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Gov. Christie: I Hope The Democrats Will Pass The Budget And If They Do, I Will Sign It

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Transcript:

Teresa Priolo: We should ask about this is really the Governor.

Antwan Lewis: We believe that the governor is joining us by phone. Mr. Governor, are you there sir.

Governor Christie: Yes, I am. Good morning.

Antwan Lewis: Good morning. Thank you so much for being on "Good Day New York."

Teresa Priolo: We'll start where we just let off Governor. Why now? What led to this point?

Governor Christie: Well, the constitution required the budget be done by June 30 or the government doesn't have money. And so, there has been no budget passed by the legislature. I said yesterday and I've been saying all week, if they pass a budget, I will sign it. And if they passed that budget by June 30th, whichever kind of budget they tried to pass, I would have signed whatever budget they sent me. But I've been telling everyone that, they have not passed a budget. The Democrats in the Legislature haven't done it and so we wait until they finally decide to get enough votes to pass the budget. They control both chambers of the Legislature by a large margin. It is up to Democratic party to pass the budget if they pass it I will sign it and the shutdown will end.

Antwan Lewis: Governor can you just tell us what exactly is the sticky point, we understand it has something to do with BlueCross BlueShield something with health care there in your state.

Governor Christie: It does. Well, that's one of the sticking points and basically what I've said is everybody out there in your audience knows that their health insurance premiums are going up double-digit percentages every year. And what we've found when we started to look at the Horizon BlueCross BlueShield. They have executives being paid millions of dollars of year. They have 15 different lobbyists they're paying \$50 million a year. And there's no transparency to this to the public. There's no transparency as to why they're making the money to make or charging the money they charge. So I've said I want accountability and transparency. They are a nonprofit, BlueCross BlueShield. They should file the forms of the federal government that every nonprofit does that shows how do they spend their money. They don't do that. There is no accountability. Their board is picked almost entirely by the Chairman and the CEO and so they are under the Chairman's and the CEO's thumb and yet the prices continue to go up. I think this is a really important issue for people and I have said I want a bill in that regard. And what I also have said, by the way, is, if they do not send me that bill, that is fine. Send me the budget anyway. And I will just line-item veto spending out to make sure that the budget balances without any additional spending that the Democrats want. And so it is a sticking point because I think it is a big issue, but if they didn't send me the bill, I would still sign the budget. But I just wouldn't give them the extra spending that they added to the budget I presented in February.

Teresa Priolo: And Governor if I understand this fight correctly and I do know that it is quite complicated, Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto said he believes that this issue should be handled outside of the budget negotiations. You and he have locked horns over this, however, the Senate President Steve Sweeney is behind the push. So do you think that this is just a show of force by some Democrats who because you are bound by term limits just don't want to see you succeed with your last budget?

Governor Christie: Yeah, I think that that is it. And in fact, Speaker Prieto said the reason he's doing this he doesn't want to give the governor a win. Well I mean, that's pretty small minded thinking. You're supposed to be representing the public and whether anyone perceives this as a win a win or loss for me, also why does it matter. I mean, in the end, I am not on the ballot this November. I've served two full terms as governor. I've been elected as much as I can be elected under our Constitution. So why does it matter? And let's remember something else, the bill I'm talking about regarding Blue Cross Blue Shield has been passed by the Democratic Senate. This is not just a Democrat Republican issue. This is just Vincent Prieto. Listen, I cannot tell you why. Who knows what Blue Cross Blue Shield has given him or members of his coalition to get him to be standing this way but the fact of the matter is you know the Democrats of the Senate passed the bill. I don't know why Speaker Prieto has decided to close down the government. And let me say one last thing about that. I have no choice but to close down the government. The constitution says if there is not a budget by midnight, 12:01 am on July 1, then the government has no money and the government must be closed. So it's not like it's an optional exercise by me. I have no choice. The constitution requires it. Other states do not require the government be closed. They just allow them to run a deficit, that's not the way it works in New Jersey.

Antwan Lewis: Governor Christie, we know that closure includes of course, the parks there in the Garden State. Can we talk about the controversy going on with this picture on the front page of the Star-Ledger. It shows you at the beach. Can you respond to that? A lot of people are upset about seeing that.

Governor Christie: Sure, well let's just say that the governor has two residences in New Jersey. One is down at the beach at Island Beach State Park and at Drumthwacket which is also in Princeton and it's a park where people come and tour and visit as well. The Governor is allowed to go to his residences. And I'm at my residence. And I'll tell you this, I said last Monday, a week ago today, that no matter what happened, we are coming here as a family this weekend. This is where we live, one of the places we live and so what a great bit of journalism by the Star-Ledger. They actually caught a politician being where he was going to be with the people he said he was going to be with, his wife and his children and their friends. So I'm sure they're going to get a Pulitzer Prize for this one because they actually proved they caught me doing what I said to do with the people I said I was going to be with.

Teresa Priolo: But Governor, there was some back and forth yesterday about this. When asked if you had any time in the sun. Your people apparently said no. And then they said well he was wearing a cap. I mean it perhaps with tongue-in-cheek but on a more serious note, at this point at least according to Quinnipiac University your poll numbers are not fantastic. You are registering at 15%, which according to Quinnipiac University is the worst approval rating for any governor in any state ever conducted by them so some are saying on social media that it shows maybe you may be a bit out of touch with what the people in New Jersey are going through especially since it is a holiday weekend. Do you care to respond to that?

Governor Christie: My response is if the Legislature would pass a budget, then the park would be open as I said I would sign the budget. And by the way, again, this is the governor's residence. I told people starting last Monday that our family had plans to be here, along with friends who are flying from all over the country. And so we were going to be here, we are here and so I was actually caught being where I said I would be with the people I said I was going to be with. Most of the time when they catch politicians with hidden cameras and planes flying over you, they catch you with someone you're not supposed to be with. I was actually with who I was supposed to be with and where I was supposed to be. And I really wonder about journalists who spend money flying planes to look whether people are actually where they said they would be. I'm sure there are Pulitzer coming, it will be great.

Antwan Lewis: Governor Christie we thank you for being on Good Day this morning with us. We hope that you and lawmakers there in the Garden State will be able to resolve this issue really, really quickly.

Governor Christie: I hope the Democrats will pass the budget and if they do, as I said I would starting on Thursday, I will sign it if they send it.

Teresa Priolo: Thank you. Enjoy your fourth.

Governor Christie: Thank you. You two.

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