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### **Chris Christie Supports New Jersey's Autism Communities, Meets with Concerned Families**

October XX, 2009, West Orange, NJ –Chris Christie, candidate for governor, and his running mate, Sheriff Kim Guadagno, met with New Jersey's autism and vaccination choice communities to discuss vital issues and their plan of action for health care in New Jersey. Christie and Guadagno understand more needs to be done to support this large and growing segment of families

“Jon Corzine has failed New Jersey's special needs children and their families. During Governor Corzine's tenure, the Division of Developmental Disabilities has wasted millions on frivolous and unnecessary expenses and overpayment of contracts,” said Chris Christie. “It is shameful that any state funds are wasted and abuse, but it is particularly appalling that this waste comes at the expense of our most vulnerable children and families. Furthermore, Governor Corzine's reckless and irresponsible one-shot budget gimmicks are jeopardizing special education programs in every school district.”

New Jersey has the highest documented incidence of autism of any state in the country: 1 in 94 and climbing. Christie has listened to parents share their concerns about the effects of NJ's most-in-the-nation vaccine mandates on their children. These parents have met with Christie and Guadagno throughout the campaign to discuss their priorities. Christie has consistently engaged special needs families, recognizing the financial, social and emotional impact of autism on New Jersey families.

New Jersey parents, with and without children affected by autism, are raising the issue of vaccination choice and demanding the philosophical exemption to mandatory vaccination. “Fifty percent of Americans in 18 U.S. states including the highly populous, corridor states of California and Texas have vaccination choice. We deserve it here, in the state that leads the nation in autism incidence and the number of mandated shots for school attendance,” said Louise Kuo Habakus of Life Health Choices, who is one of the family members who has personally discussed these issues with Christie and Guadagno.

Other concerns included: adequate, stable funding for services for families, residential and employment placement for disabled adults, more effective safety initiatives for children in the care of the public schools, especially on school buses, autism research, schools, respite and caregivers, parent training, support groups, government councils and departments, and medical choices.

Christie concluded: “My interactions with educators, caregivers, health professionals, and parents of special needs children have given me an appreciation for the important role of state government in improving the lives of special needs children and adults and ensuring all have the tools they need to succeed in our state. Ending waste in state government in order to improve care and services for these unique children and adults will be a top priority.”

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