



## Probation Association of New Jersey

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*An affiliate of the American Probation and Parole Association*

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6:00 pm

Senate President Stephen Sweeney is calling on the CEO of Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey to meet with him, Sen. Joe Vitale and Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto to try to broker some path out of the government shutdown now in its second day.

Sweeney, addressing reporters on Sunday in the Senate majority caucus room, voiced increasing frustration with the impasse over a bill that would restructure Horizon. Gov. Chris Christie has demanded the bill in exchange for as much as \$350 million in Democratic spending priorities.

"We're all here on a Sunday. No one wants to be," Sweeney said. "This really stinks, to be perfectly honest with you." Sweeney said he and Vitale, who authored the Senate Horizon bill ([S4](#)), have been trying to get Horizon CEO Robert Marino on the phone and have been rebuffed. He chastised the insurer, accusing it of causing the shutdown that will begin to have a significant impact on furloughed state workers and residents next week if it is not resolved.

"This isn't a game of chicken, we're playing with people's lives," he said. "It's not fair that the insurance company thinks they can just ignore us. ...The only way this is going to be resolved is with the principals in the room."

Shortly after Sweeney called for the meeting, Prieto, who was on the floor of the Assembly chamber, said he would attend but repeated his stance that any negotiation on Horizon would have to take place after a budget was passed.

"Any meeting is productive. I haven't been told of it," Prieto said. "I'm open to doing things after we get the budget done. ... I have

members already that are drafting something. We can have a public debate on it."

Asked to confirm that he would definitely attend, Prieto said, "Of course."

It is unclear if Horizon would agree to participate but the company is expected to issue a statement shortly.

Excerpts above from Politico and NJ .Com

As of right now, there is still a government shutdown. PANJ has received the weekend list of those employees required to work during the shutdown. If you are required to work during a continued shutdown, you will be notified, as if an emergency situation had occurred. PANJ hopes that there is a quick resolution to the impasse in Trenton, so that our members and their families do not sustain the impact of a protracted government shutdown. PANJ is in consultation with Capitol Impact Group and the Law Offices of Daniel Zirrit to ensure that you are best represented.

In Solidarity,

Dwight Covalleskie, PANJ President  
Ellen Cribbin, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, Line Staff  
Gavin Cummings, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, Supervisors