



Latin Jazz at the Vineyard: Karen Rodriguez performs holiday music Salsa-style, December 18, Crossing Vineyards, Washington Crossing, PA.

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Can Chris Christie Really Trim New Jersey's Fat?

The governor-elect promised to fix the bloated state. A dozen influential minds offer advice.

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And Can He Trim His Own?

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What Should Christie Do?

- Advice from
- Marie Bilik
- William Dressel
- Debbie Hart
- Philip Kirschner
- Rich Lee
- Ingrid Reed
- John Sarno
- Steven Some
- Robert Stack
- Christine Whitman

Christie's Challenges – Most Are Financial

When Chris Christie takes over as governor next month he will be starting on ground that has been scorched by rising unemployment, bad management by the state legislature, crushing property taxes, and fiscal bumbling.

Taking over amid one of the worst economies in 50 years, Christie has vowed to cut the fat out of the state's bloated budget. His first task will be to snip \$800 million from the state budget, an action widely expected to include state layoffs and hiring freezes.

Born in 1962 in Newark, Christie grew up in Livingston. There he became a solid high school baseball player and avid fan of Bruce Springsteen. Christie even invited "the Boss" to play at his inaugural gala, but Springsteen turned him down.

Home is also where he learned about politics. His father, Bill, a retired CPA, is a longtime Republican, while his mother, Sondra, who died in 2003, was a lifelong Democrat.

An independent woman who, according to many of Christie's friends, taught him the value of leadership and independence, Sondra Christie was the first to encourage her son to volunteer for the campaign of a local assemblyman in his campaign for governor. That candidate, Tom Kean, became a role model for Christie.

In 1984 Christie graduated from the University of Delaware and entered

law school at Seton Hall. He met his wife, Mary Pat, in his senior year at Delaware. The couple came to New Jersey, where he took a job at Dughi, Hewit &

Palatucci, a law firm in Cranford, while she went to work at Cantor Fitzgerald, a financial firm on Wall Street. Christie was made partner at Dughi, Hewit & Palatucci in 1993; Mary Pat left her job after 9/11 but has recently returned to the field.

The Christies now live in Mendham with their four children.

At the law firm, Christie met his main political ally in William Palatucci, a Republican player with many political ties. The friendship served Christie well, putting him in the path of several rising Republican celebrities.

One was a senatorial hopeful named Christine Todd Whitman, for whom Christie wrote position papers in 1990.

Christie and Palatucci also coordinated George H.W. Bush's 1992 re-election campaign in New Jersey.



In 1994 Christie won his only other elected office, as a freeholder in Morris County. The election was noted for the suits filed by the defeated incumbents alleging defamation during the primary. The suit was settled out of court and Christie became the freeholder director in 1997.

As a lawyer and lobbyist, Christie built a personal fortune worth more than \$1 million, according to his income tax returns. From 1999 to 2001 he lobbied in favor of energy regulation on behalf of GPU Energy, and against consumer fraud.

Christie's Republican connections made him a major supporter of George W. Bush's first presidential

campaign in 2000. In turn, Bush nominated Christie to be New Jersey's chief federal prosecutor — though he had no prosecutorial experience — in 2001. His

term in that post lasted until last December and was roundly seen as successful by politicians and journalists of all stripes. But at the time, Christie's nomination was considered textbook political pandering by many, and accusations of glad-handing and corruption flew with abandon.

Christie's term as U.S. attorney was considered a success because he did so much to fight corruption here. Christie built his reputation as a corruption buster, convicting 130 public officials, Republican and Democrat, without losing a single case. He has been applauded by Democrats and Republicans for his efforts against corporate crime, human trafficking, gangs, terrorism, and polluters as well.

Despite his reputation for attacking corruption, Christie based his campaign for governor almost entirely on the economy. The cam-

aign's definition of corruption was all about the money and its misuse in the state and did not take his traditional tough-guy stance for specific causes unless they involved misleading the state's taxpayers.

He faced his share of accusations as well, including his acceptance of more than \$23,000 in campaign donations from a law firm that had won a lucrative federal contract during Christie's time as U.S. attorney, and his admitted failure to report a \$46,000 loan to his first assistant attorney, Michele Brown.

He also faced copyright infringement because of his unauthorized use of a clip from "Monty Python's Flying Circus."

Christie's main campaign thrust was against bloat in the state budget. A state hiring freeze and a round of layoffs are expected, and Christie made a pledge to cut \$800 million from the budget.

He also made a pledge not to raise taxes, and even to lower state income and business taxes. He has been a vocal opponent of the scale of the state Department of Environmental Protection, which he said is "killing business" with its fines and over-regulation.

John Sarno: Employers Advocate

John Sarno is the president of the Employers Association of New Jersey, a Livingston-based advocacy and policy group with a major worry this year — an increase in employer contributions to the state's badly deflated unemployment insurance trust fund. Unless Chris Christie can state it off, employers around the state will be paying more into the fund by July.

The fund, which pays for unemployment benefits, is in a nearly

\$800 million hole — the amount Christie has pledged to trim from the budget — after 15 years of bipartisan legislative reshuffling that has redirected the fund toward charity care and healthcare for the poor.

The \$4.7 billion worth of reshuffling has saddled employers with picking up the difference. State law dictates that if the fund gets too low, an automatic increase in employer contributions kicks in.

One increase kicked in earlier this year, though its impact was relatively minor. Without some sort of fix, however, that increase could seem like the carrot before the stick, as employers could be asked to contribute as much as \$700 per employee more next year.

Christie's transition team is already at work on ways to halt the automatic increase. In July, 2008, Governor Jon Corzine signed a \$260 million bill to ward off the impending contribution increase.

But New Jersey, a state of 8 million, faces an almost 10 percent unemployment rate, thereby increasing the demand for resources in the fund. On top of that, the state is looking to cut \$800 million from the budget this year. Where Christie will find the money is one of his biggest challenges as he enters the Statehouse.

New Jersey faces short and long-term economic challenges and potential opportunities. The two-year recession has accelerated long-term trends, and its aftershocks will leave a permanently altered business environment for the state. Chief among these trends are the depletion of manufacturing, the decline of private sector labor unions, outsourcing, and the consolidation of big corporations.

Additionally, the federal health care reform will most likely permit New Jersey to opt out of whatever government-sponsored health care plan is likely to emerge. This decision will be enormously complex and will have a big impact on the health and welfare of the workforce.

Governor-elect Christie has an opportunity to refocus on job training and workforce health, wellness, and productivity. His new labor commissioner should look carefully at how existing job training money is being spent and begin an immediate dialogue with Washington, D.C.

The Department of Labor has a big fund for worker retraining, so there cannot be an adversarial relationship with the Obama administration. There has to be a close working relationship in order to transform the state's unemployment insurance program into a reemployment program.

Likewise, the small employer health insurance market is broken. Insurance companies, hospitals, and health care providers dominate

The State of Things: Chris Christie is about to enter the Statehouse in Trenton with a resource never before available — a lieutenant governor. Christie and Kim Guadagno face one of the worst economies in 50 years, but hope and advice abound.

policy making in New Jersey. A public plan is anathema to these interests, but it deserves consideration if health insurance is to remain affordable to small business.

Philip Kirschner: Business Advocate

Philip Kirschner is president of the New Jersey Business & Industry Association in Trenton, an advocacy group representing more than 23,000 companies in the state.

The business community is among the most optimistic about Chris Christie's governorship. Christie's campaign made much of the need for New Jersey to back and grow its business community.

From the business community's perspective, Governor-elect Chris Christie is off to a great start. From the beginning, Christie pledged to cut taxes and reduce the red tape that drags down our economy, and he made it clear that helping businesses create jobs in New Jersey would be a top priority. Since winning the election he has hit the right notes and already taken action to signal that the Christie Administration is going to be business-friendly.

One of the first acts of his transition was to form a task force to analyze New Jersey's burdensome regulatory system and put his Lieutenant Governor-elect, Kim Guadagno, in charge of it. Christie has also said that once in office he will sign an executive order suspending the implementation of any new regulations for 90 days.

On taxes Christie has said he will let expire a number of temporary corporate and income tax increases enacted last year.

Among other things, he wants to let expire an \$80 million surcharge on corporate income taxes that was supposed to end last year, as well as a one-year income tax increase that hit small S corporations and LLCs particularly hard.

Christie also wants to tackle New Jersey's notoriously high property taxes by getting rid of unfunded state mandates that drive up costs for local governments.

These are all the right moves to get New Jersey's economy growing again. There is another important issue looming on the horizon — payroll taxes.

New Jersey's unemployment insurance fund is running out of money and could be facing a deficit of \$1 billion.

If something is not done by the end of March employers in New Jersey will get hit with a huge payroll tax increase that will make it much harder to hire people and create the jobs we need.

Unlike other taxes, payroll tax increases do not receive an up or down vote in the Legislature, nor do they get signed or vetoed by the governor.

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Federal law requires that once the fund's balance dips below a certain level taxes on employers are raised automatically. And because the tax rate is tied directly to an employer's payroll, it will directly affect each employer's ability to hire new people, or simply hang on to the ones they have.

Employers have already absorbed a \$400 million payroll tax increase this year. The only way to fix the problem is to put more funding back into the unemployment insurance fund to keep it from triggering a tax increase.

It's another tough issue brought on by decades of short-sighted policy decisions by past administrations. Since 1993, the state has diverted \$4.7 billion worth of unemployment insurance payroll taxes to the general fund.

Had past elected officials simply left the fund alone, it would have more than enough reserves to cover today's high unemployment benefit claims, even as our unemployment rate hits a 26-year high.

As U.S. attorney for New Jersey, Chris Christie successfully handled many tough cases. Fixing the state's fiscal mess, including the unemployment insurance fund, is another tough one.

Debbie Hart: New Jersey Biotech

Debbie Hart is the president of BioNJ, the state's leading voice for the biotechnology industry, based in Hamilton.

In Princeton, where biotech and pharma still reign, though with a slightly tarnished scepter, the state's interest in high-tech business could have far-reaching effects in and beyond the area.

As you wrestle with the tasks of addressing a significant budget crisis and growing New Jersey's economy, the companies of the state's biotechnology community — which have seen their numbers triple in a little more than a decade — encourage you to continue to support the economic incentive programs provided by the state Economic Development Authority, the New Jersey Commission on Science & Technology, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development that have helped drive this burgeoning economic engine and to work with us to find new ways to enhance and expand these proven programs.

In doing so medical discoveries and economic returns will surely follow. Now composed of more than 240 companies, New Jersey's biotechnology industry includes such recognized names as Celgene Corporation, Genmab, Amicus Therapeutics, PTC Therapeutics, and Chromocell, and represent promising therapies and cures as well as high-paying jobs and tax and other revenues to the state.

We also encourage you to look for new and innovative ways to support the industry and would be pleased to work with you to do so.

Finally, your visibility and active engagement of the industry here and abroad will greatly assist retention and attraction efforts. We at BioNJ stand ready to assist and support you and wish you well in your very difficult, but exciting new post. Here's to a more economically sound New Jersey.

Ingrid Reed: Eagleton Institute

Ingrid Reed is the policy analyst and director of the New Jersey Pro-



Business, Industry, Policy: Chris Christie's day-to-day dealings with lobbyists and policy analysts will shape much of his term. Some he will be aware of include, clockwise from left: John Sarno of the Employers Association of NJ; Philip Kirschner of NJBIA; Debbie Hart of BioNJ; and Ingrid Reed of the Eagleton Institute.



ject, Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University and a resident of Princeton Borough.

Campaign promises aside, Chris Christie's term as governor likely will be defined by his day-to-day dealings with lobbyist trying to curry his favor. His success or failure will be in how he interacts with them.

To Governor-elect Christie:

No need to remind you these are tough times in New Jersey. And maybe you don't need to be reminded that you bring impressive assets to leading the state. But I will remind you anyway.

You represent the new generation of leaders in their mid-40s who have experienced unprecedented

opportunities but are still striving to make the most of them for themselves and society.

You are comfortable with the new media. You communicate with ease, both formally and informally.

Your successful campaign showed that you can produce smartly on a modest budget.

Your career as U.S. attorney seemed to invigorate shared values of ethical public service and raise expectations for how the business of government should be conducted.

You enlisted the voters to entrust you with leading our state to a brighter future.

You appear to have enlisted the legislature to work with you. New Jerseyans will be watching how our basic belief in a system of sep-

aration of powers will work out for the benefit of the citizens. This will be tested when decisions about budget cuts reveal conflicting political values and concerns for efficiency and fairness when crafting solutions to the state's problems.

Since no democracy can succeed without a competent and dedicated bureaucracy to carry out the work of government, you will need to enlist the public managers — those now running programs and

Continued on following page

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Continued from preceding page

those you recruit. Count on them to do more with less. Have high expectations of them. Trust their assessments when they tell you what can and cannot be done as well as who gains or loses when tough choices are made.

Expect them to be accountable. Take advice from New York City's mayor, Michael Bloomberg. He runs a city with the same number and diversity of people as our state. He says "if you can't measure it, you can't manage it." Apply that advice when reforming regulations and mandates to separate complaints from problems. Use it when evaluating state grants and investments.

For example, grants for initiating shared services should include expected saving. Grants to support municipal consolidation should demonstrate how to lower cost of government. When the state pays, it should mean that all state taxpayers gain in efficiency, effectiveness, and lower costs.

Finally, enlist the people. They want and deserve real facts and reliable explanations to understand our state's problems. Be a teacher, not a preacher, but remember that you do have a bully pulpit.

You have a state website. Describe what an \$8 billion deficit actually means. What are the components of the revenue needed? Where does it come from? What expenditures are absolutely necessary? Which ones are optional?

Use charts, pictures, easy to understand terms.

A democracy works if people can trust their leaders and can verify what they learn from them. You do have assets — except financial ones — going for you. Use them in good health and with great satisfaction and success for you and us.

Steven Some: Public Affairs Analyst

Steven Some is president of Capital Public Affairs, a public policy group based on Mapleton Road.

Some worries about the state of the economy — one of the worst in the last 50 years — but is optimistic that Christie can rejuvenate the state, so long as he can maintain the public's confidence.

Upon taking office in January, Governor-elect Chris Christie and his administration will be facing an unprecedented fiscal crisis requiring extraordinary measures. Severe cuts in state spending and possible state employee layoffs, along with other major changes to the way state government has been functioning over the years, are likely being considered by the new administration.

Right now the public is hopeful that the new governor and his administration will do what is necessary to restore New Jersey's fiscal well-being, which will enable the state to provide a better future for



Public and Municipal Affairs: Christie also will face hard realities concerning the state's 566 municipalities, as well as its press corps. Left to right, Steven Some of Capital Public Affairs; William Dressel of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities; and Rich Lee of the Hall Institute of Public Policy.

the next generation. My advice to the new governor is to assemble the best and brightest communications professionals to work with him in the governor's office.

Maintaining public support for the new governor's agenda for change is extremely important and will be critical to his success in dealing with the state legislature. It is essential for him to remain very close to the public, especially in the early days of his administration.

Chris Christie is an articulate speaker and has a strong personality, two qualities that serve him well in communicating with legislators and the public. He should follow in the footsteps of former President Ronald Reagan, who was hailed as a great communicator, and take every opportunity to speak directly to the public.

I would recommend that Governor Christie have regular press conferences, appear regularly on "Ask the Governor" radio talk

shows, and hold town hall meetings and forums throughout the state so that he can answer questions from the public.

In addition, the governor's office should take full advantage of the new social media, like Facebook and Twitter, in communicating with the public, and the governor should encourage the public to write to him at a special E-mail account.

William Dressel: NJ Municipalities

William Dressel is the executive director of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities in Trenton. More than anyone, Dressel is concerned over how the state's actions affect every town in New Jersey. A major factor, as it always is, will be affordable housing.

Governor-elect Christie should focus on cost-savings that are permanent in several priority areas. The most pressing issue is unfunded mandates — something Lieutenant Governor-elect Kim Guadagno has been charged with identifying. Relief from these mandates would mean real property tax relief for all New Jersey taxpayers. These mandates include:

COAH reform. There is little doubt that affordable housing is a

Affordable housing is a real and persistent need in our state. The Christie Administration must reform the COAH process.

real and persistent need in our state. However, the assessments and calculations by the Council on Affordable Housing are the subject of the current controversy. New Jersey municipalities have already spent tens of thousands of dollars, and, in some cases, hundreds of thousands of dollars, preparing plans based on faulty data and on projections that conflict with other state planning priorities.

With two dozen current appeals of the COAH third round regulations pending, it is likely that local governments will again be forced to expend resources preparing new plans. The Christie Administration must reform the COAH process, to harmonize housing policy with other state planning priorities, and to reduce the financial obligation on our taxpayers.

Binding interest arbitration. This process allows a union to

bring in a neutral third-party arbitrator whenever economic issues, such as salary percentage increases, longevity pay, or shift and rank differentials, remain unresolved between a town and its fire or police force after at least three negotiation sessions. After considering guidelines contained in the law, the arbitrator has the power to impose the terms of a new contract.

Currently, arbitrators function without supervision or control. Although the statute has criteria dealing with ability to pay, and requires a measurement of the "total net annual economic change" for each year of the contract, they often receive little attention. The recent State Commission of Investigation report, "The Beat Goes On," details many such abuses in compensation and benefits that result from this process.

In addition to police and fire fighters, almost all other local government employees have benefited from this, though to a lesser extent. At times municipal collective bargaining units will wait for the municipality to settle with the police or fire union prior to negotiating, so as not to "lose out" on any benefits, including percentage increases, given to the police or fire unions.

Pension contributions. The municipality must contribute a percentage determined by the Division of Pension instead of negotiating the employer "match" by contract. Every municipality is unique and should be able to come to an agreement with their employees through the contract negotiation process.

More than ever, in tough economic times, the people need property tax relief. To do this, Governor-elect Christie should provide immediate relief from unfunded mandates.

Rich Lee: Press Advocate

Rich Lee is the communications director for the Hall Institute of Public Policy, a non-partisan policy advocacy group based in Trenton, and the former head of communications for Governor Jim McGreevey.

One of Lee's concerns is the pending relationship between Chris Christie and the press. At age 47, Christie is among the youngest governors elected here, and his technological savvy makes him comfortable with all forms of electronic and traditional media.

But he also is known for his temper with critics. How he will manage his public image and how the people of New Jersey will respond to him will rely on how accessible Christie will be while in Trenton.

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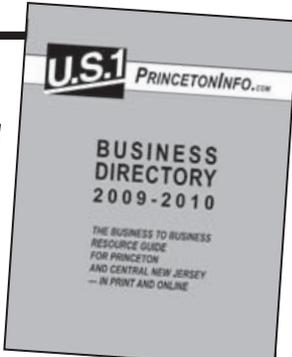
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In the few years that have passed since I taught public relations at the college level, the business has changed significantly, largely due to the continued growth of the Internet and social networks. However, the greatest change in the industry may not have been a technological one but a fundamental shift in the relationship between the news media and the people and organizations they cover.

As a public relations instructor, I stressed the value of building a strong, working relationship with the press. Whether it was writing press releases, planning news conferences, or answering questions from reporters, I taught my students that the best way to garner positive coverage for their clients was to be honest, accessible, and cooperative.

Lately, however, I sense that the dynamic has changed.

On the national level, Sarah Palin rarely gets through a speech or an interview without chastising the media — and she's drawing record crowds to her public appearances while her book is on top of the best seller lists. And it's not just conservatives who have been taking aim at the Fourth Estate. The Obama administration has been extremely vocal in its criticism of Fox News and has even boycotted the network at times in an effort to alter the tone of the coverage and fire up the President's supporters.

So would national figures such as Barack Obama and Sarah Palin receive failing marks were they to take my Public Relations 101 course? Poor grades might have been justified four or five years ago, but I have to admit treating the press with disdain has its advantages today.

Education: Marie Bilik, left, of the New Jersey School Boards Administration.



For starters, public opinion of the news media is at a low point. According to the PEW Project for Excellence in Journalism, public opinion on accuracy, morality, professionalism and bias in the press is lower today than it was a generation ago.

And an NBC/Wall Street Journal poll conducted earlier this year found that only 8 percent of Americans have a great deal of confidence in national news media — and 18 percent have no confidence at all.

Secondly, since public opinion of the media is so poor, the press makes a perfect scapegoat for politicians who are unable or unwilling to address the many serious and complex problems confronting our nation, our states, and our communities today. Why not blame the press for fueling partisanship and polarization — or for focusing on motor vehicle infractions, infidelity and other transgressions instead of substantive issues (even when it often is politicians and their campaigns — not the media — driving these stories)?

Lastly, why should public figures bother to court the press and build relationships today when it is so easy to bypass traditional media outlets and deliver information directly to the public through the Internet and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube? Their messages can arrive in the inboxes of constituents just as they intended it, without the editing and

scrutiny of the press.

This trend in media and government relations comes to mind as a new gubernatorial administration is preparing to take office in New Jersey. Governor-elect Chris Christie and his transition team have begun the process of building their administration, and much time will be spent on structuring the executive branch.

For the new Governor's press office, this means making decisions such as who will serve as the chief executive's spokesperson, who will write his speeches, and how many deputy and assistant press secretaries will be needed.

But a more important decision may be what type of attitude the new Governor and his administration take toward the media.

Is it still important to build a strong, cooperative relationship with the press? Or do the advantages of using the press as a foil outweigh the benefits of developing a good rapport with the media?

The answer is not as simple as it was a few years ago, but New Jersey's recently completed gubernatorial election suggests that taking

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Compatriots: Robert Stack of Community Options with Chris Christie. Stack is part of Christie's transition team.

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on the media can be an effective strategy.

During the campaign, Christie showed that he wasn't shy about criticizing reporters and news organizations when he felt he was being treated unfairly — and now he's the one preparing to move into the Statehouse.

Marie Bilik: Education Advocate

Marie Bilik is the executive director of the New Jersey School Boards Association in Trenton.

Chris Christie's relationship with state educators has run hot and cold. Christie, whose own children attend Catholic school, strongly supports tax credits for parents who send their children to private and parochial schools, charter schools, and merit pay — as opposed to automatic pay increases and tenure — for all districts.

His campaign also made much of his support for state-funded vouchers, which can be used to move students from failing school districts to private schools in lieu of tuition, or public schools willing to accept them.

New Jersey taxpayers fund 60 percent of all school district budgets. Christie must find a better answer.

munities' ability to pay and less on other districts' settlements; and restore school boards' ability to implement their last best offer when negotiations are fully exhausted.

Promote shared services. A 2007 Rutgers study, commissioned by the New Jersey School Boards Association, documented numerous examples of shared services, ranging from joint banking to shared business office functions. That same study identified legal obstacles to sharing services. School districts share services when they identify two outcomes: cost-savings and improved delivery. The new administration should give priority to the concept.

Reduce reliance on property taxes. The state government supports less than 40 percent of public school costs. Local property taxes cover close to 60 percent. That ratio has not changed much over three decades.

Nationwide, the state tax vs. local property tax split is roughly 50-50. New Jersey's low level of state support is a major cause of its high property tax bills. A revenue-neutral tax shift could lower property taxes without increasing spending.

Reduce unfunded mandates. A plethora of requirements come from Washington and Trenton without the dollars to back them up. Common complaints are paperwork and administrative regulations that take up valuable time.

For school districts, state and federally required special education remains one of the major cost drivers. Certainly, special education is one of the success stories of our schools. And full state funding for required special education programming would retain these programs, while reducing property taxes in virtually every New Jersey community.

New Jersey's public schools rank among the top on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the most reputable apples-to-apples comparison of student achievement among the states. Despite the red tape from the state and federal governments, New Jersey spends a smaller share of its education budget on administration than do 40 other states, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Our state also spends below the nationwide average on school and central office administration.

Neither school boards nor the incoming governor would want our schools to backslide. Ultimately, the quality of public education is a key element in making New Jersey a desirable place to live and operate a business.

In the coming weeks Governor-elect Christie will hear plenty of advice about ways to rein in taxes and run government. Our state's future depends on two interrelated goals: Improving the state's economy, while maintaining quality public education.

Here are some ideas:

Break the mold. Christie has called for expansion of charter schools. But his administration also needs to break the mold in the so-called "regular public schools" by advancing merit pay, the elimination of lifetime tenure (essentially, a job protection), and further strengthening academic standards. These efforts will improve the quality of instruction and student achievement.

Strengthen school boards in contract negotiations. New Jersey school boards negotiate with affiliates of one of the best financed and most powerful public employee unions in the nation.

Current bargaining laws work to the unions' advantage. Here are three ways to balance the process: Support strong anti-strike penalties; when negotiations become deadlocked, focus fact-finders' recommendations more on com-

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Continued on following page

Robert Stack: Disability Advocate

Robert Stack is the president and CEO of Community Options Inc., a Farber Road-based group that looks to find jobs for handicapped individuals. He also is a member of Christie's Transition Subcommittee of Human Services and Children and Families.

Q: How can Mr. Christie get done what he said he will do?

A: You have to remember two things: First, that he is a man of principle. He is not going to make a decision because it will help advance him politically. He knew that this is not going to be a popularity contest. He is going to make decisions that are founded on the most profound utilitarian logic possible. He will remain disciplined and unflappable in getting New Jersey back on track.

Second, Christie is also somewhat Socratic in his approach. He knows that he doesn't know everything. Rather than function as though he is the only one with ideas, he will reach out to others and ask them for opinions and ideas. He will synthesize these perspectives and ideas and then arrive at a logical approach and make the right move.

Q: Christie is looking to cut spending: Where and how should he do it best?

A: My background will simply point to the way that services to persons with disabilities in New Jersey are provided. It is extremely expensive, and in my opinion cutting funding for community care is not in the best interest when it comes to adults with disabilities. We have more people with cerebral palsy and autism and mental retardation in institutions than 48 other states.

The only state that has more people with disabilities in its institutions is Texas. There are almost three times as many people living there than in New Jersey, and still they only have 2,000 more people living in these costly segregated facilities.

This is the result of lack of good leadership at the state level and the complacency that arose on the part of parents who were told to be patient.

Experience: Christine Todd Whitman, former governor of New Jersey.

They were also told that the institutions were the best thing for their son or daughter and because of the lack of exposure to community alternatives, they never knew anything else.

We need to let families see other things that do in fact work. We need to help them raise the bar on their expectations and then the bar will be raised for their loved one in need of support. The government has to consolidate institutions, reduce the wait list and increase family support.

Another way Christie is going to save big bucks is with good leadership. He has to empower his managers and hold them accountable rather than micro-manage them and play puppet master. There is so much government waste on so many different fronts. Why is there a Princeton Borough and Princeton Township? Why is there an East, North, South and New Brunswick?

There are reasons that accounting firms merged. It saved administrative costs. Consolidation, less intrusive services for persons with disabilities, and leadership are great ways to cut costs.

Q: Where should he not cut?

A: I know the one place he won't cut a dime. That is integrity. He has a lot of it; he demands it from others and he won't cut corners in that department.

Q: What advice would you give the governor-elect?

A: He is a Jersey boy. He knows he is and we know he is. When he speaks I honestly believe that his accent is a mix of both north and south Jersey.

A Jersey boy doesn't take any you know what from anybody. A Jersey boy is focused. Abraham Lincoln said "Only a fool trusts everyone ... or no one."

Christie needs to pick his battles and trust the right people, but by all means stick to his guns and never forget where he works and where he was born and whom he works for — New Jersey. The governor should not be afraid to listen to both sides of the aisle as well as the middle, and maybe a couple of hecklers in the balcony too.



Christine Whitman: A View from Inside

Christine Todd Whitman is president of Whitman Strategy Advisors, former director of the federal Environmental Protection Agency, and was governor of New Jersey from 1994 to 2001. Chris Christie helped her significantly in her failed run for U.S. Senate in 1990, and the two have been political friends for nearly 20 years. She offers some advice that only experience can allow.

First, find people you trust. Remember that you cannot do everything on your own, so select advisors and cabinet members whose counsel you can heed. You should determine your policy principles, and then dispatch them to do their best work. Trust their advice.

Second, you have a resource that no governor before you has had — a Lieutenant Governor. This is a tremendous resource, especially given who yours is. Together, you and Lieutenant Governor-elect Kim Guadagno can shape this role into something that will be highly beneficial to the state. She is a bright and thoughtful woman who will be an excellent addition to New Jersey's leadership.

Prioritize now. It is easy to get distracted by the day-to-day issues that arise. Decide now what areas you want to impact most significantly and keep them as your focus.

Finally, make sure to take a moment to enjoy the role. It's the greatest job and it will be over in a flash.

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