation's Oldest Tenure Law:

Marking the first extensive reform of New Jersey's tenure law in over 100 years, Governor Christie signed into law the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act, a sweeping, bipartisan overhaul of the oldest tenure law in the nation. The legislation:

Transforms the existing tenure system to now provide powerful tools to identify effective and ineffective teachers;

Strengthens the supports available to help all teachers improve their craft;

For the first time, ties the acquisition, maintenance, and loss of tenure to a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom;

Dramatically reduces the time and cost it takes to remove educators who are repeatedly ineffective in improving student outcomes.

The law was the result of nearly two years of consistent and vocal advocacy for real education reform by Governor Christie and good faith, bipartisan cooperation with members of the legislature, education reform advocates, and

Stay Connected
with Social Media

Stay Connected
with Email Alerts

LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT
WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

SHARE [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) ...

stakeholder groups.

Senator Teresa Ruiz (D-Essex): "It was about what I thought was right and what we know, that the teacher has the greatest impact on our children and what happens in the classroom." (John Mooney, "Compromise, Caffeine, and Trade-Offs: Behind NJ's New Tenure Reform Bill," *NJ Spotlight*, 8/7/12)

Senator Kevin O'Toole (R-Bergen): "[This] landmark achievement of bipartisanship was made possible in large part by Gov. Christie's fierce leadership and sponsor Senator Ruiz helping to propel students' needs in front of special political interests." (Jarrett Renshaw, "Gov. Christie hails signing of tenure reform bill as 'a great day for good teachers,'" *The Star-Ledger*, 8/7/12)

Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan (D-Middlesex): "This is meaningful tenure reform that does what's best for our children while balancing the protection of due process for our principals and teachers." (Assembly Democrats, "Diegnan, Caputo, Coutinho, Jasey, Watson Coleman & Coughlin Tenure Reform Bill Now Law," Press Release, 8/6/12)

Diegnan: "Our focus will be where it should be - making sure we have the best teachers in the classroom."

New Jersey Education Association President Barbara Keshishian: "The evolution of this law is a blueprint for effective public policy ..." (New Jersey Education Association, "'Win-Win' For Students, Teachers, And The Public," Press Release, 8/6/12)

Keshishian: "'We're happy to have been a part of the process that created this law ... It should go a long way to help us reach the goal of providing every child with the best teacher.'"

Better Education For Kids Executive Director Derrell Bradford: "This bill is monumental ... In 2009, if you told me we'd have tenure reform, I would have looked at you like you had two heads." (Heather Haddon, "Christie Hails Tenure Bill as Victory," *The Wall Street Journal*, 8/6/12)

IMPROVING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Continuing his strong record of bipartisan cooperation and compromise to put results before politics, Governor Chris Christie signed the bipartisan "New Jersey Medical and Health Sciences Education Restructuring Act" into law, achieving a long-awaited, dramatic overhaul and strengthening of the state's higher education system that had eluded leaders in the state for more than a decade. This significant and sweeping restructuring legislation, A-3102, will promote long-term, sustainable economic growth and high academic achievement by fostering three hubs of higher education excellence in the northern, central, and southern parts of the state.

Senate President Stephen Sweeney: "This is a legacy day for the state of New Jersey. Today, we're doing what other states couldn't do by making higher education in our state better ..." (David Levinsky, "Christie Signs Higher-Education Overhaul Into Law," *Burlington County Times*, 8/23/12)

Assembly Speaker Sheila Y. Oliver (D-Essex/Passaic): "This was always about creating a better and stronger New Jersey and building a better future, and in the end the bill sent to the governor was written in a way to ensure that indeed is the case. I look forward to seeing the progress it brings in the coming years." (Assembly Democrats, "Speaker Oliver Welcomes Long-Term Benefits of NJ's Higher Ed Restructuring," Press Release, 8/22/12)

Newark Mayor Cory Booker: "This legislation is a win for Newark, it is a win for Rutgers, it is a win for medical higher education, it is a win for our hospital, and it is a win for New Jersey." (Paul Milo, "UMDNJ Merger a 'Win for Newark,'" *Newark Patch*, 7/3/12)

PROMOTING EFFICIENCY AND SAVING TAXPAYER MONEY WITH PENSION BENEFITS REFORM

Governor Christie Signed Landmark Bipartisan Pension and Health Benefit Reform Legislation: Governor Chris Christie signed into law landmark pension and health benefit reform in June 2011, marking months of hard work, negotiation, compromise and ultimately bipartisan support. The fundamental reforms shake up New Jersey's out-of-date, antiquated and increasingly expensive pension and health benefit systems and bring to an end years of broken promises and fiscal mismanagement by securing the long-term solvency of the pension and benefit systems. At the same time, critical savings for state and local governments are achieved – pension reform alone will provide savings to New Jersey taxpayers of over \$120 billion over the next 30 years, and an additional \$3.1 billion over the next 10 years from health benefits reform.

Governor Chris Christie, Senate President Stephen Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver, Senate Minority Leader Thomas Kean, Jr. and Assembly Minority Leader Alex DeCroce:

"After months of serious discussions, we are pleased to announce that we have reached agreement on legislation to reform our public pension and health benefits systems in New Jersey. ...We all fully support this legislation and will work together to assure its passage by both houses of the Legislature and enactment into law...." ("Statement from Governor Chris Christie and the Legislative Leadership," Press Release, 6/15/11)

New Jersey State League of Municipalities:

"The League applauds the bipartisan efforts of those who can craft such legislation which would accomplish this while protecting our current retirees and grandfathering those eligible for retirement by not breaking our commitment to them. The League commends Speaker Sheila Oliver, Senate President Sweeney and Governor Chris Christie for their leadership championing these bipartisan reforms while achieving an important balance for all the major stakeholders." (New Jersey State League of Municipalities, "League Supports Progress on Pension and Health Reform," Press Release, 6/20/11)

New York Post:

"New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie pulled off something of a miracle this week -- pushing through a package of pension and benefits cuts for government employees that will save the state \$130 billion over the next 30 years. And he did it as the Republican governor of a blue state where Democrats run the House and Senate -- and where unions have long run the Dems. The changes are remarkable." (Editorial, "Christie wins again," *New York Post*, 6/25/11)

The Newark Star-Ledger:

"Compromise. Tackling A Critical Issue...The Deal Saves Money. Billions. And We Applaud It" (Editorial, "Benefits deal puts state on the right track," *Star-Ledger*, 6/17/11)

COMBATING DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION

Expanding The Drug Court Program For Non-Violent Drug Offenders: Governor Christie firmly believes that no life is disposable and the Fiscal Year 2013 budget provides \$2.5 million for an expansion of the drug court program for non-violent drug offenders, because everyone deserves a second chance.

Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-Mercer): "By expanding on the success of the voluntary drug court program and reaching even more people through mandatory treatment in their sentencing, we can save taxpayer dollars and, more importantly, help these individuals get their lives back." ("Governor Chris Christie Follows Through on Commitment to Reclaim Lives with Landmark, Bipartisan Mandatory Drug Court Law," Press Release, 7/19/12)

Senator Raymond Lesniak (D-Union): "This law expands access to the life-saving, cost-saving and crime-preventing opportunities provided by our drug courts to thousands of criminal offenders struggling with drug addiction." (Senate Democrats, "Lesniak-Scutari Drug Court Bill Signed Into Law," Press Release, 7/19/12)

Delia Bass-Dandridge, president of the Rescue Mission's Board of Directors: "We believe, as [Governor Christie] does, that everyone deserves a second chance," she said. "No life is dispensable." (Melissa Hayes, "Christie signs bill mandating drug offenders seek treatment," *The Record*, 7/19/12)

NJ Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies CEO Debra L. Wentz: "Christie's initiative is right on time to strengthen New Jersey and address a widespread health issue." (Debra L. Wentz, "Gov. Chris Christie's drug treatment plan good for jailed people, N.J.," *Star-Ledger*, 1/29/12)

TAX RELIEF TO NEW JERSEY FAMILIES

Ensured Lasting Property Tax Relief with 2% Cap: In July 2010, Governor Christie signed into law a 2% hard cap on property taxes, marking the first significant step toward bringing lasting property tax reform to New Jersey.

Newark Mayor Cory Booker:

"Whether you're leaders in the Senate like Sweeney or the Governor, everybody knows that. It's about how to figure out a path to get there and where Chris Christie is standing up and saying the right things, I'm going to stand with him." (MSNBC's "Morning Joe," 6/28/10)

The Gloucester County Times:

"Certainly, the governor and the Senate president deserve credit for showing that all is not lost in terms of their ability to play well together." (Editorial, "Big cheeses in accord on cap," *Gloucester County Times*, 7/7/10)

TRANSFORMATIONAL, LONG-OVERDUE INTEREST ARBITRATION REFORM

Signed Critical Tool Kit Measure for Local Governments with Interest Arbitration Reform: Working together with Senate and Assembly Leadership, Governor Christie signed into law transformational, long-overdue interest arbitration reform that provides municipalities with the help they need to keep property taxes down for New Jerseyans.

Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney (D):

"This is truly historic reform for New Jersey. ...And I thank the Governor for not only listening, but realizing that through compromise we could produce better legislation and stronger reform than any of us could have come up with on our own. Each of us shared the same goal: to revolutionize the system of binding arbitration, and for the first time, to ensure taxpayers stand on a level playing field with the police and fire unions. By putting aside partisanship, we did it." ("Sweeney: Landmark Arbitration Deal Good for Taxpayers, Towns And Public Employees," Press Release, 12/9/10)

Assembly Speaker Sheila Y. Oliver (D):

"This is a reasonable and commonsense plan that takes a big step toward long-term property tax reform. ...I'd like to thank everyone involved, including Senate President Sweeney and Gov. Christie, for their hard work and cooperation in getting this done." ("Speaker Oliver on Arbitration Agreement," Press Release, 12/9/10)

Assembly Budget Chairman Lou Greenwald (D):

"This legislation is exactly what New Jersey has needed..." ("Greenwald & Quigley Bill Revising Arbitration System to Bring Long-Term Property Tax Reform Advanced By Assembly Panel," Press Release, 12/9/10)

A COMMITMENT TO ATLANTIC CITY'S REVITALIZATION

Set Stage For Atlantic City's Economic Revitalization: Governor Chris Christie signed into law sweeping legislation to enact his reform plans to revitalize the ailing gaming and tourism industries in Atlantic City, and set the region on a new course for economic growth, job creation and prosperity.

Press of Atlantic City:

"A year ago today, Gov. Chris Christie stood on the Atlantic City Boardwalk and announced his plan to remake the resort - and to put the state in charge of a new Tourism District. So how's it going? Remarkably well, especially considering that the new law creating the Tourism District and putting the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority in charge of it was not approved by the Legislature and signed by the governor until Feb. 1. ...We were wary of the governor's plan. It was big, bold and all-inclusive. It can't work, we said to ourselves. Atlantic City is often where grand dreams die. But it *is* working. (Editorial, "Atlantic City One Year Later / Making Progress," *Press of Atlantic City*, 7/21/11)

PROTECTING NEW JERSEY'S ENVIRONMENT

Accelerated Work To Improve New Jersey's Environment And Expand Green Technologies: In December 2010, Governor Christie unveiled a comprehensive plan of action to address the short and long term ecological health of Barnegat Bay and to deal with the cooling system at the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant which has threatened the surrounding fish population. By January 2011, he signed legislation that targeted nutrient runoff from lawn and landscape fertilizers, soil restoration, and storm water basin repairs.

Jeff Tittel, Director Of The New Jersey Sierra Club:

"Today is a victory for the environment. ...Without these bills, especially the fertilizer bill, the Bay will die. ...These three bills are three of the most important first steps..." (Rob Spahr, "Christie Signs Barnegat Bay Legislation In Ocean County, *Press of Atlantic City*, 1/5/11)

Dena Mottola Jaborska, Executive Director Of Environment New Jersey:

"Gov. Christie and the Legislature deserve kudos for taking the first steps to deliver for the Shore." ("Tide Starts To Turn: Gov. Christie Takes First Step For The Shore With 3 Bills," Press Release, 1/5/11)

Rick Bushnell Of Reclaim The Bay, The Volunteer Shellfish Restoration And Public Education Group:

"I think this is the first time I've seen recognition that it's a multifaceted problem...It seemed in the past politicians always seized on the environmental cause du jour. This is the first time that's all come together." (Kirk Moore, "N.J. Begins Barnegat Bay Rescue," *Asbury Park Press*, 1/5/11)

Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
Kevin Roberts
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, 1996-2017
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000