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N.J. employees would pay for parking in Gov. Christie's privatization plan

By [Statehouse Bureau Staff](#)
March 11, 2010, 9:55PM



Ed Murray/The Star-Ledger

Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno and Gov. Chris Christie with task force members (L-R) John Galandak, P. Kelly Hatfield, and Dick Zimmer. Christie today signed his 17th Executive Order, creating a task force to study and make recommendations on the potential efficiencies to be gained from privatizing certain functions of state government at the State House

TRENTON — State employees would have to pay for parking as one piece of a privatization effort Gov. Chris Christie launched today, according to two state officials familiar with his plans.

Christie, who today created a task force to find savings from privatizing government jobs and functions amid a budget crisis, declined to say which areas would be turned over to the private sector. But the two officials said plans involve having employee parking run by an outside entity that would collect a fee. They declined to be named before the governor announces the plan.

The move would be the latest jab to unionized state workers who Christie is trying to portray as resisting shared sacrifice because some are due 7 percent raises in the next fiscal year. Today, he said privatization would "define and narrow the scope of services" provided by government and save money by cutting labor costs beginning in January.

"Privatization is something I'd be considering whether or not we had the fiscal crisis we have now, whether or not we had the intractability of the public sector worker unions we have now," said Christie, who will propose ways to close an \$11 billion budget gap on Tuesday.

Union leaders said the governor is overlooking \$450 million in concessions over the past three years and ignoring a tortured history of privatization in New Jersey.

"Nobody is going to close this budget gap by making state workers pay for parking," said Hetty Rosenstein, state

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director for the Communications Workers of America. She said many employees already pay to park, and Christie is being "punitive" while not recognizing privatization's shortcomings.

"It's being anti-government and it's ideological — it is not based upon fact or history," Rosenstein said.

A privatization effort under former Gov. Christie Whitman that turned auto inspections over to Parsons Corp. in the 1990s was called a "mammoth boondoggle" by investigators. Parsons was criticized for hiring politically connected subcontractors, botching the work and inconveniencing motorists as it took over inspections. Its contract was later renewed and the company continues to operate in New Jersey.

Christie said he would learn from past mistakes, and he — not the task force — would make the decisions on which firms to hire. The governor has previously said he'd consider privatizing the state motor pool but did rule out privatizing New Jersey's toll roads or its State Police.

He left other recommendations to the five-member task force led by Republican former Rep. Dick Zimmer, now a Washington lobbyist. Christie declined to say how many state jobs could be trimmed, or how much money would be saved. Administration officials told *The Star-Ledger* Wednesday that up to 2,000 positions could be cut.

Chris Edwards, an economist at the Cato Institute, said government can save money by privatizing a wide range of functions, from trash collection to airports. Private companies, by definition, have a built-in profit incentive, and they are not always beholden to hiring unionized workers and compete for business, he said.

Edwards said Christie should not have ruled out the privatized highway decision, which he said has worked well in other places.

By Josh Margolin and Lisa Fleisher/Statehouse Bureau

Statehouse Bureau reporter Claire Heining contributed to this report.

Chris Christie issues a challenge to the legislature



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 Posted by [njstwkr10](#)
 March 11, 2010, 8:08PM

No problem. I will pay for parking.. I will take public transportation, BUT I WILL NO LONGER PUT OVER 12,000 MILES A YEAR ON MY PERSONAL VEHICLE FOR WORK PURPOSES at .31 a mile. You want me to drive all over the state for work? pay me the federal amount or give me a car.

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 Posted by [Kurt](#)
 March 11, 2010, 8:16PM

Maybe get a job in the private sector. See how much they pay you to use your car?

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Posted by [tiredofthewhining](#)
March 11, 2010, 10:13PM

Ah, nice try. I get .45 cents a mile in the private world.

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Posted by [grmpyolfrt](#)
March 12, 2010, 7:51AM

Ya vol Kurt! The private sector already does. It's called a "car allowance," and take it from me its WAY BETTER than a lousy .31 cents/mile.

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Posted by [NJ Resident](#)
March 12, 2010, 9:08AM

you DO get reimbursed using your own car for business in the private sector. What are you talking about?

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Posted by [awaynhappy](#)
March 11, 2010, 8:21PM

You do know that you can write off the difference between what you get and the federal rate on your 1040 federal tax form.

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Posted by [raven06](#)
March 12, 2010, 7:51AM

I tried. Didn't work.

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Posted by [videodummy](#)
March 11, 2010, 10:17PM

PARKING??? That's hitting below the belt, unless he made that statement with alot of barratone in his voice.

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Posted by [wizard of blogs](#)
March 12, 2010, 9:38AM

N.J. employees would pay for parking ...

Not only should you NOT pay to park but demand that you get the federal rate. The state keeping the difference is the biggest skim job, if I every heard of one.

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Posted by **spres2007**
March 11, 2010, 8:10PM

hmmmm, im betting that the governor and the elected officials are not going to pay anything.. Oh thats right the governor has a state issued car and bodyguards..

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Posted by **slolane**
March 11, 2010, 8:12PM

But what if someone works in a dangerous inner city area, & they get rid of parking, & then the person gets mugged, robbed or killed?

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Posted by **Nora's Tea Party**
March 12, 2010, 12:47AM

The parking is still there. Employees will just have to pay the garage rates out of their own pocket's or use public transit, car pool, whatever. Same as in the private sector.

"company cars" are a different issue. Per mile type payments are standard in the private sector. They are also an avenue for abuse so I would suggest any government employee who utilizes their private vehicle for business also be rigged with the same type of GPS that verison uses (AC elect?).

One (or both) of those companies run continuous logs of where each vehicle went to keep employees from misuse of company property. We have the technology to automate mileage tracking for vehicles. The pay back rate standard is set by the fed's vis tax deduction rules.

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Posted by **raven06**
March 12, 2010, 7:53AM

so now you're talking more money. thought the state was trying to cut expenses.

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Posted by **banksrscum**
March 11, 2010, 8:16PM

nice agenda dude

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Posted by **pampurr**
March 11, 2010, 8:37PM

I was vacationing in OC Maryland in a nice hotel on the beach, there was a nj state car parked in the carport where my car was parked. The state worker took the state car on vacation. Nice.

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Posted by **grmpyolfrt**
March 11, 2010, 8:38PM

Did you report it?

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Posted by **tashilama**
March 11, 2010, 10:18PM

So, did you take the license number and report it. If not, you are part of the problem.

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Posted by **shuhgrri**
March 12, 2010, 1:05AM

report it to where? Because I have a neighbor that has a state vehicle on weekends, during blizzards, etc. I would love to report or at least ask why this is necessary. But I don't know who to report to.

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Posted by **xamyx**
March 12, 2010, 12:31AM

you think member they had out of state business? certain state jobs require out of state travel you goof....

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Posted by **xamyx**
March 12, 2010, 12:34AM

maybe*

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