

# The Bully's Pulpit 26

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From NJEA

## Christie's \$268 million blunder

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### **Holding Urban Kids and Staff Hostage**

#### *3,900 remain unemployed while governor delays*

More than two weeks after the first states submitted their applications for federal aid intended to put school employees back to work this fall, Governor Christie continues to dig in his heels, refusing to submit New Jersey's application for \$268 million in already-approved funds.

Incredibly, the administration continues to insist that it needs more time and "technical advice" in order to complete a "thorough and complete application," which consists of a single question.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> day since the first applications were submitted, NJEA President Barbara Keshishian issued the following statement:

"It is completely implausible that the state could not have completed this one-question application and submitted it two weeks ago or more. [California](#) and [Illinois](#) submitted their applications on Friday, August 13. [Tennessee](#) and [Kansas](#) submitted theirs that weekend. Anyone who looks at the application can see that it is easier to apply for this funding than to open a new checking account.

"After all, Governor Christie's administration managed to prepare and submit a 1,000-page Race to the Top application over a three-day holiday weekend. This is a three-page, one question application, and he's still asking for more time 16 days after the first applications were submitted.

"Governor Christie should just be honest with the people of New Jersey. Unlike other governors who saw the opportunity to put people back to work and jumped on it, he is putting his own anti-public education political agenda ahead of the needs of New Jersey's working families. There is no other way to explain his willingness to keep 3,900 New Jersey professionals on the unemployment rolls when quick action two weeks ago could have ensured they'd be working this week when school begins.

"It is an affront to every unemployed person in the state that the Governor cares so little about helping get people back to work. And it is even worse, because he's also denying students across the state a better education.

"His \$1.3 billion in cuts have already guaranteed thousands of layoffs and will result in larger class sizes and fewer opportunities for students. His administration's mishandling of the Race to the Top application has cost the state \$400 million. Now his inexcusable delay in applying for the \$268 million that the federal government is trying to return to New Jersey taxpayers will end up harming the very public schools that money was intended to save."

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## P.E.A. NOTE:

A member of the P.E.A., heeding our last request to call the Governor's office about the EDJOBS bill told P.E.A. that the Governor's aide to whom he spoke " ... told me the reason he hasn't signed yet is because he's trying to find a way to spread the funds throughout the state, rather than have it go through Title I, which concentrates the funds in urban districts. He said, no matter what, the Governor will sign it by the deadline which is Sept. 9."

Christie continues to hold to his agenda to destroy urban education in order to promote his plans for charter schools that will gain his buddies millions in state funding.

**We urge you again to call Governor Christie at (609) 292-6000. Tell him you are unemployed because of his budget cuts and don't want to be on unemployment compensation.**

**Remind him that children in urban district's such as Paterson stand to lose instruction in art, music, world language, and even physical education. That his cuts have resulted in the loss of library programs, guidance and SAC services to our kids ... the neediest of the state's children.**

**Tell him to sign off on the federal jobs funding so you can get back to work!**

*Peter A. Tirri*, President

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