

**From The Governor: govnews@gov.state.nj.us
Sick Days: Use It Or Lose It**

TRENTON—December 28, 2011: Just 14 days remain in the lame duck session for legislators to act on real sick pay reform, but with such broad agreement what is the holdup? These mayors, Republicans and Democrats understand that this issue is not a partisan issue. "This issue is an issue of common sense. This should be easy. And the fact that we're still waiting to get this done, to me, makes no sense. I really call on the legislature, let's get this done." - Governor Chris Christie, Town Hall With 234 Mayors On Sick Pay Reform, Teaneck, NJ, December 8, 2011

Legislators On Both Sides Of The Aisle Agree On The Need To End Sick Leave Payouts:

Senate President Stephen Sweeney (D): "said he agreed with the governor that employees should not be paid for unused sick time. 'I believe you should use it or lose it'..." (Chris Megeerian, "Christie Touts Tighter Regulation On Public Worker Benefits," NorthJersey.com, 11/17/11)

Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean (R): "The legislature should do away with payouts altogether and keep them at zero because it's the right thing to do." (Stacy Proebstle, "NJ Legislative Leaders Debate Sick Leave Payouts," NJ 101.5, 12/14/11)

Senator and Union City Mayor Brian P. Stack (D): "In fact I'll say it on the record today. I'll be a co-sponsor of that legislation, on the sick pay and the vacation pay. No doubt about it." (Mayor Brian Stack, Remarks At Town Hall, West New York, NJ, 12/6/11)

Senator Jeff Van Drew (D): "I have no problem with zero (accumulated days) in the future. People have accumulated what they have, but moving forward it could be at zero." (Steven Lemongello, "Area mayors join others from across New Jersey in support of Gov. Christie's sick day and vacation day payout reform," The Press of Atlantic City, 12/9/11)

Assemblyman David Rible (R) "said the state should follow the State Police model. "It doesn't provide payouts but offers a generous amount of them during the life of the officer's career." (Stacy Proebstle, "NJ Legislative Leaders Debate Sick Leave Payouts," NJ 101.5, 12/14/11)

A Bipartisan Group of 234 Mayors Have Joined Governor Christie's Call For The Legislature To Take Action: "Teaneck Mayor Mohammed Hameeduddin said his city had to pay about \$500,000 to five deputy fire chiefs who retired and still could owe as much as \$4.3 million in payouts to employees who have yet to retire. 'We had to go to emergency appropriations for half a million for time that they accrued and time that they earned,' he said." (Melissa Hayes and John Reitmeyer, "Gov. Christie Urges Lawmakers To Reform Sick Pay In Teaneck Visit," NorthJersey.com, 12/8/11)

"[Hoboken Mayor Dawn] Zimmer said, 'It's about the city employees who are working very hard, not those working the system.'... She went on to mention how the costs of civil service litigation in her town are an inappropriate use of taxpayer money." (Gennarose Pope, "Sick days are for the sick," Hudson Reporter, 12/11/11)

West New York Mayor Felix Roque: "I always say a commander

has to make a tough decision,' Roque proclaimed to Christie in front of the audience. 'And you're the commander and I'm sure you're making those tough decisions. And I also say in the military, when the going gets tough, the tough get going and you're doing it so I'm proud.'" (Mayor Brian Stack, Remarks At Town Hall, West New York, NJ, 12/6/11)

"Brigantine Mayor Phil Guenther supports the governor's reform initiative, but not for existing employees. ... 'It's a new era,' Guenther added, 'and contracts going forward should reflect that. There's a new reality that all municipalities and government agencies are facing. We all realize there's fiscal challenges going forward.'" (Steven Lemongello, "Area mayors join others from across New Jersey in support of Gov. Christie's sick day and vacation day payout reform," The Press of Atlantic City, 12/9/11)

"Northfield Mayor Vince Mazzeo, a Democrat, another of the signees, said that he was in favor of "basically anything that helps us with the burden of these sick (days)." (Steven Lemongello, "Area mayors join others from across New Jersey in support of Gov. Christie's sick day and vacation day payout reform," The Press of Atlantic City, 12/9/11)

Newspapers across the state have endorsed Governor Christie's call for zero cash payouts:

The Star-Ledger: Governor Christie "Absolutely Right" On Sick Pay. "Gov. Chris Christie wants to stop this now. Under his plan, a cop would get what he or she has accumulated, but earn nothing more. He's absolutely right. Why should taxpayers be forced to pay for benefits that far exceed anything they get themselves? Sick days should be just that: Days to use when you're actually sick. Democrats already have backpedaled from \$15,000 to \$7,500. They should keep going — to zero." (Editorial, "Democrats Should Back Gov. Chris Christie's Policy On Sick, Vacation Pay," Star-Ledger Editorial Board, 11/27/11).

Asbury Park Press: Eliminate "Phantom Perk" of Sick Leave Payouts. "It isn't rocket science. Unused sick days by New Jersey's public employees should have no cash value when those workers retire. ... The long-term goal of any reform in this regard has to be the elimination of this 'phantom' perk, not some Byzantine work-around." (Editorial, "Unused sick days: Don't compromise," Asbury Park Press, 12/5/11).

The Times of Trenton: This "Sort Of Bonanza Must End." "The state can no longer afford to pay out millions every year because some workers salt away their sick time for a healthy payout at the end of their careers. That sort of bonanza must end. The governor's plan to do so is a fair one. It would not take away anything from employees who have already accrued the time. But it would establish a new clear and consistent policy that prohibits sick time and vacation benefits from being used as a bank. We urge legislators to act immediately and make that change." (Editorial, "End Sick Time Payouts For N.J. Public Workers," The Times of Trenton, 11/20/11).

Letters to the Editor

As a Democrat, For All I Know... It Should Be Rothman vs Garrett

As a Democrat in New Jersey, I am very disappointed to see that Representative Steve Rothman has decided to challenge fellow Democratic Representative Bill Pascrell instead of going against ultra-right conservative Representative Scott Garrett. Now I am not against there being a primary for anyone, I believe that all incumbents should have to face a primary challenge, even President Obama. That is not the point.

The point is what is the reason for Rothman to go against Pascrell. For all I know both have pretty much the same political views and voting records. There may have been one or two times where they may have voted differently in the House of Representatives, but not more than that. So, why should someone in Pascrell's district choose Rothman since, for the most part, there is no difference

between them?
I can see Rothman if he wanted to challenge a fellow Democrat then go up against one that is more a DINO (Democrat In Name Only). What does he have to gain by challenging Pascrell? He is only hurting the Democratic Party and is not doing it nor the state any good. By running against Garrett he would (if he won) help the Democrats maybe regain control of the House of Representatives. I hope the people in Representative Rothman's district as well as his fellow Democrats in the House will show him the error of his decision and that he will reconsider and run not against fellow Progressive Democrat Pascrell, but against reactionary (Tea Bagger) conservative Scott Garrett.

Michael Smith
Berkeley Heights

David Larsen Announces Candidacy For 7th Congressional District

TEWKSBURY - David Larsen on Monday announced his candidacy for the U.S. Congress. New Jersey's 7th District to challenge Rep. Leonard Lance in the June primary. Mr. Larsen ran unsuccessfully for the position in the June 2010 Republican Primary.

In his press release, Mr. Larsen said:

"I am committed to restoring the American dream for all. This means establishing a campaign guided by true conservative principals, values and beliefs. Our nation is unique among the nations of the world in that it was founded on a fundamental set of ideals; 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' The Great Experiment. We must protect these ideals, as they make up the very core from which our great Republic was established.

"America has come to a precipice, economically and socially. I am again reminded of the phrase, 'Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country.' That is why I am compelled to campaign for the U.S. Congress. I will no longer stand idly by; allowing entrenched career politicians to rob America's future freedoms and liberties by making immoral decisions for self-aggrandizement and special interests. Time is of the essence for real change in Washington and restoring the American dream."

Mr. Larsen, a small business owner,

Update goleader.com/organizations

The U.S. Has Become The World's Busybody as Interventionist

Whenever I hear critics of a non-interventionist foreign policy speak, they always attack those who hold this view as "isolationists." They claim that non-interventionists want to isolate themselves from the globe they want to create a bubble between them and the outside world, and not engage in interaction in anyway with the foreign world. That characterization is false and very very dishonest.

A non-interventionist foreign policy is the belief in "peace, commerce, honest friendship with all nations," and "entangling alliances with none" to use the bold words of Thomas Jefferson. It is the belief that all nations have the right to engage of freedom of trade and freedom of exchange, that all nations should be friendly toward one another, but that no nation should involve itself in the quarrels of other nations or in another nation's political and social disputes. This was the foreign policy position of the U.S. for 100 years. It was rejected in 1898 when President William McKinley and Congress decided to go to war with the nation of Spain over Cuba. Since then, the U.S. has been following an interventionist path that has caused the U.S. to become the world's busybody, not to mention the world's policeman. This interventionist policy has also caused the U.S. to get entangled in alliances with dictators and despots not only in places like the Middle East but elsewhere. It has caused populations in other nations to hate the U.S. because of these alliances.

At this time, the United States is engaged in a War on Terror. We are

facing an enemy whose goal and ideology is to seek the destruction of the U.S. and its people and to create as much havoc in the world as possible. It seeks to impose its will on the world as well as eliminate those who are against it through murder and oppression. There is no disputing this. There is no denying this truth. When this war comes to an end, and it will, my hope is that we as Americans will engage in reflection about our foreign policy and return back to the wisdom of our Founding Fathers. The foreign policy of interventionism has caused this nation to be hated and has caused it to bleed lives as well as treasure on the ground of countries. This all has to stop and this all must be ended.

Alex Pugliese
Kenilworth

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Ken Carter, Chairman ERC
Bethesda, MD

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