
THIS WEEK IN TRENTON



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Senate Confirms Cabinet Nominees

The State Senate yesterday confirmed Governor Christie's nominations of Brett Schundler to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Education and James Simpson to serve as Commissioner of the Department Transportation. Schundler was confirmed by a vote of 35-2, with Senators Nia Gill and John Girgenti casting the negative votes. Simpson was confirmed unanimously. The Senate Judiciary Committee released the nominations of Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez to continue to serve in her current role, Janet Rosenzweig to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families, Gary Lanigan to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Corrections and Raymond Martinez to serve as Chief Administrator of the Motor Vehicle Commission.

Christie Signs Executive Order Creating New Jersey Privatization Task Force

Governor Chris Christie signed Executive Order 17, creating the New Jersey Privatization Task Force to develop recommendations for a comprehensive approach to converting certain areas of government operations to privately-run operations in an effort to cut the size and cost of state government. The task force will examine areas where government services and functions can be provided by the private sector. According to Executive Order 17, the Task Force will serve without compensation and be dissolved after issuing its final report on May 31, 2010. The report will include specific recommendations for privatization initiatives for implementation by state government during the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2010.

In announcing the formation of the task force, Governor Christie said that he is facing state employee contracts entered into by the prior administration that include raises of between 7 percent and 11 percent for thousands of public employees in 2011. Christie said, "We are stuck with this problem, but that does not mean I am barred from finding a way to fix it. I don't think you will find private sector employees anywhere enjoying the luxury of an 11 percent raise next year. It was a promise that the state cannot afford and should never have been made in the first place."

The Task Force will be chaired by former Congressman Dick Zimmer and include Todd Caliguire, Kathleen Davis, John Galandak, and Dr. P. Kelly Hatfield.

Goodwin Elected to Succeed Baroni

Hamilton Township Council President Tom Goodwin was elected by the Republican County Committee members in the 14th Legislative District to replace former State Senator Bill Baroni, who resigned his Senate seat to become Deputy Director of the Port Authority of New York and

New Jersey. Goodwin defeated former Assemblywoman Barbara Wright by a vote of 75-31. Goodwin will serve until at least November. He will have to seek re-election in a primary in June and general election in November. The likely Democratic candidate in November is Assemblywoman Linda Greenstein.

Goodwin was first elected to the Hamilton Council in 2005 and was re-elected in 2009. He is a financial advisor. He ran for the Assembly in 2007 and fell just short of defeating Assemblyman Wayne DeAngelo. He is expected to be sworn in next week.

Legislature Announces Budget Review Schedule

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee and the Assembly Budget Committee have announced their schedules for reviewing Governor Christie's proposed budget. The Governor will present his budget proposal to a joint session of the Legislature on Tuesday, March 16th. It must be adopted and signed into law by July 1, 2010.

The Senate Schedule is:

March 23	9:30	Public Hearing
March 25	9:30	Public Hearing
April 8	10:00	Budget Overview and Revenue Forecast (Office of Legislative Services)
	1:00	Budget Overview (State Treasurer)
April 13	9:30	Department of Education
	1:00	Department of Transportation, NJ Transit, Motor Vehicle Commission
April 15	9:30	Department of Human Services/Medicaid
	1:30	Department of Labor and Workforce Development
April 20	9:30	Department of Banking and Insurance
	11:30	Department of Agriculture
	1:00	Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
	2:30	Department of State
April 22	10:00	Department of Environmental Protection
	1:00	Department of Corrections/State Parole Board
April 27	10:00	Department of Health and Senior Services
April 29	10:00	Department of Community Affairs
	1:30	Higher Educational Services
May 4	10:00	Department of Law and Public Safety
	1:30	The Judiciary
	3:00	Department of Children and Families
May 6	10:00	Department of Treasury and Interdepartmental Accounts
May 18	10:00	Revenue Update (Office of Legislative Services)
	1:30	Revenue Update (State Treasurer)

The Assembly Schedule is:

March 24	9:30	Public Hearing on Health Human Services, Seniors, Family and Children's Issues
April 7	10:00	Budget Overview and Revenue Forecast (Office of Legislative Services)
	1:00	Budget Overview (State Treasurer)
April 12	10:00	Department of Health and Senior Services
	2:00	Department of Environmental Protection
April 14	10:00	Department of Community Affairs

	2:00	Higher Educational Services
April 19	10:00	Department of Law and Public Safety
	1:30	Public Hearing on Education, Higher Education and Local Government Issues
April 21	10:00	Department of Treasury and Interdepartmental Accounts
	2:00	Department of Banking and Insurance
	4:00	Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
April 26	10:00	Department of Education
	2:00	Department of Transportation, NJ Transit, Motor Vehicle Commission
April 28	10:00	Department of Human Services/Medicaid
	2:00	Department of Labor and Workforce Development
May 3	10:00	Department of Children and Families
	2:00	Department of Corrections/State Parole Board
May 5	10:00	Department of State
	1:00	The Judiciary
	2:30	Department of Agriculture
	4:00	Department of the Public Advocate
May 10	9:30	Public Hearing on Public Safety, Economic Development, Environment, Transportation, Arts, History and Cultural Issues (and all other issues not listed)
May 19	10:00	Revenue Update (Office of Legislative Services)
	2:00	Revenue Update (State Treasurer)

Legislative Calendar

This week the Senate held a voting session and the Assembly held Group C and D Committee meetings. Next week the Legislature will convene for a Joint Session on March 16 to receive the Governor's budget message. Senate Group 3 and 4 Committees will meet on March 15 and Senate Group 1 and 2 Committees will meet on March 18. The Assembly will hold a voting session on March 15 and select committees will meet on March 18. The Senate Judiciary Committee will consider the nominations of Dr. Poonam Alaigh to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Health and Senior Services, Thomas Considine to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Banking and Insurance and Bob Martin to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection on March 15.