



Everything Jersey

## Gov. Chris Christie compares Democrats to vampires at town hall

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By **Jenna Portnoy/Statehouse Bureau**

**CEDAR GROVE** — Gov. Chris Christie today trotted out a new moniker for the lawmakers considering making a tax cut contingent on revenue numbers, calling them “Corzine Democrats.”

“Here we are 12 days from the end of the session,” he told a town hall crowd at Cedar Grove High School. “Two and a half years into my term you thought the Corzine Democrats were dead. Well they’re back.”

The Republican governor never took a position on the proposal, instead comparing them to vampires: “We thought we’d taken a wooden stake and put it through this type of Democrat’s heart.”

After the town hall, the Assembly Democrats pointed out that the two-year session isn’t technically over until January 2014. (Christie was referring to June 30 deadline by which the state must pass a balanced budget.)

“Democrats are preparing a fiscally responsible budget that puts the focus on property tax relief and New Jersey’s middle-class,” spokesman Tom Hester said. “It’s that simple.”

Christie said Democrats in the Legislature were like the cartoon character Wimpy — always happy to pay tomorrow for a hamburger today. “They’re going to tell you we’ll put the money in the budget for the tax cut, and we promise you we’ll give it to you in January,” he said.

He whipped up the mostly friendly crowd by invoking former Govs. Jim McGreevey, Dick Codey and Corzine, saying they failed to keep property tax cut promises. “Let me give you a hint,” he said. “You all are still waiting by the mailbox. Go inside and get yourself a cup of coffee and relax. It ain’t coming.”



Brian Donohue / The Star-Ledger

Gov. Chris Christie speaks at a town hall meeting in Galloway earlier this month.

He kept it up, prompting the kind of outburst that has been rare at the twice-a-week town halls the administration has scheduled in the run up to the budget. "I thought I took care of them for you in 2009," he said. "I thought I got rid of them for you. But they're back. The same way Jon Corzine came back to Wall Street and you see how that went."

#### **Gov. Chris Christie: We thought we had slain the Corzine Democrats**

Speaking at a town hall meeting at Cedar Grove High School on June 19, 2012, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie lambastes Democrats in the legislature who proposed making a proposed tax cut contingent upon the state meeting the governor's optimistic revenue projections. (Video by Brian Donohue / The Star-Ledger)

"Why isn't he in jail?" the man yelled out several times before Christie, former U.S. attorney, said: "That was my old job, pal. I can't do anything about that."

The interruption seemed to embolden Judith Arnold, a retired teacher from New Jersey Peace Action in nearby liberal Bloomfield. Her T-shirt said, "Fund Schools, Not Wars".

"How about a wealth tax?" she yelled out. "A 1 percent wealth tax."

They loudly talked over each other, with the crowd cheering for Christie, until he advised her to be calm — "like your governor."

"You raised your hand, I'll be happy to call on you," he said.

Later he did just that, fielding question from her friend Madelyn Hoffman, who handed out a flyer from the organization before the town hall started.

She asked Christie why he did away with the millionaire's tax at the end of the Corzine administration. Christie quickly corrected her, explaining the "millionaire's surcharge" expired and Democrats didn't reinstate it when they had the chance. Christie has said he would veto such a tax a third time if it gets to his desk.

Hoffman also asked him if he'd favor the concept of 25 percent cut in federal defense spending.

"I think that everything should be on the table in terms of our federal budget. But I'm not going to commit to something because you decided 25 percent is a good number," he said, pivoting to his usual message about compromise.



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