

pilot program will be presented to me next year. If the results of the pilot program prove satisfactory and we see evidence that TAG funds are helping more students get their degrees, I would support expanding the TAG program to more part-time students than the many it already covers, so long as we can find an appropriate means of funding that expansion.

2. Financing Public Higher Education

New Jersey has consistently ranked near the bottom in the percentage of its state budget allocated to public higher education as well as per capita spending on public higher education. This situation persists notwithstanding New Jersey’s status as one of the richest states in median income and as the home of some of our nation’s most profitable corporations (oil companies, financial institutions, pharmaceutical companies, etc.).

Do you support raising income on upper income brackets, raising corporate taxes and closing corporate tax loopholes to generate the necessary revenue to support public higher education in our State?

Yes, I will support

No, I will not support

Comments:

While I am committed to finding ways to increase funding dedicated to higher education, our economic situation remains such I believe that now is not the time to raise taxes. Raising taxes on the wealthiest New Jerseyans was a difficult decision to make, but the economic climate necessitated decisive action to allow us to uphold our most important priorities. That being said, I don’t think raising taxes further is the wisest course in this still-delicate economic climate. I hope not to raise taxes any further, which means that we need to work together to find ways to provide higher education with adequate support.

3. Governance and Accountability

Fifteen years after Governor Whitman abolished the Department of Higher Education and in the wake of scathing State Commission of Investigation (SCI) report, there is a growing consensus in Trenton that State oversight needs to be restored.

Do you support the creation of a cabinet-level position to represent the interests of public higher education in state government?

Yes, I will support

X

No, I will not support

Comments:

Do you support revamping the Commission on Higher Education to give it final authority over budgets, the number, type and compensation of senior management, tuition, academic programs, the ratio of full time to part-time/adjunct faculty and campus construction at the senior public colleges and universities?

Yes, I will support

No, I will not support

Comments:

I would consider administrative reorganization proposals that would result in efficiencies to enable us to get more out of the money we invest in higher education.

Do you support expanding public college and university boards of trustees/governors to include two employees chosen by the majority public employee representatives at these institutions?

Yes, I will support

No, I will not support

Comments:

Input from university employees could only benefit the good work of public college and university boards of trustees/governors. However, each of our public colleges and universities are unique in their mission and in the number and variety of unions that represent their workers. I look forward to working with you to determine the best way to get more input from organized labor in a way that fulfills each school's educational mission.

4. Faculty and College Excellence Campaign (FACE)

Part-time and adjunct faculty currently outnumber full-time faculty and teach over half of the courses at our public colleges and universities. Their compensation is meager, they receive no paid health benefits and they have no job security. Although part-time and adjunct faculty fulfill a valuable role in higher education, over-reliance on this contingent workforce inevitably diminishes educational quality.

Do you support requiring all public colleges and universities to enact a plan to ensure that by the end of 5 years at least 75% of undergraduate courses are taught by full time faculty?

Yes, I will support

No, I will not support

Comments:

I would support setting, on a school by school basis, a baseline number of full-time faculty, establishing a floor which we would then help schools build upon. Part-time and adjunct faculty are a critical component of our efforts to keep higher education affordable and to meet the dynamic educational requirements created by our modern job market. While relying on the valuable contributions of adjunct and part-time faculty, we must remain mindful that we do not dilute the opportunity for full-time faculty to shape curricula and to advise students.

Do you support adjusting the compensation of part-time and adjunct faculty to a proportion of the compensation of full time faculty, based on the percentage of a full time course load they teach?

Yes, I will support

No, I will not support

Comments:

Part-time and adjunct faculty are a key component in our mission to provide students with a world-class, yet affordable education. We need to recognize their invaluable contribution by ensuring that they receive a living wage and reasonable working conditions. I look forward to

2. Charter Schools

AFT New Jersey has a long history of supporting high standards in education, high quality public schools and a collective voice for educators. The AFT strongly supports charter schools that embody the core values of public education and a democratic society: equal access for all students; high academic standards; accountability to parents and the public; to helping all public schools improve; and a commitment to the employees' right to freely chose union representation. In several districts where charters are set to expand, charters are having an adverse impact on the finances of the regular public schools, resulting in cuts to services and programs for New Jersey's neediest students.

Will you support a funding formula that protects support for regular public schools in which the vast majority of students are educated?

Yes, I will support No, I will not support

Comments:

Protecting funding for all schools has been a top priority of my Administration, and I don't believe that we fund charter schools at the expense of other public schools.

Would you support legislation so that no public school district's total payments to charter schools exceeds a certain percent of the district's net school spending?

Yes, I will support No, I will not support

Comments:

Charter schools are partners in our children's education; they are part of the public school system, but can also serve as laboratories for school reform. Some successful techniques identified by charter schools can then be replicated among other traditional public schools, and we must continue to provide them the funding they need in order for all of our schools to reap the benefits that can come from their innovations. I could not support a measure limiting their funding without closer examination of the economics behind it. I look forward to working with you to come up with the most efficient method of improving our school funding practices.

Current law in New Jersey only requires charters to submit an annual report and have a financial audit. In order to enhance the transparency of all public schools,

Would you support increasing the disclosure requirements for charter schools, so that their annual reports and financial audits are a matter of public record?

Yes, I will support No, I will not support

Comments:

I think that charter schools should be subject to the same disclosure requirements as all public schools.

Would you also support strengthening the content to be included in the annual reports of charters, including percentage of special needs and ELL enrolled students; data on student

and teacher mobility; data on student achievement broken down by campus; and information detailing the names, credentials, and positions and salaries of the teachers?

Yes, I will support No, I will not support

Comments:

As I stated above, I think that charter schools should be subject to the same disclosure requirements as all public schools.

A stronger teacher voice supported by a union is essential to achieving fairness in the workplace and improving academic outcomes. Charter School teachers and staff should be able to choose union representation in a timely and straightforward process.

Do you support the rights of Charter School employees to seek union representation through collective bargaining?

Yes, I will support No, I will not support

Comments:

Health Care

1. Safe Staffing

The link between staffing levels and patient outcomes has been well documented. Studies found that greater RN staffing was consistently associated with better outcomes; specifically an increase of one RN full-time equivalent (FTE) per patient day was associated with a 9% reduction in the likelihood of death in intensive care units, a 16% reduction in the probability of mortality among surgical inpatients, and a 6% reduction in mortality among medical in-patients. Studies on medical/surgical units have found that higher RN hours per patient day were associated with lower rates of pressure ulcers, pneumonia, postoperative infections, urinary tract infections, gastrointestinal bleeding, and patient falls. S1233/A1531 Establishes minimum registered professional nurse staffing standards for hospitals and ambulatory surgery facilities and certain DHS facilities.

To improve patient safety and retain our nursing workforce, do you support legislation mandating nurse-to-patient ratios?

Yes, I will support No, I will not support

Comments:

I have taken action on this important issue. Hospital licensing regulations require nurse staffing levels to be based on patient acuity. A few distinct units such as ICU/CCU are required to have a minimum number of nurses to patients. The rules were amended last year to require hospitals to post daily patient care staffing levels in specific locations and to report them routinely to the Department of Health.

2. Governance and Transparency

New Jersey hospitals are governed by volunteer Board of Trustees that are self-appointed and self-selected. Although supported by public monies, these institutions have long behaved like private businesses, trustees, their family members or business associates may have contracts to sell supplies or services to the institution on whose Board they sit, while others are officers at banks that loan money to these institutions.

S4004/A1863 requires each hospital Board of Trustees to adopt a written policy governing conflicts of interest. Do you support legislation that would limit and require disclosure of hospital board conflicts of interest?

Yes, I will support No, I will not support

Comments:

Labor and Public Policy

1. Public Defined-Benefit Pensions

One of the most important benefits to workers is their pension plans. There is a national effort under way to eliminate the *defined-benefit pension plans* for teachers, other school employees and state and local government employees. Defined-benefit pension plans guarantee income security, provide greater portability and are not subject to investment risks.

Will you oppose efforts to eliminate defined-benefit pension plans?

Yes, I will support No, I will not support

Comments:

2. Privatization of Public Services

AFT members in every division are increasingly threatened by privatization and contracting out. Public employees represented by the AFT are often targeted by politicians and their jobs are threatened by privatizations. Numerous studies have proven that privatization efforts have not improved the quality of services and have actually increased the cost of those services substantially. When the state contracts out public services, the true cost to taxpayers is frequently underestimated. Private contractors are often less accountable to the public and elected officials. Finally, privatization often hurts local and state economies, though the loss of public sector jobs.

Will you oppose the further privatization or contracting out of public services?

Yes, I will support No, I will not support

Comments:

These are difficult economic times, and we must all work together to identify ways to keep the cost of higher education reasonable so that we can provide our students with an affordable and world-class education. In evaluating all measures, we need to perform a fact-sensitive analysis, examining all measures on a case by case basis to ensure that we meet the needs of both our public employees and the students that they serve.

Would you support legislation that protects the rights and benefits of education employees threatened with subcontracting?

Yes, I will support

No, I will not support

Comments:

Protecting the financial security of our education workers is always a priority, and a consideration that we must ensure is always taken into account when these types of measures are considered. I am committed to working to ensure that any such decisions are taken without losing sight of that reality.

3. Collective Bargaining

Currently, the State has the power to impose its final offer on some public employee unions if negotiations reach an “impasse.”

Do you support legislation that would prevent the State from imposing its contract proposals on public employee unions?

Yes, I will support

No, I will not support

Comments:

My Administration is currently working with the Legislature, public employee unions, the AFL CIO, and other unions in order to try to reach satisfactory solutions on issues regarding negotiations. I am committed to working in good faith with stakeholders such as yourselves to resolve these questions.

Public employee unions have limited collective bargaining rights, which prevent them from negotiating over major terms and conditions of employment.

Do you support legislation that would expand the scope of collective bargaining to include subjects not specifically excluded by statute?

Yes, I will support

No, I will not support

Comments:

As I mentioned above, my Administration is with you and with other stakeholders to try to find common ground on this issue. I look forward to continuing to work with you to find solutions to these questions.