
THIS WEEK IN TRENTON



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December 3, 2009

Christie Announces Governor's Office Staff

Governor-elect Christopher Christie this afternoon named former State Senator Richard Bagger as his Chief of Staff, former Executive U. S. Attorney Jeffrey Chiesa as his Chief Counsel, campaign manager Bill Stepien as Deputy Chief of Staff and Assistant U. S. Attorney Kevin O'Dowd as Deputy Chief Counsel.

Bagger served as an Assemblyman from 1992-2002 and as a State Senator from 2002-2003. He resigned his Senate seat to accept a promotion as Pfizer, where he currently serves as a senior vice president for worldwide public affairs. During his time in the Assembly he spent four years as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee. Prior to joining the Legislature, Bagger was a Westfield mayor and councilman.

Chiesa was Christie's law partner at Dughi, Hewit & Palatucci and joined the Governor-elect at the U.S. Attorney's Office in 2002. He served as Chief of the Public Protection Unit, as Counsel to the U.S. Attorney and as Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney. Chiesa currently works at the North Jersey law firm of Wolf and Samson and is the Executive Director of Christie's transition team.

Stepien has held top posts on several national campaigns and for the Republican National Committee. He was the Field Director of the Bush/Cheney campaign in New Hampshire in 2004 and the Director of the Republican National Committee's 72-Hour Campaign in 2005 and 2006. He worked on several New Jersey statewide and legislative races before managing Governor-elect Christie's campaign.

O'Dowd is currently the Securities & Healthcare Fraud Unit Chief at the U.S. Attorney's office and has tried several high profile cases.

Christie Will Re-evaluate State Borrowing

In the aftermath of a state report that says New Jersey owes nearly \$34 billion, Governor elect Chris Christie said he will re-evaluate all planned borrowing for the coming year.

The state expects to borrow \$200 million in general obligation bonds this budget year and another \$200 million for each of the next two years, according to a report prepared by the state Department of Treasury presented to lawmakers today. New Jersey is on track to borrow \$3 billion for transportation projects through July 2011 and \$4.1 billion more to cover public school construction through July 2013, according to the report.

New Jersey's \$33.9 billion tax-supported debt burden ranks 3rd highest in the U.S., behind California and New York. The total amount of debt New Jersey taxpayers are footing is actually \$51.25 billion when all borrowing by state authorities, commissions and other state-affiliated agencies is included.