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Subject: "We Have More Work To Do Here In New Jersey. And I Look Forward To Working Together With All Of You To Get It Done."

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"We Have More Work To Do Here In New Jersey. And I Look Forward To Working Together With All Of You To Get It Done."

Excerpts from Governor Chris Christie's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Address

Trenton, New Jersey
February 16, 2016

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"With every budget that I have presented in this chamber, New Jersey has continued to advance down the path towards a future of greater justice and opportunity for all. When it comes to making the investments we need, we've never hesitated. But we've shown that we can live within our means.

"And today, it's important that we continue to hold our course. Because no matter how much progress we've achieved, all this can still be undone. That's right - Reversed. The private sector job growth, Reversed. The housing market recovery, Reversed. The smaller government we have achieved – Bloated once again.

"We live in a time when our national economy and the global economy face new threats. New Jersey cannot stand alone – our state has to be ready to weather the economic storms as well as the actual storms."

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"Will we work together to make progress for our citizens or will we just engage in partisanship?"

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"Let me remind you – the election of our next Governor is 630 days away. 630 days, are we going to waste those days on partisanship and politics? Or will you work with me to use those 630 days to help bring relief to our overburdened taxpayers?"

"We have made so much progress over the 2,220 days together. Against all odds. Nearly 10% unemployment when we started. 5.1% unemployment today.

"\$11 multi-billion deficit when we started. \$800 Million surplus today.

"7% yearly property tax increases when we started. Less than 2% average per year today.

"Zero net private sector job growth in the eight years before we started. 230,000 new private sector jobs in the last six years and, this year, the best private sector job growth in fifteen years.

“The largest public University merger, between Rutgers and UMDNJ, in American history which previous governments had tried and failed over and over again. Over \$1.3 Billion invested in capital improvements to our colleges and universities for the first time in thirty years. Over \$24 Billion invested in our infrastructure in the last six years.

“Criminal justice reform which made bail available to those who deserve it and keeps the truly violent off our streets. Crime rates down. Prison population down and a state prison closed. Drug courts in every county and a new emphasis on treating this disease and saving lives. More of our developmentally disabled in group homes and fewer in institutions. More of our poor receiving good health care and charity care in our hospitals dramatically reduced.

“A dramatic expansion of solar energy and the meeting of our 2020 clean air goals, all without taxing our citizens through the discredited Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. More money is being spent on K-12 education than any time in history and more families being saved by charter schools in our cities than ever before. And all of this has been done with no new state tax increases in six years, no radical expansion of government regulation and 10,000 fewer state employees.

“We did all of this together in the last 2,220 days. Regardless of our party differences. Regardless of the relentless selfishness of the special interests. Regardless of the constant negativity of the media. Are we willing to do this again over the last 630 days or will we succumb to politics, selfishness and negativity?

“I am standing here to tell you I am willing to continue to fix the remaining problems. Let’s take the next steps to insure our future. Lower taxes to stop people leaving New Jersey. Build infrastructure in a way that is fair to our taxpayers. Fix our pension and health benefit system in a way that will not divide and burden our taxpayers, but will bring closer together the real world and the excesses of the government world. I am ready to work with you if you are willing to stop the partisanship and the reckless amending of our constitution just to score political points. We can sit and reason together for the next 630 days or we can fight for the next 630 days and leave our citizens without hope.

“I want to face the future with faith and hope in the people we elected and appointed to make life better. All the problems created by people can be solved by people – and we’re the ones who have to make it happen.

“Over the years I’ve also been honored to work with all of you to make good things happen in New Jersey. We might not always agree on everything, but we’ve always been able to have the hard conversations we need to move our State forward. Let’s do that now, and continue to invest in making New Jersey the greatest State possible for all our people.”

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