

REMARKS OF GOVERNOR THOMAS H. KEAN
STATE OF THE STATE MESSAGE
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TRENTON, NEW JERSEY
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1987

FROM 974701
NEW JERSEY G-52
DEC 20 1989
185 W. STATE
TRENTON, NJ

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE.

IT IS MY HONOR AND CONSTITUTIONAL DUTY TO REPORT TO YOU ON THE CONDITIONS OF THE STATE.

THE STATE OF THE STATE IS GOOD -- WE HAVE NEVER BEEN IN BETTER SHAPE.

WHILE OUR FRIENDS IN OTHER STATES ARE IN TROUBLE, WE ARE CREATING RECORD NUMBERS OF JOBS.

WHILE OTHER GOVERNORS ARE PREACHING THE "POLITICS OF LESS," WE FIND NEW WAYS TO SHARE MORE WITH OUR CHILDREN, THE ELDERLY AND THE POOR.

TODAY NEW JERSEY IS A LEADER.

WE HAVE THE THIRD HIGHEST STANDARD OF LIVING. WE OPEN NEW BUSINESSES AT MORE THAN TWICE THE RATE OF THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. WE HAVE THE LOWEST UNEMPLOYMENT IN SIXTEEN YEARS.

A NEWSPAPER IN DALLAS CALLED US, "THE ECONOMIC JEWEL OF THE NORTHEAST." WE SPARKLE AS A BEACON OF GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY.

. . . THESE ARE OUR GLORY DAYS.

YET THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO BASK IN THE WARM SUNSHINE OF SUCCESS.

IN THE SHADOWS LURK DANGERS THAT THREATEN OUR CONTINUED PROSPERITY.

I HAVE BEEN DOING A GREAT DEAL OF THINKING THE PAST YEAR ABOUT OUR STATE, AND ITS FUTURE. ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES AND THE DANGERS THAT LIE AHEAD.

TODAY I LAY BEFORE YOU A PLAN -- I CALL IT AN OPPORTUNITY AGENDA. I BELIEVE IT IS THE WAY TO PASS OUR PROSPERITY ON TO OUR CHILDREN.

ITS PURPOSE IS NOT TO EXPAND GOVERNMENT, RATHER IT IS TO USE GOVERNMENT WISELY.

THE OPPORTUNITY AGENDA IS A ROADMAP. FROM THE VERY GOOD STATE WE ARE TODAY WE CAN BECOME THE VERY BEST.

THIS AGENDA BEGINS WITH ONE OF THE FEW ISSUES LEFT FROM LAST YEAR'S AGENDA.

THE COST OF INSURANCE IS AN ALBATROSS AROUND OUR ECONOMY'S NECK. IT IS A GREEDY PICKPOCKET THAT STEALS FROM WORKING PEOPLE THEIR HARD EARNED PAY AND RAISES PROPERTY TAXES.

NOW WE MUST GO FURTHER. WE MUST FIND A WAY TO LIMIT THE OFTEN EXORBITANT COURT SETTLEMENTS THAT FORCE PEOPLE TO PAY OUTRAGEOUS INSURANCE RATES. TO DO THIS, WE NEED TWO THINGS.

FIRST, WE NEED TO CHANGE JOINT AND SEVERAL LIABILITY. SECOND, WE NEED TO PUT A CAP ON OUTRAGEOUS AWARDS FOR PAIN AND SUFFERING AS SUGGESTED BY ASSEMBLY SPEAKER CHUCK HARDWICK, MAJORITY LEADER CHUCK HAYTAIAN AND ASSEMBLYMAN RALPH LOVEYS.

REMEMBER THE MAGIC FORMULA -- LOWER INSURANCE RATES MEANS LOWER PROPERTY TAXES.

FOR TEN YEARS OUR MOTORISTS HAVE WAITED FOR RELIEF FROM THE HIGHEST AUTO INSURANCE PREMIUMS IN THE COUNTRY. FOR TEN YEARS THE SPECIAL INTERESTS HAVE BLOCKED THE WAY.

THE VERBAL THRESHOLD WILL SAVE NEW JERSEY MOTORISTS OVER \$200 MILLION DOLLARS. THAT'S LIKE CUTTING THE INCOME TAX OR THE SALES TAX. LET'S TAKE THAT MONEY FROM THE INSURANCE COMPANIES AND THE LAWYERS AND GIVE IT BACK TO THE PEOPLE. PASS THE VERBAL THRESHOLD . . .

. . . OUR DYNAMIC ECONOMY SHOULD CREATE 600,000 NEW JOBS IN THE NEXT DECADE -- GOOD PAYING JOBS, WITH BRIGHT FUTURES.

BUT WHO WILL FILL THESE JOBS?

WILL THEY BE THE GRADUATES OF OUR URBAN SCHOOLS?

WILL THEY BE THE WORKERS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR JOBS BECAUSE THE FACTORY CLOSED?

OR WILL BUSINESSES, CONFRONTED WITH LABOR SHORTAGES AND HIGH RETRAINING COSTS, SIMPLY TAKE THEIR JOBS TO KOREA . . . OR JAPAN . . . OR BRAZIL . . . WHERE THE WORKFORCE IS PREPARED?

THIS IS THE CRITICAL QUESTION OF OUR TIME. NEW JERSEY IS GOING TO FIND THE ANSWER.

WE NEED ACTION IN THREE AREAS.

FIRST, JOB TRAINING.

I WILL FORM A TASK FORCE TO STUDY OUR ENTIRE JOB TRAINING SYSTEM. I WANT TO BRING LABOR, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT TOGETHER IN A COMMON PURPOSE. WITHIN SIX MONTHS I WANT SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHAT IT'S GOING TO TAKE TO KEEP NEW JERSEY WORKING.

. . . WE MUST GET PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS OFF THE WELFARE ROLES . . .

TODAY I PROPOSE A NEW WELFARE PROGRAM THAT WILL GIVES WELFARE RECIPIENTS WHAT THEY WANT AND WHAT THEY NEED: ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE.

WE CALL THE PROGRAM: REACH. WE PLAN A BARGAIN WITH THE WELFARE RECIPIENT.

REACH WILL PROVIDE CHILD CARE, MEDICAL SUPPORT, AND TRANSPORTATION. IN RETURN, REACH PARTICIPANTS WILL SIGN A WRITTEN CONTRACT, REQUIRING THEM TO WORK OR TO TO SCHOOL.

REACH GOES BEYOND ANY OTHER WELFARE REFORM PROGRAM THAT YOU HAVE READ ABOUT. IT GOES BEYOND MASSACHUSETTS. IT GOES BEYOND CALIFORNIA. IT WILL BE THE FIRST WELFARE REFORM TO TOUCH EVERY WELFARE RECIPIENT.

IT WILL COST SOME MONEY. BUT IF WE CAN REDUCE WELFARE ROLES BY ONLY FIFTEEN PERCENT, THE PROGRAM PAYS FOR ITSELF.

IF YOU SUPPORT THIS PROGRAM, NEW JERSEY CAN PROVE WHAT OTHER STATES ONLY TALK ABOUT -- THE VERY BEST WELFARE PROGRAM IS A JOB.

BASIC TO OUR OPPORTUNITY AGENDA IS EDUCATION. FOR FIVE YEARS WE HAVE WORKED TOGETHER TO IMPROVE OUR SCHOOLS. WE HAVE MADE GREAT PROGRESS.

BUT THERE IS NOT YET CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION.

TODAY I AM RECOMMENDING A NEW PROGRAM -- CALLED 10,000 JOBS/10,000 GRADUATES -- TO HELP PLACE 10,000 GRADUATES OF CITY SCHOOLS IN FULL-TIME, PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS BY 1992 . . .

. . . THINK OF THIS STATE AS A HUMAN BEING. EDUCATION, WELFARE REFORM AND JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS INVEST IN THE MIND, BUT OUR BODY NEEDS ATTENTION AS WELL.

WE NEED TO KEEP OUR ROADS, HIGHWAYS AND MASS TRANSIT IN TOP CONDITION.

THE TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND WILL BE OUT OF MONEY THIS JUNE. WITHOUT THIS MONEY, OUR ROADS, BRIDGES, BUSES AND TRAINS WILL SUFFER.

I ASK YOU THEREFORE TO LOOK AHEAD, TO ADD THAT NICKEL TO THE PRICE OF GASOLINE, AND DEDICATE IT TO NEW JERSEY'S FUTURE.

WE NEED TO RENEW THE TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND.

IN THE PAST, OUR ROADS HAVE LED FROM THE CITIES TO THE SUBURBS. WE NOW MUST REVERSE DIRECTION.

"WE WILL NEGLECT OUR CITIES TO OUR PERIL," JOHN KENNEDY ONCE SAID, "FOR IN NEGLECTING THEM WE NEGLECT THE NATION . . ."

WE MUST MAKE THE CITIES SELF-SUFFICIENT AGAIN. ONLY THEN CAN THEY AVOID THE ANNUAL BUDGET CRISES. ONLY THEN CAN OUR CITIES SAY TO BUSINESSES, HOMEOWNERS AND PARENTS -- "THIS IS A SOLID COMMUNITY. PLANT YOUR ROOTS HERE."

I PROPOSE THAT WE GIVE CITY RESIDENTS A STAKE IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT. GIVE THEM THE POWER TO BUILD HOUSING AND OWN BUSINESSES. LET'S MAKE THEM A PROPOSITION.

THEY CREATE A CORPORATION AND SERVE AS SHAREHOLDERS. WE FIND THEM BUSINESS LEADERS TO INVEST IN THEIR PROJECT. EVERYONE -- RICH AND POOR, RESIDENTS AND NON-RESIDENTS -- HAS A SHARE IN THE PROJECT. AND EVERYONE HAS A STAKE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S SURVIVAL . . .

. . . LET'S BREAK THE CHAIN OF DEPENDENCY. LET'S GIVE THE NEIGHBORHOODS THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO HELP THEMSELVES . . .

I WANT ACTION ON OTHER PRIORITIES.

I AGAIN ASK YOU TO APPROVE TWO CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO HELP OUR POLICE FIGHT THE CRIMINALS WHO PREY ON OUR ELDERLY AND OTHER VULNERABLE CITIZENS.

IF A POLICE OFFICER CONDUCTS A SEARCH IN GOOD FAITH, THAT EVIDENCE DISCOVERED OUGHT TO BE USED IN COURT, OTHERWISE YOU CAN HAVE PEOPLE LITERALLY GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER.

AND THUGS WHO REPEATEDLY ATTACK INNOCENT PEOPLE DO NOT BELONG ON OUR STREETS. APPROXIMATELY ONE OUT OF SIX CRIMES IS COMMITTED BY SOMEONE OUT ON BAIL. THE SENATE SHOULD PASS SENATOR FRANK GRAVES AND ASSEMBLYMAN WATER KERN'S LEGISLATION GIVING JUDGES THE POWER TO HOLD THESE DANGEROUS CRIMINALS IN PRISON AWAITING TRIAL.

I HAVE SAID IT OVER AND OVER, WE CAN'T MAINTAIN A STRONG ECONOMY WITHOUT A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT.

WE HAVE SET THE PACE IN PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE REST OF THE NATION. NOW WE MUST DO MORE.

. . . THIS SUMMER, MY MAILBAG WAS FILLED WITH LETTERS ON ONE TOPIC: THE SHORE.

THE SHORE MEANS A LOT TO NEW JERSEYANS. HOW MANY CHILDREN HAVE SPENT THEIR FINEST SUMMER AT BELMAR, LONG BEACH ISLAND, POINT PLEASANT, OCEAN CITY OR CAPE MAY? HOW MANY OF US HAVE SAT TRANSFIXED BY THE SUNRISE OFF BARNEGET BAY?

. . . BUT TOO MANY GOVERNMENTS AND TOO MANY AGENCIES TRY TO PROTECT THE SHORE. WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG, NO ONE IS ACCOUNTABLE.

FOR THIS REASON, I ASK YOU TO TAKE A DRAMATIC STEP THIS YEAR.

I ASK YOU TO CREATE A NEW JERSEY CLEAN OCEAN AUTHORITY TO PROTECT THE SHORE FOR US AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS . . .

SO THIS IS OUR OPPORTUNITY AGENDA. I AM ASKING YOU TO LOWER INSURANCE RATES. TO CHANGE OUR WELFARE SYSTEM. TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES IN OUR POOREST CITIES. AND TO CREATE AN AUTHORITY TO KEEP OUR OCEAN CLEAN.

IT IS NOT A SIMPLE AGENDA. IT IS NOT EASY. IT WILL NOT BE FAVORED BY THE SPECIAL INTERESTS. IT WILL TAKE POLITICAL COURAGE.

I AM SURE WE WILL SUMMON THAT COURAGE TO MAKE THIS STATE BETTER IN THE YEAR AHEAD.

THANK YOU.