



Government shutdown another line in the sand

By Carl Golden

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There have been so many lines drawn in the sand by the opposing political forces in state government that Gov. Christie and the Democratic legislative leadership may find it necessary to apply to the Federal government for beach replenishment funds to assure an adequate supply of sand is on hand to see them through the three and one-half years remaining in Christie's initial term.

While Democrats have dared Christie to cross their lines on issues ranging from increasing the tax rate on those with incomes in excess of \$1 million to refusing to consider a nominee for Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, the Governor has stood equally as firmly behind his boundaries, pledging to veto any tax increase and standing by his prerogative to replace a sitting Justice.

Public employee unions have joined the line drawing game as well, mounting a court challenge to the public pension reform package signed into law by the Governor and vowing to fight to the end the Governor's plan to impose a ceiling on salaries and benefits of public workers. While the lawsuit remains active, the unions lost the first round this past week when a Superior Court judge refused its request to block the implementation of the pension reform law.

The running battle between Christie and the New Jersey Education Association hasn't let up either. The Association President publicly labeled him a liar and the Governor accused teachers of using their students netting even more money. Increasing speculation that the state will experience its second shutdown in a year has led to agree on a spending program.

While the talk of a shutdown makes for interesting fodder for the ch

The current situation differs considerably from that of 2006 when fo services after the Democratically-controlled Legislature failed to agr sales tax and delayed passage of a budget for a week.

This year, Democrats are fighting a Republican governor, not one an environment. They are united in their support of a tax increase on v citizen homestead rebates and maintain the prescription drug progr

In an effort to cut the ground from beneath supporters of a milliona Democrats' effort to score points with seniors, Christie abruptly reve he would restore funds to the program despite his earlier harsh ass callously pandering to the elderly.

As anticipated, the Legislature approved the millionaire's tax in a pa anticipated, the Governor vetoed it within minutes after passage.

