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# Christie Slams Legislature Tuesday in Cedar Grove

Governor calls on "Corzine Democrats" to approve stop impeding his budget reforms at town hall.

By [Elizabeth Moore](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 20, 2012

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Governor Chris Christie got a warm welcome at Cedar Grove High School during his town hall-style meeting Tuesday — where he used the platform to criticize Democratic legislators whom he said are impeding his budget reforms.

"We have a \$30 billion-plus budget and they haven't even responded to it yet," he said. "I'm still waiting for bills to come to my desk."

He villified Democratic legislators who oppose him by calling them "Corzine Democrats" and said he'd thought he'd driven "stakes through their hearts" when he was elected in 2009. The governor took jabs at former Gov. Jim McGreevey and state Sen. Dick Codey as well and said New Jersey residents who are waiting for tax relief to come their way from the Democrats should, "Go inside . . . it ain't coming."

Christie held his 85th town hall meeting in the high school gymnasium, which was packed with more than 400 people. The crowd filled the venue within minutes of the doors opening. It was mostly a supportive crowd, led by local Republican elected officials including Cedar Grove native state Sen. Kevin O'Toole.

A woman in a blue t-shirt who did not give her name encouraged Christie to consider becoming Mitt Romney's vice president.

"I love your no-nonsense and no bull---- attitude," she quipped. "Will you run?"

Her question was met with a roar of applause, but Christie said he did not think he'd be asked and told her, "If you were a betting woman, I would bet on me being governor in January 2013."

Christie took several audience questions — on everything from cutting military spending nationally, to tort reform, and whether shifting some of the Rutgers campus from Newark to Camden was a good move.

But Christie focused most of his talk on his platform of reducing property taxes and the size of government.

One speaker, Lynne Davies of Cedar Grove, illustrated his point perfectly when she said she was retiring and moving to Delaware because her property taxes would be lower there.

"What are you doing to encourage retirees to stay in New Jersey," she asked.

Christie said he would continue to reduce property taxes, veto attempts to introduce additional taxes, and take a hard look at public spending.

The governor also took a shot at teacher tenure, in response to a question from Millburn School Board member Jean Pasternak who called for greater accountability of school spending.

The governor said he is considering "demanding new benchmarks" for school districts in order to receive certain state aid.

"We have to say results matter," Christie said.

He said he opposes teacher tenure the way it is set up now, but favored incentive raises for teachers who are doing a good job.

The only contentious moment of the meeting came when Madelyn Hoffman, director of NJ Peace Action in Bloomfield, accused him of not renewing the so-called "Millionaire's Tax" which would have required higher taxes for state residents at a certain income level.

Christie shot back at her that it was up to former Gov. Jon Corzine to do that before he left office and it would unfairly target businesses and residents who make \$400,000 a year.

"I'm not going to engage in the class warfare the president is engaged in," retorted the governor, who also responded to someone in the crowd shouting that Corzine should be in jail.

"That was my old job pal," said Christie referring to his stint as the U.S. Attorney. "I can't do anything about that."

Overall, the governor was well received and the crowd gave him a standing ovation as he left the gym to return to Trenton, where he pledged to continue to do battle with his Democratic opponents.

He did give shout outs to state Sen. President Stephen Sweeney and Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver, whom he said had worked with him to accomplish pension and benefit reforms last year.

"It's great to be in Cedar Grove, you know I'm an Essex County kid," he told the crowd, recounting his birth in Newark and upbringing in Livingston. "This neighborhood of suburban Essex County is my home. It's where I came from."

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**Martin Golan**

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He didn't of course mention that property taxes won't go down as long as he cuts state aid to towns. My property taxes have been going up since he's been in office, even though my town -- and even the county -- have kept taxes flat, almost solely because of drops in state aid. But he'd just find some way to blame those who teach our children. It's rare that someone's personality so well fits the way they govern.

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