



state of new jersey

Acting Governor Richard J. Codey

# PROPERTY TAX CONVENTION TASK FORCE



- > [property tax home](#)
- > [task force members](#)
- > [view bill establishing task force](#)
- > [convention related press releases](#)
- > [task force background](#)
- > [task force transcripts](#)
- > [task force final report](#)
- > [hearing audio](#)

[contact the governor](#)

1

1 STATE OF NEW JERSEY

2

3 NEW JERSEY PROPERTY : TRANSCRIPT

4 TAX CONVENTION TASK FORCE : OF

5 ----- HEARING

6

7 Date: October 26, 2004

8

9 TRANSCRIPT ORDERED BY:

10 JACK DONNELLY, State of New Jersey, Office of  
the Governor, The Statehouse, PO Box 001,  
11 Trenton, New Jersey 08625

12

13 PANEL PARTICIPANTS:

- 14 MICHAEL R. COLE, VICE CHAIRMAN
- SUSAN A. COLE
- 15 SHERRYL GORDON
- SENATOR LEONARD LANCE
- 16 TERRENCE MALLOY
- ASSEMBLYMAN KEVIN O'TOOLE
- 17 MAYOR GARY J. PASSANANTE
- ERNEST C. REOCK, JR., Ph.D.
- 18 MAYOR JO-ANNE B. SCHUBERT
- CARL E. VAN HORN, Ph.D., CHAIRMAN
- 19 SENATOR RICHARD VAN WAGNER, SR.

20

21

22  
Coleen Rand, AD/T  
23 Certified Court Transcriber  
For Guy J. Renzi & Associates

24 824 West State Street  
Trenton, New Jersey 08618  
25 (609) 989-9199

2

1 (Tape 1, Side A)

2 MR. VAN HORN: -- so I'm going to get

3 -- call this meeting to order and get underway.

4 This is, I believe, the sixth meeting

5 of the Property Tax Convention Task Force. My name

6 is Carl Van Horn, I'm the chair of the task force;

7 and, as has been my custom, I would like to ask my

8 distinguished colleagues on the panel to introduce

9 themselves, so that the witnesses and the audience

10 knows who's here today. I'll start with Dr. Cole.

11 DR. COLE: Susan Cole, President of

12 Montclair State University.

13 SENATOR LANCE: Leonard Lance in the

14 State Senate.

15 MR. MALLOY: Terrence Malloy, City of

16 Bayonne, Business Administrator and CFO.

17 ASSEMBLYMAN O'TOOLE: Kevin O'Toole in

18 the New Jersey State Assembly.

19 MR. COLE: Mike Cole, I'm an attorney.

20 MAYOR PASSANANTE: Gary Passanante,

21 I'm the Mayor of the Borough of Somerdale, and

22 Chairman for New Jersey State League of

23 Municipalities, Property Tax Reform Committee.

24 DR. REOCK: Ernest Reock, retired from

25 the Rutgers University faculty.

3

1 MR. VAN HORN: We have two excellent

2 panels here today, invited to talk with us about our

3 responsibilities. And we're going to begin with

4 Phil Kirschner, who's the President of the Business

5 and Industry Association. He will be followed by

6 Rich Goldberg from the Commerce and Industry

7 Association.

8 Joan VerPlanck is en route and stuck

9 in the inevitable New Jersey traffic, so hopefully

10 she will be here soon, as well.

11 And Senator Van Wagner, a member of

12 the task force, has just come in. Welcome, Senator.

13 And then we're going to be hearing

14 from Richard Locke (phonetic), who is representing

15 Charles Wowkanech. Mr. Wowkanech, I believe, is

16 attending a funeral today, so he was unable to be

17 with us, but Mr. Locke is here representing him.

18 I'm going to -- as I've discussed with

19 the panel members -- I mean, our witnesses, I've

20 asked them to each make a three-to-five-minute

21 opening statement. I believe that it would be most

22 efficient if they all made their statements, and

23 then we had an opportunity to question them and

24 follow up on their comments.

25 And we'll begin with you, Phil. Thank

4

1 you very much.

2 MR. KIRSCHNER: I thank you. Good

3 afternoon again. My name is Phil Kirschner, I'm

4 President of the New Jersey Business and Industry

5 Association. And on behalf of our 23,000 employers,

6 I want to thank you for inviting NJBIA to

7 participate in what we consider a very important

8 process.

9 A lot of people tend to view property

10 taxes as an issue that only impacts homeowners. The

11 fact is, is that rising property taxes are a

12 critical problem for employers, as well.

13 Every year at BIA, we do a survey and

14 ask our members what are the most important, most

15 critical business problems; and, over the past ten

16 years, our members have consistently ranked the cost

17 of property taxes that they pay as one of the most

18 important business problems that they -- that they

19 face.

20 Businesses, employers directly pay

21 about twenty-five percent of the property taxes in

22 New Jersey, and the rest see property taxes

23 reflected in the leases or rents that they pay; yet,

24 they receive none of the rebates or property tax

25 relief programs that homeowners do. So it is a

5

1 significant, significant problem for them.  
2 Additionally, we are starting to see  
3 more and more that high property taxes are a real  
4 disincentive to attract particularly some of the  
5 younger, high-skilled employees that we seek, who,  
6 not just only for property tax reasons, but find  
7 that living and buying a home in New Jersey is just  
8 quite -- is just too expensive, and get  
9 opportunities in other states.  
10 It is also a factor in relocation  
11 decisions or location decisions.  
12 So we have a keen interest in this  
13 issue. So the question is: What is the best way to  
14 approach it?  
15 We do not believe that a  
16 constitutional convention is necessary. We don't  
17 think it will achieve the complex goal that you've  
18 set out. Our legislators have the power to reform  
19 New Jersey's property taxes now. They do not need  
20 what we believe to be a convoluted political process  
21 that will take years, involve a necessary  
22 complexity, and be carried out largely by special  
23 interest groups.  
24 One thing I want to make clear, some  
25 of the proponents, well-meaning proponents, have

6

1 this romantic notion that a constitutional  
2 convention will be this citizen-run, citizen-  
3 dominated, New England town meeting type of event,  
4 where everyone gets together, puts all kinds of  
5 partisan rancor aside, thinks the great thoughts,  
6 and a wonderful solution comes out of that. We do  
7 not.

8 We believe that a constitutional  
9 convention will be a special interest event,  
10 dominated by those who rely on public spending, who  
11 will organize the process, who will work hard to  
12 elect their delegates, who have a predetermined  
13 agenda in what is a very political process, every  
14 bit as political as the Legislature is now. And we  
15 really don't see a way around that if you're going  
16 to have an electoral process. Even if you limit  
17 spending on that, those groups that are organized  
18 that can elect their delegates, that have well known  
19 delegates, will be the ones that will prevail.

20 Furthermore, any process that doesn't  
21 address spending cannot achieve meaningful property  
22 tax reform. Spending is what drives the need for  
23 additional property taxes, and no shift to other  
24 taxes is going to change that. Any savings in  
25 property taxes will be eaten up very rapidly by

7

1 increased costs, and we'll be back here very

2 shortly. Any solution, any relief will be short-

3 lived and temporary, at best.

4 We understand this has been a long-

5 term problem, but we think a -- there is an

6 alternative that has not been tried yet, that is an

7 alternative to a constitutional convention, and that

8 is a special session of the Legislature. And by

9 that we mean a session that is devoted exclusively

10 to reform of our property tax system, one that

11 considers no other business for as long as it takes

12 the Legislature to resolve this problem; a special

13 session that has legislators coming to Trenton every

14 day, and I mean every single day, whether that's

15 days, weeks, or months, until they resolve the

16 problem.

17 We believe that a special session

18 would be more efficient, solutions could be achieved

19 quicker. The infrastructure is already in place, in

20 terms of the research infrastructure and the place

21 to meet, and the, quote, "delegates" are already

22 there, and that is our elected governor, forty

23 senators, and eighty assemblypeople. They should do

24 the job that they were elected to do, and take

25 control of reforming property taxes, rather than

8

1 defaulting on their obligations and punting to a

2 different, but albeit as political a process from

3 where they came.

4 Again, this has not been tried. And

5 we think, before you recommend the rather drastic

6 step of a constitutional convention, all other

7 legislative alternatives should be exhausted, and

8 this one has not.

9 The Governor, the legislative leader

10 could decide very shortly that they're going to do

11 this, and it would be well accepted by the public if

12 it's in the manner that we said: One totally

13 devoted to it, and take as many weeks or months as

14 it -- as it needs.

15 With regard to the substance of

16 property tax reform, I just want to address the

17 issue of government spending a little more because

18 it is so -- it is so intertwined to a resolution of

19 this problem. If we're going to do this, let's do

20 it right. And spending and the taxes to pay for it

21 are just so intertwined.

22 We strongly believe that the scope of

23 inquiry, if you're going to have a convention or a

24 special session, has to include school district and

25 municipal spending. That should be part of the

9

1 inquiry. The credibility of the process in the

2 eyes, certainly, of our members, while we believe in

3 the eyes of the public, demands a review of the

4 spending side of the equation, and not just the

5 revenue side.

6 On average, it costs over \$11,000;

7 11,248, to educate a public school student in New

8 Jersey, compared with a national average of almost

9 7,400. That's more than a fifty percent difference.

10 Why? Fifty percent. Since sixty to eighty percent

11 of local school budgets are salary and benefits,

12 again, any spending inquiry has to look at that side

13 of the equation.

14 Any discussion of education

15 improvement and financing must also address the

16 longstanding obstacles to cost efficiency and

17 educational excellence, and that's issues such as

18 consolidation of school districts, promoting shared

19 services, consolidating local and school board

20 elections on one day, and examining built-in costs

21 for mandated benefits. They all should be careful

22 examined and included in any process of inquiry in a

23 constitutional convention.

24 Furthermore, it's -- again, going back

25 to the representation issue. It's our fear that any

10

1 delegation for a constitutional convention would be

2 populated with representatives from special interest

3 groups, and the voice of employers and the owners

4 and renters of industrial and commercial property

5 would be muted.

6 Such issues as lifting the

7 constitutional bar, which we have now, on taxing

8 commercial and residential property might be lifted;

9 increase corporate taxes could be part of the

10 equation, and that would hurt the competitiveness of

11 our state, the economic competitiveness of our

12 state. It will have a negative impact on ratables,

13 which already help to keep down the cost of

14 residential property taxes, and, really, will hurt

15 us in the ability to produce the kind of jobs that

16 provide the ability to support any kind of tax that

17 -- that is finally adopted.

18 So, again, I thank you for the

19 opportunity to address you. I don't envy the job

20 that you have. It's very difficult. We pledge to

21 work with you, to try to come to a resolution and

22 the best resolution possible of the issue of

23 property taxes. Again, thank you for your time.

24 MR. VAN HORN: Thank you, Phil.

25 Richard Goldberg.

11

1 MR. GOLDBERG: Good afternoon, Mr.

2 Chairman and members of the task force. My name is

3 Richard Goldberg, I'm the President of the Commerce

4 and Industry Association of New Jersey. I'm pleased

5 to provide testimony on behalf of our members

6 regarding the scope of a constitutional convention  
7 to address the issue of property tax reform.  
8 Clearly, the employer community  
9 recognizes the urgent need for real property tax  
10 reform; however, let me be clear in saying that our  
11 association cannot support a constitutional  
12 convention that does not equally address spending at  
13 all levels of government, nor can we support a  
14 constitutional convention that empowers special  
15 interests by not providing for a fair and equitable  
16 delegate selection process.  
17 Should our state proceed with a  
18 convention, we are very concerned that, in order to  
19 find alternative revenue streams, the convention  
20 will increase the tax burden on New Jersey  
21 businesses by raising the corporate business tax,  
22 sales tax, or income tax, or by raising the rate by  
23 which commercial properties are taxed.  
24 Over the past several years, the  
25 business community has been hit with various tax

12

1 increases targeted at specific industries. New  
2 Jersey currently has one of the highest business tax  
3 burdens in the nation, and any additional tax  
4 increases will further put our state at a  
5 competitive disadvantage.  
6 Furthermore, history suggests that

7 such an increase in other taxes would not  
8 effectively reduce property tax rates. In 1976, New  
9 Jersey introduced the state income tax to reduce the  
10 reliance on local property taxes, and increased the  
11 income tax in the '80s and '90s for the same reason.  
12 However, since 1976, there has not been one year in  
13 which property tax rates have declined. It is clear  
14 that the more tax dollars government receives, the  
15 more government will spend.  
16 Therefore, it's the opinion of this  
17 association that the answer to property tax reform  
18 does not lie in finding new revenue sources, but in  
19 implementing new spending controls at every level of  
20 government.

21 While the Governor recently signed  
22 legislation to cap local government discretionary  
23 spending by 2.5 percent, we must go much further and  
24 implement strong tax and expenditure limits at the  
25 state level, as well. When state government spends

13

1 beyond its means, the result is looming budget  
2 deficits and a greater burden on municipalities to  
3 fund our schools and other programs through  
4 increases in their property tax rates.

5 We believe the constitutional  
6 convention should implement strong tax and  
7 expenditure limits at all levels of government,

8 pertaining to all budgetary items. Twenty-six other  
9 states in the nation currently have tax and  
10 expenditure limitations known as "TELS," which help  
11 to control state spending and reduce taxes.  
12 Specifically, the convention should  
13 look at the Colorado Taxpayers Bill of Rights as a  
14 model for tax and expenditure limits in our state.  
15 In 1992, the people of Colorado passed a  
16 constitutional amendment which capped spending at  
17 the rate of growth plus inflation, and required the  
18 immediate refund of surplus tax revenues to the  
19 taxpayers. As a result, Colorado taxpayers have  
20 received 3.2 billion in tax rebates since 1997.  
21 Between 1995 and 2000, the state ranked first in  
22 gross state product growth and second in personal  
23 income growth. Such strong controls in New Jersey  
24 would go a long way to help control state and local  
25 spending, generate property tax relief, and avoid

14

1 future budget crises.  
2 Other states have implemented TELS,  
3 but many have not achieved the degree of success of  
4 Colorado because they've not been as stringent. In  
5 fact, in 1978, New Jersey enacted a very weak TEL  
6 with many loopholes, which was allowed to lapse in  
7 1983. History has shown that the most successful  
8 spending control mechanisms are constitutionally

9 mandated; and, therefore, cannot be changed or  
10 circumvented by elected officials.  
11 The Heartland Institute recently  
12 issued a study which discussed other important  
13 components of successful state TELs. The institute  
14 said that strict definitions of spending caps were  
15 critical, and that the limits should apply to both  
16 local and state governments, so constraint at the  
17 state level could not be circumvented by shifting  
18 functions to local governments. Moreover, the  
19 institute said that, in order to control spending,  
20 no government function such as education should be  
21 allowed to operate outside of the spending limits.  
22 Another important component is the  
23 stabilization of state and local budgets through a  
24 rainy day fund, which eliminates the need to  
25 increase taxes or incur debt when there is a revenue

15

1 shortfall. In periods of rapid growth, part of the  
2 surplus revenue is returned to the people through  
3 tax cuts and tax rebates, and part is set aside for  
4 such a rainy day fund. This fund is then used to  
5 offshoot -- offset revenue shortfalls in periods of  
6 recession.

7 It's our opinion that a  
8 constitutionally mandated cap in state and local  
9 expenditures is an important part of reforming our

10 property tax system; however, New Jersey must also  
11 take a look at the inequitable manner in which we  
12 fund our schools.

13 By mandating that urban school  
14 districts receive the same amount as the highest  
15 spending school district in the state, we're  
16 shortchanging the majority of our middle class --  
17 excuse me -- state's middle-class schools, resulting  
18 in massive property tax burdens on New Jersey  
19 homeowners in those communities.

20 It makes little sense that urban areas  
21 receive the majority of our state's education  
22 dollars with little improvement in their test scores  
23 and graduation rates. Clearly, this is a funding  
24 formula that's broken and harmful to both suburban  
25 property taxpayers, as well as the students in those

16

1 urban districts.

2 In closing, I'd like to thank the  
3 members of the task force for hearing the concerns  
4 of our member community and employers in this state.  
5 Should it be decided that a constitutional  
6 convention is the appropriate course of action, it's  
7 our hope that the scope of the convention includes  
8 controlling government spending at all levels, and  
9 avoids placing additional tax burdens on New Jersey  
10 employers or working families. Thank you very much.

11 MR. VAN HORN: Thank you, Mr.

12 Goldberg. Richard Locke -- or Lockey, is that?

13 MR. LOCKE: Yes.

14 THE COURT: Just use the microphone,

15 please.

16 MR. LOCKE: I'm sorry.

17 Mr. Chairman and committee members,

18 thank you for having the opportunity -- providing

19 the opportunity for us to present a position before

20 you today, I think on behalf of AFL-CIO President

21 Charles Wowkanech, who was unable to attend, I serve

22 as co-general counsel to the New Jersey State AFL-

23 CIO.

24 We represent approximately one

25 millions heads of household, virtually all of whom

17

1 work or live within the State of New Jersey; of

2 those, a little over 200,000 are in public

3 employment at various levels. We have a genuine

4 concern with the efficient flow of services

5 protecting our membership, of course, but the

6 efficient flow of services and support of the

7 efficient functioning of state and local government.

8 My remarks will be focused in two

9 separate areas: First, the area of creating an

10 effective and appropriate enabling statute or

11 convention call, and the second are will be the

12 issue of delegate selection.

13 With respect to the first issue, there

14 is, of course, precedent for legislative control and

15 constitutional convention agenda-setting in both our

16 '47 and '66 experiences. These can be

17 distinguished, of course. The more narrow enabling

18 legislation was in 1966, where Senate Bill 2-61 was

19 very narrow in its addressing the Baker decision,

20 having to do with reapportionment. And even that

21 constitutional convention was preceded by the Meiner

22 Commission (phonetic), which even more narrowly

23 focused the debate. That charge was narrow and

24 clearly focusing, it was a readily identifiable

25 issue, as distinguished from the issue of property

18

1 tax.

2 Property tax is neither so readily

3 identifiable, nor narrow in scope. One cannot, for

4 example, address taxation without addressing

5 spending. Revenue is inextricably linked to

6 appropriation.

7 Once the door is opened, a

8 constitutional convention could develop directions

9 of its own, given a broad charter; and, unless there

10 was very clearly defined -- there are clearly

11 defined parameters, things could occur that no one

12 anticipated.

13 For example, one might call it a  
14 runaway convention, as has been occurred elsewhere  
15 in other states. Things might happen such as I&R;  
16 initiative and referendum, which might change the  
17 lay of the land in many areas.  
18 A Proposition-13-type circumstance, so  
19 encouraged by Howard Jarvis in California some years  
20 ago.  
21 Revisions of the debt ceiling, and the  
22 ability of governmental bonding and borrowing  
23 generally, which could have significant impacts on  
24 capitalization of projects, and so forth.  
25 And, of course, if one were simplistic

19

1 and attacked only one phrase, "thorough and  
2 efficient education," enormous savings could be  
3 achieved instantly throughout our state. And nobody  
4 is suggesting the mooted of Robinson v. Cahill or  
5 Abbot v. Burke. But, once one gets that ball  
6 rolling, where does it end? And the comments made  
7 earlier about school spending and so forth, after  
8 all, it's approximately two-thirds at the local  
9 level. How can that be overlooked?  
10 There's a delicate balance that, I  
11 think, has to be set in -- which justifies the  
12 calling of the convention, and doing that which the  
13 Legislature, for some reason, is not able to do;

14 yet, maintaining some appropriate level of control  
15 to avoid the crippling of government or the  
16 effective delivery of service.  
17 I think, clearly, the best method of  
18 dealing with questions of taxation and spending is  
19 for such questions to be dealt with legislatively.  
20 Why would a convention be necessary if the only  
21 questions to be placed before said body were those  
22 questions which are readily and presently within the  
23 control of our legislative body.  
24 The deferral, you know, to a  
25 constitutional body, does have pitfalls, and they're

20

1 far-ranging and difficult to estimate at the  
2 threshold. One thinks of the Frankenstein monster  
3 that was created in good faith, and didn't work out;  
4 it turned on its creators. And one could similarly  
5 find themselves situated.  
6 On the subject of delegate selection,  
7 there is no clear precedent. There are many  
8 different examples, even within the State of New  
9 Jersey. The 1967 model differs from the '47 model.  
10 And while one issue, for example, is,  
11 should legislators even serve on the constitutional  
12 commission -- on the constitutional body as a  
13 delegate, this has been debated over the years. On  
14 the one hand, one may see a need a for legislative

15 experience, where practicality of the legislative  
16 charge is being discussed on a convention floor.  
17 But, on the other hand, if the legislator --  
18 Legislature is deferring the issues which are  
19 presently within the scope of their control to this  
20 constitutional body, would we see a duplication?  
21 If I may quote from that debate -- and  
22 I didn't realize Professor Reock would be here on  
23 the panel -- but referring to his book, he quotes  
24 the statement of then-Senator Nelson Stambler  
25 (phonetic) of Union County on the subject, where he

21

1 says, and I quote:

2 "Allowing active legislators to take  
3 part would only compound the mess by adding the  
4 extra and troublesome ingredient of unenlightened  
5 self-interest."

6 That was responded to by Governor

7 Hughes at the time, who suggested a limit on

8 legislators. I guess Senator Stambler established

9 some traction with that comment.

10 But we have had, over the years,

11 percentage breakdown on the earlier '66; that is,

12 seventeen percent current members of the

13 Legislature, eighteen percent former members. On

14 the '47 convention, there were eleven percent

15 current and twenty percent former legislators.

16 The issue has to be submitted,  
17 resolved as a threshold issue, how this is to be  
18 handled. If we are only replicating the  
19 Legislature, why are we having a convention? On the  
20 other hand, we can't operate in vacuum of  
21 legislative expertise.

22 In selecting delegates, one, of  
23 course, cannot ignore the elective process. But  
24 then we also have to talk about the size. It's been  
25 related to the districts in the '47 convention, over

22

1 eighty-one delegates; and in '66, 126. There, some  
2 were casting half-votes, rather involved.

3 There's little doubt that there is  
4 some correlation between the size of a body doing  
5 work and what's going to get done. And there's also  
6 a restricted time frame, one would anticipate, in  
7 the charge, and the logistical and scheduling  
8 considerations that flow.

9 The position of the AFL-CIO would be  
10 to recommend that, in addition to those elected  
11 numbers of delegates, that certain others be  
12 appointed at large. The specific intent of this  
13 suggestion is to ensure that requisite experience  
14 and knowledge on those issues is directly at hand  
15 before the constitutional convention body.

16 For example, the typical municipal tax

17 levy has a factor for education of about sixty to  
18 sixty-five percent. How efficient could such a body  
19 be without representation from knowledgeable  
20 educators? While we are not here to argue, and  
21 certainly not here to argue in support of the League  
22 of Municipalities or the New Jersey Association of  
23 Counties, they do bring a level of experience and  
24 practical knowledge, which would be an asset to a  
25 body otherwise formed, and would increase focus and

23

1 efficiency.

2 One cannot ignore other major  
3 organizations, too. However, the largest single  
4 representative bodies in the entire state also  
5 cannot be overlooked.

6 The government is a labor-intensive  
7 industry; it certainly is. It is the position of  
8 the New Jersey State AFL-CIO that labor must have  
9 representation at such a convention, and it must be  
10 so arranged in the initial enabling legislation.  
11 Labor must have a seat at the table. With due  
12 respect to other organizations of varying size and  
13 scope, the best equipped and the best prepared is  
14 the New Jersey State AFL-CIO.

15 A suggestion would be that, in  
16 addition to the elected convention persons, there  
17 would also be reserved delegate positions; for

18 example, five to the Governor's Office and five to  
19 each house of the Legislature, with a specific  
20 intent to bring into play these other areas of  
21 expertise. The specific charge would be very  
22 focused in that regard, and I think it must be done  
23 up front.

24 The other area on selection I wanted  
25 to comment on is the voting. The time line would

24

1 likely be your recommendation by the end of the  
2 year; and, assuming it's in favor of a convention,  
3 legislative action next year, with a ballot going to  
4 the people in November of '05. It is suggested that  
5 there would be a separate vote in April of '06 to  
6 select delegates, and this is the reason:

7 First, one must determine whether or  
8 not there is to be a convention before the  
9 contingent question of who would be on it would be  
10 selected. There's a model for this. In fact, in  
11 '66, there was a special election held on March 1 of  
12 that year. That might be more costly than the April  
13 date we're suggesting because there's already an  
14 election across the state, the school board  
15 election, in April. So second-balloting, second-  
16 printing, second duplication of efforts would be  
17 avoided to some degree.

18 The second question, in April would

19 also give an opportunity for campaigning, which is  
20 another issue this body must consider, or the  
21 Legislature perhaps must consider. Again, quoting  
22 the professor's book, and it's dealt with at length,  
23 I'll just mention that the use of -- quoting:  
24 "The use of party names and slogans,  
25 the bracketing of names on the ballot was

25

1 specifically authorized."

2 So there was an entire campaign  
3 procedure with respect to the delegate body. And an  
4 April date would seem to be appropriate there.  
5 It might also provide some support  
6 that somebody will go out and protest the two-thirds  
7 piece of their tax on the school board, where we  
8 typically get across the state about twelve percent  
9 voter turnout on the two-thirds piece. Yet, when  
10 we're in the municipalities, talking about other  
11 types of public service, there are frequently  
12 comments made that, you're driving up the tax rate;  
13 yet, only a fraction of the people who can vote, do  
14 vote.

15 We are not taking a position at this  
16 time with respect to whether or not there should be  
17 a convention, only to these two procedural points  
18 referenced. Thank you for the opportunity to speak  
19 before you.

20 MR. VAN HORN: Thank you very much,

21 Mr. Locke.

22 Joan, your timing is impeccable.

23 Welcome, and sorry we don't give you a chance to

24 settle in, but if you're ready, we'd like to have

25 you give your remarks, as well, and then we'll start

26

1 the questioning of the task force.

2 MS. VER PLANCK: Thank you. My

3 apologies. I was on Route 1, and a double-ambulance

4 accident, so it took quite a bit of time to get

5 here. But I'm better off than they are, we should

6 all have them in our prayers and thoughts, I

7 suppose.

8 Good afternoon. I'm Joan VerPlanck,

9 President of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, a

10 Trenton-based trade association that represents

11 2,500 businesses across the state. I thank you for

12 giving me the opportunity to speak before you here

13 today, and I appreciate the seriousness of the

14 assignment that is before you.

15 The property tax crisis in New Jersey

16 is a tremendously difficult issue, one that can only

17 be solved by everyone working together to find

18 innovative and dynamic solutions.

19 The state chamber's board of directors

20 has not had the opportunity to consider the pros and

21 cons of a constitutional convention, nor have they  
22 taken an official position on the issue. That said,  
23 they have had ample opportunity, particularly over  
24 the last few years, to consider the overall impact  
25 of taxation on the business community.

27

1 Early in this discussion on how to  
2 solve the property tax dilemma, I'm not surprised  
3 that some are already recommending that the employer  
4 community should pay more so that tens of thousands  
5 of homeowners in the state do not have to. If there  
6 is one point to be made to the members of this panel  
7 in the few minutes I have before you here today, it  
8 is that targeting the business community to shoulder  
9 the bulk of property tax relief would be a  
10 disastrous mistake.

11 New Jersey's long-term economic  
12 expansion is already seriously threatened by the  
13 state's current policies toward business, and the  
14 nation is taking notice. A flurry of recent  
15 research has placed New Jersey at the bottom of the  
16 pack when it comes to how the state is viewed  
17 nationally as a place to conduct business. This is  
18 research that is examined closely by out-of-state  
19 companies deciding where to relocate, or by New  
20 Jersey companies considering expansion.  
21 New Jersey ranked forty-second out of

22 fifty states in economic opportunity, according to  
23 the May 2004 U.S. Economic Freedom Index 2004  
24 report, which is published by the San Francisco-  
25 based Pacific Research Institute, in association

28

1 with Forbes magazine. The ratings are based on  
2 state spending, occupational licensing,  
3 environmental regulations, income redistribution,  
4 right to work, and prevailing wage laws, tort laws,  
5 and a number of government agencies.

6 Similarly, the Washington D.C. based  
7 Tax Foundation ranked New Jersey fortieth in a study  
8 examining business tax climates in the nation's  
9 fifty states.

10 Another recent study from the Council  
11 on State Taxation; "COST," also based in Washington,  
12 revealed that New Jersey businesses shoulder the  
13 sixth-highest state and local business tax burden in  
14 the nation, paying an average of \$4,613 in business  
15 taxes for each and every employee.

16 COST also reported that, since New  
17 Jersey's 2002 corporate business tax overhaul, no  
18 other states have followed our lead and crafted such  
19 massive changes. COST findings are not surprising.  
20 Those opposed to the CBT rewrite predicted that no  
21 other state would willingly damage its business  
22 retention and attraction efforts by adopting New

23 Jersey's policies.

24 CFO magazine released a study earlier

25 this year listing the states with the least-friendly

29

1 tax environments for business, in which they called

2 New Jersey, quote, "the falling star" of their

3 survey. Respondents ranked New Jersey's tax

4 environment least fair and predictable of all fifty

5 states, and named the Garden State least desirable

6 when it comes to locating or expanding a business.

7 In the nine-question survey of corporate CFOs from

8 around the country, New Jersey ranked worst in four

9 among the five worst -- in four categories, and

10 among the five worst states in four others.

11 I cite these studies because

12 increasing the tax burden on New Jersey businesses

13 would only further damage the reputation of our

14 state as a desirable place to do business. At a

15 time when we so desperately need to create private

16 sector jobs, we should avoid crafting policies that

17 will further discourage companies from setting up

18 shop or expanding in our state. As these studies

19 reveal, New Jersey's businesses already pay an

20 exorbitant amount of taxes in comparison with other

21 states in the nation.

22 The New Jersey business community paid

23 \$15.6 billion of the 37.9 billion total tax burden

24 in New Jersey in 2003. This equals 41.1 percent of  
25 the total state and local tax burden.

30

1 Property taxes in New Jersey account  
2 for over 45 percent of total state and local  
3 revenue. In fiscal year 2003, New Jersey employers  
4 paid over \$7 billion in property taxes to local  
5 entities and to the state. This represents a 13.2  
6 percent increase in property taxes paid since fiscal  
7 year 2000.

8 Any discussion of property tax reform  
9 must also include a serious discussion about cost-  
10 cutting measures, such as the consideration of  
11 levels of government, the elimination of duplication  
12 of services, the regionalization of schools, and  
13 many other factors that currently challenge our  
14 state.

15 Senator Adler, in a release dated  
16 September 21st, said essentially the same thing,  
17 quote:

18 "We need to look at the tax side, as  
19 well as the spending side, to make sure that tax  
20 relief this year is not outdone by local spending  
21 jumps the next."

22 It's time to question expenditures to  
23 determine whether they are necessary, fair, and  
24 reasonable, rather than simply determining who will

25 pay. Ideally, this issue should be addressed by the

31

1 Legislature.

2 Should you, however, following your

3 deliberations, recommend a constitutional

4 convention, I would ask that you consider assembling

5 a delegation that is reflective of the taxpayer

6 community. The number of delegates from the

7 business community should be commensurate with the

8 percentage of property tax dollars provided by that

9 community. I believe that you can find a great deal

10 of talent within this community, and assure you that

11 the leadership of my organization will assist in

12 identifying individuals for consideration.

13 Thank you for the opportunity to speak

14 before you today. I hope that you will consider

15 seriously the impact on the business community

16 before adopting any recommendation that can damage

17 the long-term economic growth of our state. The

18 business community needs to be part of this

19 discussion. So I look forward to continued dialogue

20 on this issue as the process continues. Thank you.

21 MR. VAN HORN: Thank you very much.

22 I just want to recognize Sherryl

23 Gordon and Jo-Anne Schubert, members of the task

24 force that came in after the panel started.

25 And I would, as before, recognize

32

1 panel members who would like to ask questions of our  
2 witnesses.

3 UNIDENTIFIED: Mr. Chairman?

4 MR. VAN HORN: Yes.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: Assuming the convention

6 moves forward, and making another assumption, that

7 there's not additional tax burden placed upon the

8 business community by shifting from the residential

9 end, in your opinion, do you view any of the

10 existing or different business tax, would that be

11 more equitable than property taxes?

12 (Participants confer)

13 UNIDENTIFIED: I'm not sure I quite

14 understand the question.

15 UNIDENTIFIED: Well, again, making two

16 assumptions --

17 UNIDENTIFIED: Right.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: The convention moves

19 forward, and there's not a shifting a taxes on to

20 the business community, but rather proportionately

21 remains the same, in your opinion, is there a fairer

22 tax to the business community than property tax.

23 MS. VER PLANCK: Oh, so you're just

24 asking us to pick our poison?

25 UNIDENTIFIED: In essence, making the

33

1 assumption that your tax load is not going to be  
2 changing. But is there a more equitable method in  
3 which to tax businesses, besides the existing  
4 property tax method.

5 MS. VER PLANCK: We've already got so  
6 many fees, fines, taxes on everything from income to  
7 filing for permits. I guess I don't know what the  
8 numbers -- you'd have to look at the numbers and  
9 then better understand.

10 But if what we're talking about is  
11 just freezing the property tax where it is for  
12 businesses, but then finding more money somewhere  
13 else, it just exacerbates the problem. It's still a  
14 greater percentage of the tax is for the business  
15 community, I would think.

16 (Mr. Kirschner not identified for the record)

17 MR. KIRSCHNER: I would agree. I'm  
18 not sure there's a book -- a favored tax, so to  
19 speak. There are modifications to existing taxes,  
20 like the corporate income tax, where actually for  
21 the New Jersey resident corporation, the  
22 disadvantage if you have property here and a payroll  
23 here, versus somebody who just uses sales, New  
24 Jersey as a sales office, they pay less taxes.

25 (indiscernible) we've advocated for a long time that

34

1 all companies should just be taxed on state sales,

2 to make it equitable.

3 But I'm not sure if it's

4 (indiscernible) taxes that just one that is

5 considered better than another.

6 (Mr. Goldberg not identified for the record)

7 MR. GOLDBERG: Well, I would say a

8 reduction would probably be a good idea to encourage

9 development in the state, to encourage more

10 companies to come here, and also to increase the

11 amount of jobs in the state, to make us more

12 competitive with our neighbors out there in

13 surrounding states. So it's not always a matter of

14 which tax would be better. Making us more

15 competitive will generate more income and revenue

16 for the state, as well as provide more jobs.

17 MR. VAN HORN: Assemblyman O'Toole?

18 ASSEMBLYMAN O'TOOLE: Yeah, I just

19 want to touch upon what, Richard, you just hit upon.

20 I mean, we're not really talking about, you know,

21 picking our poison. I think what I'm hearing from

22 the four of you is that we really have to look at

23 the spending, as well as revenue. And when you say

24 "look at spending," it's because we have to cut

25 spending. Is that what I'm hearing?

35

1 Because, frankly, the costs you're

2 absorbing right now are, frankly, costs that are  
3 just too much. Is that what I'm hearing?  
4 MR. GOLDBERG: There's no business out  
5 there that can operate the way the state, local, and  
6 county governments operate, spending more than they  
7 are able to take in. And then the result is having  
8 to just increase taxes to avoid this increased  
9 spending. I think, for all of us, none of our  
10 companies would survive if they operated that way.

11 MS. VER PLANCK: There's a --

12 MR. VAN HORN: Mr. Locke.

13 MS. VER PLANCK: Oh, I'm sorry.

14 MR. VAN HORN: Mr. Locke, did you want  
15 to make a comment? Then we'll come back to you,  
16 Joan.

17 MR. LOCKE: Yes, the fact -- what  
18 Assemblyman O'Toole mentioned, the inextricable link  
19 between revenue and -- and expenditure; that one  
20 cannot just attack one side of the formula. If  
21 people make a choice in a given municipality or a  
22 county of a certain level of services, then that  
23 must be linked. One cannot defer the  
24 responsibility, one cannot ask for the Legislature  
25 to make it go away; or, in this case, a

36

1 constitutional convention to act in some magical or  
2 mystical form.

3 It's a very -- when they run their

4 businesses, they have a similar consideration. Why

5 is it so, you know, obtuse, or do we deal with it in

6 such an obtuse way here.

7 MR. VAN HORN: Go ahead.

8 ASSEMBLYMAN O'TOOLE: One follow-up.

9 If you've exhausted your explanation, I have a

10 different --

11 MS. VER PLANCK: I just have one more

12 point to make.

13 ASSEMBLYMAN O'TOOLE: Yes.

14 MS. VER PLANCK: We know that, as the

15 Governor has pointed out, there are many school

16 districts that don't even have a suitable number of

17 children to have a school district for. We know

18 that there's tremendous overlap between

19 municipalities and counties. I know that there was

20 a study done a couple of years ago that pointed out,

21 if you, say, got rid of county government and went

22 into districts, so you'd share purchasing power and

23 the like, but you'd have them grouped around

24 legislative districts, you could save roughly \$3

25 billion a year, which would then maybe open the door

37

1 to discussions for consolidations of school

2 districts, which would save immense amounts of

3 money.

4 So I mean, you know, we've always --  
5 rather than saying, you know, why are we paying more  
6 for -- per student than any other state in the  
7 nation, any other country in the world, we just say,  
8 how are we going to pay for it, who's going to bear  
9 the burden. We don't ask whether it's a legitimate  
10 burden, we just say, how are we going to pay for it.  
11 We'd like to back it up and ask, why are we buying  
12 it in the first place.

13 ASSEMBLYMAN O'TOOLE: Chairman, the  
14 second question I'd like to ask, we talked about the  
15 delegate selection, and I'm curious about some of  
16 the testimony that talks about it should be  
17 reflective of the population. I mean, how do we do  
18 that?

19 You know, Richard, you talked about  
20 whether the Governor would have five allocations,  
21 and maybe both houses have five, and perhaps you're  
22 going to have a special allocation to make sure the  
23 unions and business, and make sure that minority  
24 groups are represented.

25 If we have forty districts and we have

38

1 elections, how do we guarantee a balance,  
2 nonpartisan, bipartisan, special interest, non-  
3 special interest in that scenario.

4 MR. LOCKE: I'm not sure that it's any

5 more doable than the creation of the Legislature as  
6 it's imposed today in the makeup of the Senate and  
7 the Assembly. We have our legislative districts,  
8 and they are apportioned, and they are apportioned  
9 with some rationale, and that is a basis to work  
10 from.

11 The reason we suggest this amount of  
12 at-large delegates is to ensure that the body does  
13 not meet without governmental finance knowledge.  
14 There's a labyrinth on governmental finance at the  
15 local and county and state level, of course.  
16 Someone has to understand what's going  
17 on. We cannot have simplistic approaches taken to  
18 complex problems that will only create more issues  
19 down the line; particularly where to cure a  
20 constitutional change may require another  
21 constitutional amendment and we're compounding the  
22 problems.

23 There should be a mix, and not --  
24 we're talking about a mix of people with experience  
25 and knowledge of the subject matter. It will still

39

1 be in the minority of the -- if there are eighty  
2 delegates, an example, I suggested fifteen, those  
3 are just suggested numbers. But there should be  
4 someone there who understands the nuts and bolts of  
5 the operation and can offer that information at the

6 time.

7 MR. VAN HORN: Phil, do you want to

8 comment on that?

9 MR. KIRSCHNER: Yeah. A mix is -- is

10 a very important concept, as Mr. Locke has proposed.

11 It's -- because, otherwise, the electoral process,

12 left to its own device, is -- will result in special

13 interests. So you can have a mix of both appointed

14 and elected.

15 The other thing is, the reservation of

16 slots, there is precedent there. We elect our

17 county committee people all over the state with male

18 and female. Why? Because we say, because that's

19 what it says, we'll have male and female. So it's

20 not unprecedented to reserve slots, in this case

21 gender. But there certainly is a precedent that has

22 held up for many, many, many years.

23 MR. VAN HORN: Does anyone else want

24 to comment on the delegate selection process.

25 MR. GOLDBERG: Yeah. I think just to

40

1 echo something Joan had in her comments, I think you

2 need to make sure that the business community, which

3 does pay over forty percent of the taxes in the

4 state, are well represented. The taxes -- those who

5 pay the taxes should be well represented on this

6 eventual board through the process.

7 I can't give you an exact breakdown of  
8 what we would recommend that should be, but I think  
9 any group that is responsible for paying in a large  
10 share should be well represented.

11 MR. LOCKE: If I may just add one  
12 point on that. When one considers the methodology  
13 of setting up the delegate body, one must also  
14 consider, I think, issues such as compensation and  
15 any others, not to increase the cost of this process  
16 unnecessarily.

17 However, if there is a limited time  
18 within which work must be done, be it ninety days or  
19 one eighty or whatever, who can afford to leave  
20 their businesses or jobs for perhaps extended  
21 periods to go to New Brunswick or wherever to work  
22 on this process, and forego pay? So one compounds  
23 the problem. We don't want to have just wealthy  
24 people, who can afford to take substantial blocks of  
25 time off from their businesses, or suffer for it,

41

1 for that matter, if they're not (indiscernible).

2 MR. VAN HORN: Uh-huh.

3 MR. LOCKE: So there has to be a  
4 balance in many areas. Okay?

5 MR. VAN HORN: Dr. Cole, and then  
6 Senator Van Wagner.

7 DR. COLE: Mr. Locke, you mentioned

8 quite articulately the problems of narrowing this  
9 very complicated question on property tax and how  
10 its tentacles went out and touched a whole variety  
11 of other areas. Have you given any thought to how  
12 you would frame the question?

13 MR. LOCKE: Well, the threshold  
14 question is whether we're dealing with issues that  
15 are now available for legislative action, or is  
16 there some reason to call a convention, as per our  
17 next question to this body.

18 DR. COLE: But if there is a  
19 convention.

20 MR. LOCKE: Well, if we are  
21 replicating the Legislature, there is one set of  
22 concerns. If we're going to have something  
23 different done, a different set of concerns, the  
24 initial charge, the enabling legislation for  
25 (indiscernible) if you will, is critical; in that,

42

1 it must be sufficient to give a reasonable charge  
2 and scope or realm within which to act by the  
3 ultimate convention body; yet, it must not be so  
4 broad or vague as to give the keys to the kingdom to  
5 people, persons unknown, unnamed, of whatever point  
6 of view.

7 If, for example, you put on the

8 ballot, the state puts on the ballot, you want to

9 save money, vote yes on -- you know, who's going to  
10 say no to that one? How do you want to start the  
11 ball rolling? That's why I suggested earlier a  
12 separate election for delegates, as opposed to the  
13 question itself. Because one can easily structure a  
14 result by just how the question is presented to the  
15 public. And that will go back to the people in the  
16 Legislature, how they handle it next year.  
17 You know, if we need a convention, we  
18 have to strike a balance. I wish I had the answer  
19 today; I don't, to say, this is the reason to have a  
20 convention, but this is too much to give them. It's  
21 pretty delicate, pretty dangerous. That's why I  
22 used the Frankenstein analogy.

23 (End of Tape No. 1, Side A)

24 (Beginning of Tape No. 1, Side B)

25 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: I take it all of

43

1 you -- this work?

2 I take it all of you in your comments

3 basically would prefer not to have a Constitutional

4 convention. Is that right?

5 MS. VER PLANCK: The State Chamber is

6 not taking a position.

7 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: You don't have a

8 position.

9 MR. KIRSCHNER: We were part of a

10 special session --

11 MR. GOLDBERG: For us, depending on

12 what it entails, what comes out of this Commission

13 will depend on whether we can support it or not.

14 MR. LOCKE: The State AFL-CIO is not

15 taking a position on that question.

16 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: Should this panel

17 recommend it, or recommend something to the

18 legislature that would call for a Constitutional

19 Convention, would you be opposed, in favor or

20 neutral on whether or not that convention also had

21 the power to change statute as well as -- or

22 recommend changes in the statute?

23 Do you have any feelings about that?

24 MR. KIRSCHNER: Well, focusing perhaps

25 on some previous discussion if you're going to have

44

1 it it should be as narrow as possible.

2 We couldn't agree more that if you're

3 going to have it, it really -- it can't be wide

4 open; otherwise, that does replicate everything the

5 legislature does.

6 The comment was made -- I mean, even

7 right now we're talking about issues of spending and

8 taxation. What's so unique about that? There's

9 special sessions of the legislature held every

10 single year in this country in different states

11 dealing with those specific issues of taxes and

12 spending. This is not something unique or drastic.

13 Every single year in various states

14 there are special sessions devoted to that.

15 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: Well, why do you

16 suppose those states are successful in getting that

17 done and we're not?

18 MR. KIRSCHNER: We've never had a

19 special session.

20 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: Yes, we have.

21 MR. KIRSCHNER: You know, not in

22 recent --

23 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: No. But we have

24 had --

25 MR. KIRSCHNER: -- not in recent

45

1 history. So it's hard to answer that until we try.

2 But certainly, before we go to a Constitutional

3 Convention that is -- that is something of which

4 there's precedent, it has worked in other states,

5 we'll look at best practices there. And it's worthy

6 of consideration.

7 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: Do you think

8 that, taking your suggestion, if we were to

9 establish or recommend the establishment of a

10 selected slate and an appointed slate of super

11 delegates or whatever you wanted to call them, you

12 think the public might look askance, given the view

13 the public is getting of government in New Jersey

14 being run basically by special interests? Do you

15 think the public would again look askance at that

16 type of recommendation?

17 MR. KIRSCHNER: I don't know that the

18 public cares that much how it's composed. I think

19 they care what comes out of it -- out of the

20 Constitutional Convention.

21 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: So you don't

22 think the public is concerned at all about the

23 process that we -- I recommend?

24 MR. KIRSCHNER: I think they're

25 concerned about the process, but I think they're

46

1 concerned more about the result. They're concerned

2 more that it -- that it be something that lowers

3 property taxes.

4 MR. GOLDBERG: I think the public

5 would be extremely skeptical no matter what we do.

6 It's just in New Jersey unfortunately we've set a

7 different type of tone out there amongst the

8 electorate and anything could be termed political

9 and usually is.

10 So I think it would have -- if it does

11 move forward, it would have to move forward

12 regardless of this perception because it will be --

13 I believe it will be there.

14 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: Thank you.

15 MR. LOCKE: When commenting on that

16 example, I purposely use the example of eighty

17 delegates elected and fifteen appointed keeping

18 those people in a distinct minority but they would

19 not be able to, well it's theoretically possible

20 swing a vote, political skepticism is something we

21 live with in New Jersey daily. But I think if we

22 have to trade that off with having expertise at the

23 table rather than have people creating something

24 which they have -- perhaps a majority of whom have

25 never seen before or dealing with concepts they have

47

1 not seen before, I think the tradeoff is well worth

2 taking.

3 MS. VER PLANCK: Could I just add one

4 thing to that?

5 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: Yes.

6 MS. VER PLANCK: I mean, when we talk

7 about expertise, and I know Phil was part of this

8 and when we went through the corporate business tax

9 exercise and the business organizations in the state

10 really did try to come together and look for

11 alternatives to what we actually ended up with, and

12 there is so much tax expertise in the tax

13 departments of these major corporations who do

14 business all over the country, all over the world.

15 They know where other states find the money. They

16 know what makes us competitive. They know what

17 makes us uncompetitive.

18 They -- I don't know. Phil, to my

19 mind, I was amazed at the kind of expertise we have

20 at our fingertips with some of these bigger

21 companies who have enormous tax departments.

22 So, you know, when I mentioned about

23 having some representation for the business

24 community I wasn't suggesting that the person who

25 has a twelve-employee Quick Check is the person you

48

1 necessarily want here. But we do have a great deal

2 of far-reaching tax expertise in the state that

3 isn't governmental.

4 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: I take it Quick

5 Check is not one of your accounts.

6 MS. VER PLANCK: Is this on the radio?

7 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: It's being

8 recorded. Thank you.

9 Phil, in your statement you

10 highlighted that you strongly believe that spending

11 at the school and municipal side should not be

12 included. You go on to say that spending at all

13 levels should be considered.

14 But are we to -- to take that as the

15 NJBIA's position that the most serious problems are

16 in the school on the municipal side or --

17 MR. KIRSCHNER: It's all government

18 spending. School side certainly accounts for

19 anywhere between sixty and two-thirds of spending

20 dollars fall a lot less than that, ten to fifteen

21 percent. But it was meant to include all spending.

22 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: So County and

23 State --

24 MR. KIRSCHNER: Yeah, absolutely.

25 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: Thank you.

49

1 MR. VAN HORN: Mayor Schubert.

2 MAYOR SCHUBERT: Thank you. You've

3 talked about delegate selection, but I don't think

4 I've heard anybody talk about how the delegates

5 finance their campaigns, will there be allowed to be

6 special interests making donations with all of the

7 pay-to-play talk and concern about special interests

8 having a hand in that.

9 Will there be a -- do you suggest that

10 there's a way that they can finance the campaign

11 without that special interest background?

12 MS. VER PLANCK: Well, my initial

13 concern, again, this hasn't been vetted with my

14 board yet, but for anybody who's spent any time

15 looking at initiative and referendum and how it's

16 played out among the states historically, once you  
17 get really good at INR it's whoever throws the most  
18 money behind the issue wins.

19 And so the general population pretty  
20 much decides that. They -- they've selected,  
21 they've picked their poison or whatever. They've  
22 done it. But they've been so influenced by the  
23 amount of money that's been plowed into that side of  
24 the issue.

25 So this is almost like a -- the same

50

1 kind of situation. And short of public financing  
2 and limiting public financing I don't know how you  
3 control that. But that's personal opinion.

4 MR. VAN HORN: Any other views on the  
5 financing?

6 MR. GOLDBERG: Yeah. Again, we  
7 haven't taken a formal position on that or reviewed  
8 it enough either. But I could say that whatever  
9 guidelines are put on there they should be stringent  
10 and unwavering. And it should be much more strict  
11 than current legislation such as Pay to Play and  
12 others.

13 There should be no way that this --  
14 this process could be considered compromised. And  
15 although we don't have a list of all the methodology  
16 that has to happen, I think when you do finally come

17 out if you do recommend this, that there is a very  
18 serious and strict list of requirements that can't  
19 be circumvented. And too many -- too many of the  
20 ways that elections do take place can be.

21 MR. LOCKE: Yes. With a follow-up to  
22 the question. With respect to the issue, and it's  
23 been stated a few times before, if one follows the  
24 same path as we use to elect our officials today we  
25 will replicate that in the Constitutional Convention

51

1 floor.

2 The suggestion of cross-sectional  
3 representation which we addressed in a very small  
4 way, fifteen out of ninety-five, was meant to bring  
5 other people to the table though we'll have  
6 differing views.

7 You know, it's been said that a camel  
8 is a horse, you know, joined by a committee. And we  
9 don't want one of those in New Jersey. We want an  
10 efficient and effective moving forward.

11 With respect to campaign finance  
12 reform, that's an issue that goes beyond our remarks  
13 here or my remarks here. However, perhaps that is a  
14 way to go rather than have the same interest groups  
15 present the same -- and that includes the League of  
16 Municipalities, by the way, advanced therapy.

17 MAYOR SCHUBERT: Thank you. And just

18 as a follow-up to that, based on what you've said it  
19 sounds like you want to keep special interest money  
20 away from this and basically let the people of New  
21 Jersey make decisions about who the delegates will  
22 be.

23 So that brings me to the question,  
24 Governor Burn had made a suggestion to us that there  
25 be a super slate of candidates presented to the

52

1 public and the public has the right to either vote  
2 yes on them or vote no on them and not vote anyone  
3 else in.

4 Do you feel as though it's better to  
5 have it sort of wide open to the public to have  
6 delegates run or to have that super slate presented?

7 MR. LOCKE: I think wide open would be  
8 preferred rather, than have them called to vote yes  
9 or no on one question.

10 UNIDENTIFIED: An at-large slip.

11 MR. LOCKE: Yes.

12 MR. VAN HORN: Dr. Reock?

13 MAYOR SCHUBERT: Thank you.

14 DR. REOCK: The purpose of a  
15 convention is to change the constitution. Now in  
16 terms of the scope of this proposed Constitutional  
17 Convention, are there any sections of the present  
18 constitution that you believe should be changed,

19 something which gives your -- the people you

20 represent problems?

21 And, secondly, are there any sections

22 of the present constitution that you believe should

23 not be changed and should not be within the scope?

24 MR. LOCKE: I can say we didn't make

25 the proposal. We have not come asking for

53

1 constitutional change.

2 MR. KIRSCHNER: I would say we're very

3 much opposed to changing the uniformity, the uniform

4 taxation clause of the current constitution

5 whereupon all property is taxed at the same rate,

6 that there is no distinction between residential

7 property or property owned by employers.

8 MS. VER PLANCK: I would like to -- I

9 have not had the opportunity to even look at it in

10 that light, but I'd like to ask to get something

11 back to you in writing. Let me go take a look and

12 float that and see if, you know -- I'll send a

13 follow-up response. Is that all right?

14 MR. VAN HORN: Absolutely.

15 MR. GOLDBERG: Yeah. We concur with

16 the taxation, that it does remain -- the property

17 taxation remain equal across both commercial and

18 residential. It's something that we've looked at

19 and our members are very concerned about.

20 MR. VAN HORN: Okay. I want to thank

21 you very much, ladies and gentlemen -- lady and

22 gentlemen, for coming here today and sharing your

23 views.

24 Let me just reiterate that we

25 certainly welcome your further communication with us

54

1 if you so desire, and you could just send that to

2 the governor's office in care of the task force and

3 it will be distributed to all members of the task

4 force.

5 Thank you very much for your -- for

6 coming here today.

7 I'd like to --

8 MS. VER PLANCK: Would you like copies

9 of --

10 MR. VAN HORN: Yes, please. Yes.

11 I'd like to ask the second panel to

12 come forward, please.

13 Welcome to you all. We have Mr. Jeff

14 Tittel who is the Chapter Director of the New Jersey

15 Sierra Clubs. And Jeff, you want to say hello?

16 MR. TITTEL: Hi.

17 MR. VAN HORN: I know you are -- it

18 says Sierra Club in front of you, so people will

19 figure out who you are.

20 We have Judith Cambria from the --

21 who's the Fiscal Policy Specialist from the League  
22 of Women Voters and Mr. John Shure who's President  
23 of the New Jersey Policy Perspective.  
24 And we welcome you all and we'll begin  
25 with Mr. Tittel.

55

1 MR. TITTEL: Thank you. Jeff Tittel,  
2 Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.  
3 The Sierra Club, which is the nation's  
4 oldest and largest conservation organization, looks  
5 at property taxes probably differently than many of  
6 the other people in this room.  
7 We look at it as really a tax that  
8 furthers the disruption of open space and natural  
9 resources. We see it as one of the driving forces  
10 in the state for sprawl.  
11 We believe that the so-called ratables  
12 chase is one of the reasons that New Jersey is the  
13 most densely populated states in the -- it's the  
14 most densely populated state in the country and our  
15 population is more denser per square mile than Japan  
16 or India. And the only thing that's been denser has  
17 been the politicians who don't seem to get it.  
18 We believe that in order to really  
19 deal with the environmental issues that face the  
20 State of New Jersey, since we are, number one, in  
21 watersheds that are considered impaired or polluted

22 or a threat for pollution, we're number one in  
23 vehicle miles traveled and we're number one for  
24 ground level ozone. We see the direct impacts of  
25 sprawl and over-development on a daily basis.

56

1 And, in fact, New Jersey is losing  
2 land at a rate quicker than any other state in the  
3 union. One percent of New Jersey every year is  
4 paved over. And we will be the first state to run  
5 out of land.  
6 And one of the driving forces has been  
7 and will always be some of the misperceived notions  
8 on the ratables chase, that towns think that they  
9 can grow themselves into prosperity, that by  
10 allowing this new subdivision to come in here or  
11 this new development over here that they'll have new  
12 money for a new library or a new ball field. And  
13 what turns out to be a ratables dream ends up to be  
14 a sprawl nightmare because not only do they lose  
15 open space and environmental quality and quality of  
16 life, but they end up spending more money on taxes,  
17 not just to service the new populations and even new  
18 businesses, but because of infrastructure  
19 improvements that will be necessary to move that  
20 population around and deal with flooding or so many  
21 other things.  
22 In fact, when you look at studies of

23 even something as positive that some people may  
24 think from a tax side as this new Xanadu proposal up  
25 in the Meadowlands, we estimate in order to properly

57

1 move the people in and out of this 1.3 billion-  
2 dollar so-called rateable, it will cost the  
3 taxpayers over \$1.5 billion for light rail and rail  
4 improvements as well as road improvements just to  
5 bring people in and out of that region that's  
6 already over-burdened with -- with traffic.  
7 And that's true for around the state  
8 when you look at the needs that we have with falling  
9 down roads and roads that need to be improved, with  
10 the need for more light rail and other transit  
11 options. That's a direct relationship of our land  
12 use patterns.  
13 And at the same time it promotes  
14 sprawl in rural areas. The property tax situation  
15 we have in New Jersey also undermines urban  
16 revitalization.  
17 If you look at the major cities in New  
18 Jersey and you would like to go and buy a home, you  
19 will find out that your tax rates for local property  
20 taxes are through the roof because most of our  
21 cities and older communities have to, you know, bear  
22 their disproportionate share of governmental  
23 function, whether it's hospitals, universities,

24 governmental buildings, airports. And you'll find  
25 out that if you want to buy a nice three-bedroom

58

1 cape cod in the city of Paterson as a friend of mine  
2 did, the house is assessed at about \$200,000 a year,  
3 he's paying \$12,000 in property taxes.

4 It's true in Newark, it's true in

5 Elizabeth as well and so it really becomes

6 inequitable. In fact, a friend of mine moved into a  
7 new place in Elizabeth and because they were in a  
8 new development and they had not had a re-val in a  
9 long time, they were paying \$17,000 a year in taxes.

10 And so it affects both urban and rural areas of the  
11 State of New Jersey and it really does undermine not  
12 only our quality of life but the ability to try to  
13 bring populations back into the cities as well.

14 So we strongly support the

15 Constitutional Convention. The system that we have  
16 we keep talking about changes, but we keep doing the  
17 same thing over and over again and expecting a  
18 different outcome. And that's really the definition  
19 of insanity, doing the same thing time and time  
20 again and thinking it's going to turn out  
21 differently.

22 It's not going to -- what we're doing

23 now isn't going to work. You know, homestead  
24 rebates, extra state aid, school aid, all those

25 things are just band-aids on a brain tumor. We've

59

1 got to get to that cancer that's causing the sprawl,

2 urban decay and high property taxes in New Jersey.

3 And we believe that a Constitutional Convention is

4 the appropriate step in the right direction.

5 Unlike some of the people in the

6 previous panel, we don't believe the legislature --

7 having a legislative session will do it. They've

8 had their opportunities. They've punted so many

9 times. I think that it really is up to the citizens

10 of New Jersey to be the ones to fix the problems

11 that we have. That we cannot necessarily trust the

12 legislature because there is so many special

13 interests and different interest groups that are

14 pressuring them.

15 And also to take the political heat of

16 doing something that could be unpopular is another

17 reason why I think that a Constitutional Convention

18 is the way to go.

19 We believe that the convention should

20 be made up of diverse groups and people, not

21 dominated by any one interest. We believe there

22 should be a mix of populations.

23 One of the things that we think should

24 happen is that there should be no PAC money allowed

25 at all. We believe that, quite frankly, even though

60

1 I'm a registered lobbyist, I don't believe lobbyists

2 should be allowed to run.

3 I think it should be citizens as much

4 as possible and interest -- and people who are

5 actually knowledgeable in the field.

6 We would look at trying to run people

7 in districts by petition, not by interest group.

8 But we do think that there may be a need to also

9 have expertise and other people with more expertise

10 and others either appointed or maybe run as part of

11 an at-large slate. But maybe instead of just voting

12 yes and no you can have a larger field of candidates

13 where maybe five out of twelve or -- or fifteen out

14 of twenty-five would actually be elected by the

15 population so that you can bring in some people who

16 have more expertise in the different fields.

17 But also when you set up the

18 convention to bring in experts to help educate the

19 delegates, whether it's financial experts or land

20 use experts, but to really bring in people with a

21 broader range to actually help, you know, make the

22 Constitutional Convention a place for learning as

23 well as a place for coming up with solutions to New

24 Jersey's problems.

25 There are many ways we can help deal

61

1 with some of the -- you know, some of the problems  
2 that we have and with taxing in New Jersey, allowing  
3 for things like more tax sharing, looking at natural  
4 resources or consumption-based taxes. There are a  
5 lot of things there.

6 But the one thing I will mention, and

7 I don't think the people of New Jersey, you know,  
8 are not anti-tax. We have some of the highest  
9 property taxes in the country, if not the highest  
10 rate. But yet 244 towns in New Jersey and all  
11 twenty-one counties have raised their property taxes  
12 to buy open space.

13 So I think when the public sees that

14 there's a public benefit in what they're doing and  
15 it's one of the ways that they can help limit the  
16 sprawl and help protect their communities, people  
17 are willing to spend more money. I think it's going  
18 to take real leadership and I think that if that  
19 leadership comes from the convention I think there's  
20 a good chance of getting it done versus the system  
21 we have which is -- which is not working.

22 We also think that as part of this we

23 should be looking at regionalization of services and  
24 other ways of helping to fix government. You know,  
25 every town zones for every possible use. And it

62

1 doesn't make sense that one town, you know, have,  
2 you know, industrial parks, office research,  
3 commercial, block store, you know, when we should be  
4 thinking more regionally. And by sharing services  
5 and sharing possibly your tax base it may actually  
6 help make a better and more reasonable comprehensive  
7 planning in New Jersey, which I think is the other  
8 part that we need to really look at if we want to  
9 deal with the property tax issue so that we look  
10 more holistically at our -- at the regions of the  
11 state.

12 When you look at the pinelands, the  
13 towns that are in a no-growth of the pines have done  
14 much better economically than the towns in the  
15 growth areas when it comes to property taxes. So we  
16 need to really look more holistically with regional  
17 planning if we really want to deal with the property  
18 taxes.

19 And just an ending, you know, John  
20 Gorka (phonetic) who's a folk singer from New Jersey  
21 always had the line that, I don't expect a lot, I'm  
22 from New Jersey, if the world will end tomorrow I  
23 will cope, I'm from New Jersey.

24 Well, I think that we need to raise  
25 those expectations by saying that we can help solve

63

1 the problems that are facing New Jersey and that we

2 can -- that we can bring hope and a chance for

3 change for both property taxes and land use in the

4 State of New Jersey.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. VAN HORN: Thank you, Mr. Tittel.

7 Judith Cambria who represents the

8 League of Women Voters.

9 MS. CAMBRIA: Is that good? Yes.

10 Okay. Thank you.

11 First of all, I'd like to thank you

12 for the invitation to meet with the Property Tax

13 Convention Task Force and to thank you for giving

14 your time and energy to serve on this very important

15 group.

16 I think before I talk about our

17 positions, I just wanted to remind everyone that the

18 League of Women Voters has a very, very long history

19 on New Jersey tax issues, and particularly our

20 concern and action on our property tax which goes

21 back at least half a century.

22 Also you should be reminded the League

23 acts only on those state issues with which its

24 members have reached consensus. Unless we study and

25 reach consensus we do not speak out. So we do

64

1 represent citizens quite well.

2 I have prepared for you to be passed

3 around, this is on tax and spending policies of the  
4 League of Women Voters of New Jersey. It's not all  
5 of them; it's some of them.

6 I'd like you to note that the one  
7 entitled, "Tax and Spending Policy", which is one  
8 section, the first date of it is 1971. That's when  
9 this position was reached. I served on that  
10 committee.

11 And you will then notice that after  
12 that there's 1996. That's because we totally re-  
13 studied, updated and brought in a new position to  
14 reflect current conditions and that I ran in 1996.  
15 And you will find that many of the  
16 things that Mr. Tittel was talking about are  
17 reflected here. Some of the things that we don't  
18 seem to be hearing about the massive differential  
19 between the wealth and the property tax ratables in  
20 different cities, the change that's happening in  
21 terms of every year more and more of our  
22 municipalities are beginning to look like our  
23 cities, failed economically and fail socially. And  
24 that is happening every year. We see more of them  
25 twisting over and turning over.

65

1 And with that happening we are seeing  
2 greater increases in -- in -- the wealth is being  
3 concentrated, racial disparities are being

4 concentrated. We have a whole series of things that  
5 are happening in this state, none of which are good  
6 for our future.

7 So I will ask you to look at that.

8 I just wanted to say that while I was  
9 not born in this state, I moved here when I was in  
10 the fifth grade and I graduated from Weehawken High  
11 School. My father was ill and out of work at the  
12 time when I graduated and I could not go to college  
13 because we couldn't afford to. So I went and I  
14 worked for a year.

15 The reason I say this is because I  
16 want to point out to Dr. Cole here that New Jersey  
17 made the difference for me because I was able after  
18 working a year to go to Montclair State which was  
19 then a teacher's college, and it gave me a superb  
20 education which has made a huge difference in my  
21 life and the life of my family.

22 And it is one of the things that I am  
23 most concerned about, both at the lower level and at  
24 the upper level. We're doing -- we have some  
25 problems there. We're not supporting it enough.

66

1 That's not today's topic.

2 The -- we presented the coalition  
3 members, your task force members, with an eight-page  
4 document with the league's recommendations to you to

5 help and assist you in the task of developing  
6 legislation that would -- that would bring about  
7 this property tax convention.  
8 I please urge you to review them if  
9 you have not done so because a great deal of time  
10 and effort and a long history went into their  
11 preparation. And this included the input of fifteen  
12 members on my education fiscal policy committee.  
13 So there was much discussion and thank God  
14 for emails.  
15 We believe there are a number of areas  
16 that are of utmost importance and which will  
17 determine whether a convention actually takes place,  
18 number one, and if it does, whether it will be  
19 successful. And we believe very strongly and we've  
20 been working for a convention for several years  
21 because we -- we believe it's the only reasonable  
22 prospect we have for reform.  
23 We would like to point out, however,  
24 that we will oppose a convention if one of two  
25 things happen, either one of those two things.

67

1 While everyone here has talked about that they think  
2 that spending should be part of this convention, we  
3 believe absolutely the opposite.  
4 We believe it should not be an issue  
5 at this convention and that's based on our long

6 history of working on taxing and spending issues.  
7 Including spending would give the powers of elected  
8 mayors and elected councils, elected freeholds,  
9 elected and appointed school board members and  
10 elected state legislators to some eighty to ninety  
11 people. It's too much power. It can't be handled  
12 by -- in that format with those things.  
13 Every one of those places there is a  
14 long, long period of discussion to developing a  
15 budget, determining how the money must be spent,  
16 what was spent. Frankly, if we continue -- if we  
17 put this in, we are absolutely convinced the  
18 convention would flounder and it would fail because  
19 it would just be a quagmire. So that's a very  
20 strong position.  
21 The second one is that we feel very  
22 strongly that allowing -- the delegates cannot  
23 address protections that are provided to New Jersey  
24 citizens by the New Jersey constitution. It's got  
25 to be off limits.

68

1 We have worked and fought too hard,  
2 number one, for the rights of our children to high  
3 quality education that prepares them for  
4 citizenship, participation in society and the world  
5 of work to allow any of that to be endangered.  
6 We also have worked too hard on

7 housing to have that endangered and we need to do a  
8 lot more work. So there are a number of these if we  
9 cannot do that.

10 I think we would -- something that  
11 came up at the end that I was surprised about. Let  
12 me just look at my notes here. Where did I put it?  
13 Excuse me while -- I'll think of it as I go through  
14 here.

15 Here are some other. We feel very  
16 strongly that there should be a separate election  
17 for the delegates not tied to the same general  
18 election where the people would vote for or against  
19 a convention.

20 I've gone into a great deal of detail  
21 in our material as to why we believe that is true.  
22 But we do think that it's very, very important. And  
23 certainly we believe that if it were at a general  
24 election where we have the governor, the senate, the  
25 assembly, all of these things on, it will absolutely

69

1 get lost in the shuffle and their political  
2 partisanship is very, very, very likely to be the  
3 major gauge of who can get in by getting the most  
4 money from the delegates.  
5 Besides, we don't think it's fair to  
6 ask someone to spend their time, energy and money to  
7 run for a delegate and find out maybe that New

8 Jersey would say I don't want it. So we don't think  
9 that's fair.  
10 We believe it should be revenue  
11 neutral, no increase or decrease in total revenues,  
12 and we believe it should be non-partisan, not  
13 bipartisan or partisan.  
14 It should -- and we believe, along  
15 with -- very interesting, every place we've ever  
16 talked to this about people say, don't let the  
17 legislators be delegates. They all believe you have  
18 had -- that they have had their chance and they have  
19 failed time and time again and, therefore, they do  
20 not deserve another one.  
21 We believe that candidates should run  
22 without a political party designation, they should  
23 run individually not as slates and that we agree  
24 with what several people have spoken here about is  
25 that there should be a number of extra delegates  
  
70  
1 selected by a non-partisan group looking for people  
2 with real expertise. The kinds of some of the  
3 expertise that was discussed by various people here  
4 we think is very important to have.  
5 They should be a small proportion but  
6 they should have -- I'm probably at my five minutes.  
7 I'll quit.  
8 MR. VAN HORN: Thank you very much.

9 Jon Shure?

10 MR. SHURE: Thank you for the

11 opportunity to share some thoughts with you that

12 reflect in large measure the work my organization

13 has done over its seven-year existence on trying to

14 find alternatives to New Jersey's over-reliance on

15 property taxes.

16 Let me first just very briefly address

17 myself to a comment made by the first speaker in the

18 previous panel. And I would just say, what is

19 democracy if not romantic notions?

20 A convention for the purposes of

21 restructuring New Jersey's tax system has the

22 potential to greatly serve the citizens of this

23 state. This is true not only because it might

24 recommend very positive alternatives to the state's

25 over-reliance on property taxes but also because it

71

1 can raise the visibility of debate on this issue to

2 a higher level than it's ever been before.

3 It's not hard to imagine the

4 convention's deliberations will receive considerable

5 media attention and that the campaign for and

6 against the ballot question created by a convention

7 will be treated as though it were an election.

8 The recommendations of the convention

9 might not be good ones, but there will be an

10 opportunity for the public to defeat them if that's  
11 the case.  
12 The recommendations might be good ones  
13 but they might not be approved by the public. But  
14 even if this were to happen debate would have been  
15 joined and New Jersey would likely be closer to a  
16 solution, perhaps even a legislative solution, than  
17 ever before.  
18 So there's reason to be optimistic  
19 about how this process will play out. My experience  
20 working on the Citizen's Tax Assemblies held by the  
21 Coalition for the Public Good has helped confirm my  
22 belief that on matters of tax policy the public of  
23 New Jersey is ahead of elected leaders.  
24 People can handle the discussion with  
25 all the trade-offs, details and complexities that it

72

1 entails. And a more rational tax system will very  
2 likely pave the way for other reforms that could  
3 relate to spending and fairness.  
4 But many of the fears expressed by  
5 those who oppose a convention or who are not sure  
6 where they stand on it are reasonable. It will be  
7 important as the convention goes forward to make  
8 sure steps have been taken to do everything possible  
9 to ensure the credibility of the convention and also  
10 to keep it focused on the matter at hand.

11 One controversial issue, as you  
12 obviously heard so far, concerns the scope of the  
13 convention. The original reason to have such a  
14 gathering was to deal with the tax system in New  
15 Jersey. That makes sense. And straying very far  
16 from it would be a mistake.

17 There are those who say that a  
18 discussion on taxes is impossible without a  
19 discussion of spending. That's not necessarily the  
20 case.

21 Whether New Jersey were to raise twice  
22 as much money as it raises today or half as much  
23 money, we would still need a fair way to raise that  
24 money and today we don't have that.

25 And every year elected or appointed

73

1 officials and, directly in some cases or indirectly  
2 in others, voters deliberate over spending. Budgets  
3 are fashioned at the school district, municipal,  
4 county and state level. That is all about spending.

5 But it is decidedly not the case that  
6 every year there is a parallel conversation about  
7 the tax system in New Jersey. So it makes sense to  
8 have the convention deal more with taxing than with  
9 spending.

10 That said, it's reasonable to require

11 that the delegates come up with a revenue-neutral

12 plan for taxes and I think we could all take  
13 guidance in the 1988 report of the SLURP Commission.  
14 This would help to calm the fears of  
15 anyone who thinks the convention will try to  
16 increase the amount of money that government spends.  
17 But the flip side is also true. A tax  
18 convention should not have as its ulterior motive a  
19 reduction in spending. It could, however, take  
20 steps to make sure that whatever systems it puts in  
21 place to help make sure that the value and  
22 effectiveness of our tax system is increased are not  
23 eroded over time.  
24 Nor should the convention have the  
25 opportunity to reverse court rulings, laws and

74

1 constitutional mandates that contribute to the need  
2 for spending. To erase, for example, the thorough  
3 and efficient clause of the constitution or the  
4 language of the Mount Laurel decision would not be  
5 proper.  
6 This convention will work best if it's  
7 a gathering of citizens of good faith and good will  
8 focusing on a very specific thing.  
9 We should keep in mind that the reason  
10 why a convention is needed is that elected officials  
11 have not responded to the ever-worsening inequities  
12 and inadequacies in New Jersey's tax system. But

13 they certainly have over the years made decisions  
14 about spending, whether to raise it or to lower it.  
15 A convention of the public then is not  
16 needed for the purpose of addressing spending  
17 issues.  
18 Besides what the convention will do,  
19 the issues of who will do it and how are important.  
20 Delegates should be as representative as possible of  
21 the state as a whole. They should be elected along  
22 geographic lines with legislative districts being  
23 the most likely mechanism.  
24 Most, but not necessarily all the  
25 delegates should be elected by popular vote. Others

75

1 could be appointed with the specific aim of ensuring  
2 a reasonable degree of diversity.  
3 I believe a strong case could be made  
4 that those appointed as delegates could for the most  
5 part come from the pool of people who ran for  
6 election as delegates but were not elected. They  
7 will already have shown the interest in the process  
8 to offer themselves as candidates.  
9 I'm not that concerned about the  
10 people who become delegates having a great amount of  
11 expertise because, again, I've watched the public  
12 deal with this in ways that really inspires  
13 confidence. The staff would need to have a great

14 deal of expertise and that would be an important  
15 part of making sure that the convention was  
16 successful and credible.  
17 It is not essential that elected  
18 officials be delegates. In fact, at some level it  
19 might not even be desirable.  
20 In the deliberations of the Citizens  
21 Tax Assembly many people concluded the legislators  
22 should not be delegates but that municipal officials  
23 might be. There may be some sense to that.  
24 Because the earliest a public vote  
25 could be taken on whether to have a convention is

76

1 November of 2005 a strong case can be made that this  
2 should be also the time when delegates are selected.  
3 This would mean asking voters to cast  
4 a ballot for or against having a convention and also  
5 to select the people who would be delegates if the  
6 convention were approved.  
7 This would have the advantage of  
8 delegates being elected at a high turn-out election  
9 rather than at a special election where it's likely  
10 that a low number of people would vote. I think  
11 this would help the convention to be credible with  
12 the public.  
13 Ideally, the State would finance  
14 delegate campaigns providing ample opportunity for

15 prospective delegates to mail information and  
16 provide it online to voters, while limits on how  
17 much a candidate could raise and spend would be  
18 appropriate.

19 While there is no way to completely  
20 eliminate the influence of political parties or  
21 interest groups, nor is it necessarily the case that  
22 they should be totally absent, I think it would be  
23 advisable to require candidates to run without party  
24 labels and as individuals rather than in slates.  
25 Delegate candidates should be required

77

1 to be registered voters.

2 I'd be happy to answer any questions

3 as we go on, but let me just close with a final

4 thought.

5 There is no way to assure what will be

6 the outcome of a tax convention, nor should there

7 be. This will be an exercise in democracy and also

8 an exercise in faith. I think the gamble is worth

9 it. New Jersey has for far too long refused to

10 confront the problems of a tax system that calls on

11 the poorest person in the state to pay twice the

12 share of his income and major state and local taxes

13 as the wealthiest person.

14 It has for too long relied too heavily

15 on taxing the value of someone's house out of all

16 proportion to that person's ability to pay or to how  
17 much of his or her assets that house might actually  
18 be.

19 There are better, fairer ways to do

20 this and there is reason to believe that the people  
21 of New Jersey are willing and able to rise to the  
22 task.

23 Thank you.

24 (End of Tape 1, Side B)

25 MS. CAMBRIA: -- was brought up by the

78

1 -- the people who were here earlier that I thought

2 was a -- that I said I knew I wanted to speak to.

3 And I think it's very important. And it's not been

4 touched upon by anyone here.

5 In terms of what is the -- what the

6 delegates are -- can do, we had someone earlier

7 speak and say they should only be able to -- I guess

8 in address the constitutional issues, they should

9 not be able to change statute.

10 Well, one of the biggest problems we

11 have here in New Jersey is we have far too much tax

12 stuff in our constitution and other things that

13 don't belong there at all.

14 Most of our tax system is done by law,

15 by statute, by passing it. If we -- if we bar them

16 from doing that we will do -- we'll have them

17 focusing on doing more on the constitution than  
18 necessarily we should be doing and they'll be --  
19 their eye will not be on the ball which is a tax  
20 structure which mainly is put in place by how we  
21 vote on it.

22 Thanks.

23 MR. VAN HORN: Okay. Thank you.

24 Then we're open for questions from

25 members of the task force. Dr. Reock?

79

1 DR. REOCK: I think Jon may already  
2 have touched on this, but I'd like to ask Judy for  
3 her opinion and Jeff for his.

4 Do you think it's -- a number of  
5 people have made the point that we need some  
6 expertise in the convention. Do you think it's  
7 necessary that the expertise is provided by  
8 delegates or can it be provided just as well by  
9 consultants and possibly even better?

10 MR. TITTEL: I think that it would be  
11 nice to have some as delegates and hopefully there  
12 will be quality people running and they will get  
13 elected.

14 But I also believe that as part of the  
15 convention to have, you know, workshops and to bring  
16 in experts for people to ask questions could be a  
17 natural part of the function, as well as having some

18 expertise on staff. Because I think if you want to  
19 look at how to fix and change your system there may  
20 be some -- and in fact there are some very good  
21 experts from University of California, for instance,  
22 that have worked on this issue for a long time in  
23 California trying to deal with Proposition 13 and  
24 its aftermath.

25 So there are places to bring in

80

1 expertise for workshops as well as having it on  
2 staff. But I think there should be some on, if  
3 there is non-elected, that there should be some.

4 MS. CAMBRIA: I, of course, believe

5 that it's absolutely essential that the staffing  
6 with high quality who is able to provide very high  
7 quality analysis and -- for them -- for the  
8 delegates.

9 But I also think that it would be very  
10 important to have within the delegate body at least  
11 some of that. And some of the people who spoke  
12 earlier I thought mentioned, you know, the expertise  
13 that's included, like at the municipal level and the  
14 budgeting and that sort of thing.

15 So I would -- if they don't appear and  
16 don't come out and run and don't get elected, I  
17 would like to see that added and do support that.

18 MR. VAN HORN: Mr. Cole?

19 MR. COLE: Yeah. A question I guess

20 for Jon Shure.

21 Jon, I think you suggested that you

22 would have the question and the selection of

23 delegates put -- put to the voters at the same time

24 in I thought you said November '05.

25 Have you given any thought to the

81

1 timetable thereafter? When would the convention

2 take place? When would it be concluded?

3 MR. SHURE: I'm trying to think what

4 the original legislation said about I believe the

5 election is in March and then the convention

6 starting in April.

7 I think that electing the delegates in

8 November would give the option of starting the

9 convention perhaps sooner, maybe as early February

10 just to get the work begun and -- and finished

11 sooner.

12 I don't think it's a horrible idea to

13 elect the delegates separately, but I think the two

14 issues are, first of all, let's get the convention

15 started as soon as possible and, secondly, I really

16 don't want the opponents of the convention to have

17 the opportunity to say, but these delegates were

18 elected by six percent of the voters, they're not

19 legitimate.

20 And so while I understand the trade-  
21 offs that are involved I'm concerned that  
22 credibility could suffer from a low turnout  
23 election.

24 MR. COLE: It would also give you more  
25 time, wouldn't it, Jon, for educating the delegates

82

1 and bringing the expertise together?

2 MR. SHURE: It would. It would do  
3 that. If you wanted to -- you know, you could start  
4 the convention earlier if you wanted to or you could  
5 start it later and have more time for delegates to  
6 get ready. But you'd be ready. You could get  
7 underway with it and I think that would be a good  
8 thing.

9 MR. COLE: And you would put the  
10 results of the product of the convention to the  
11 voters in November '06, Jon?

12 MR. SHURE: Yes.

13 MR. TITTEL: I would -- I didn't  
14 really address it in my comments, but I -- I would  
15 have a concern with it because, since it's a  
16 partisan election as well as a gubernatorial  
17 election with a lot of candidates that are up, I  
18 think it could be very confusing to people. And in  
19 some counties the delegate that draws Line A may win  
20 because people are just used to voting, like, Line

21 A.

22 And so I would tend to think it should

23 be held separately just so that -- for people to

24 come out.

25 MS. CAMBRIA: I'd like to add to that

83

1 that this became a specific discussion question

2 amongst my committee. We have someone who I think

3 very, very highly of who weighed in saying, well, I

4 don't like to have an extra one and, you know, I

5 think we should have it the way we do charter

6 questions, you know, that you do it then.

7 So we had a full-fledged discussion

8 with everybody weighing in and we came out for a

9 separate election to get away from the partisanship.

10 And I think, perhaps it's wishful

11 thinking, but I believe that we will have so much

12 more focus on the idea of a convention, what a

13 convention is all about, if we don't have it tied up

14 with a gubernatorial election, a senatorial election

15 and an assembly election and the question itself. I

16 think then it's going to get lost -- totally lost in

17 the shuffle and that I think was the major reason

18 why the group as a whole came to the consensus that

19 despite the cost we should have a special election.

20 Thanks.

21 MR. SHURE: Let me just add -- I don't

22 want dwell because there's a small difference

23 between people who basically feel the same way.

24 But the question of whether to have a

25 convention or not will be on the ballot in 2005 in

84

1 November so it's already tied up in a gubernatorial

2 election.

3 So my sense is that adding the

4 delegates' names to that on a separate part of the

5 ballot away from the partisan lines wouldn't

6 necessarily confuse people; it would give them the

7 opportunity. If they choose not to vote about it --

8 on it because they're confused they don't have to.

9 But, again, the delegates would have

10 been before a larger pool of voters which I think

11 would help the credibility.

12 MR. VAN HORN: Mayor?

13 MAYOR PASSANANTE: I believe --

14 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: No, that's all

15 right. I'll wait.

16 MR. VAN HORN: I'll get to you,

17 Senator.

18 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: Yeah, I know.

19 MAYOR PASSANANTE: Thank you. This is

20 directed to Mr. Shure and Ms. Cambria.

21 You had indicated that neither one of

22 your organizations would support a convention that

23 would look at spending as an issue and that you're

24 looking for a revenue-neutral solution from the

25 convention.

85

1 We have had many people that have said

2 that spending needs to be addressed. Would you

3 support the concept of having the convention address

4 the revenue side and requiring the legislature to

5 hold a special session to address the spending

6 issues through the legislature?

7 MR. SHURE: My group per se doesn't

8 have a position on whether there should or shouldn't

9 be. Our opinion is that spending should not be part

10 of it, so it's not a matter of whether we would

11 support it or not.

12 But, no, I don't think we need a

13 special session on spending. Again, I think we do

14 budgets every year and address the spending issue.

15 Some of the structure of spending is

16 important and some of that probably would get

17 addressed in a tax convention.

18 And, you know, I think I -- Jeff

19 mentioned ideas like regionalization. Those are

20 very important things. I think that a tax

21 convention based on what I've seen people do will

22 start to talk about those kinds of things and

23 they'll get a lot more credence and a lot more

24 momentum than they have now.

25 So I think that a rational tax system

86

1 arising from a convention devoted to taxes will in

2 fact lead to reforms in spending down the line that

3 will help make the whole system that much more

4 rational.

5 MS. CAMBRIA: I also think that I

6 agree with that. That the -- when we presented this

7 eight-page document to you all we talked about at

8 this point was the structure of the -- the questions

9 that you asked us because you have to answer them.

10 That's going to be followed by another

11 document. And that other document is going to say,

12 these are the things that the delegates at the

13 convention should be looking at.

14 And what Jon is alluding to and

15 speaking of is a much broader group of things that -

16 - that that's where they're going to come up with

17 any solutions or any ways of addressing that. And

18 that's where you begin to get -- we have some

19 distressingly high costs because we have such

20 fantastic, you know -- the place is falling --

21 flying apart. New Jersey flies apart.

22 I mean, where else do we have as many

23 -- as many school districts, as many towns, as many

24 everything? It just -- it's very irrational and we

25 need to work on it.

87

1 MR. SHURE: Let me just -- well, I

2 mentioned the SLURP Commission. Let me just speak

3 about that for another second.

4 It did address spending, not in terms

5 of saying, cut it down to this level, but it talked

6 about what is the appropriate jurisdiction to pay

7 for this thing. For example, it recommended

8 something that has come to pass which is the State

9 paying for -- for Superior Court judges. It also

10 recommended the State pay for prosecutors which has

11 not happened yet.

12 So it looked at jurisdictional issues

13 of spending, it looked at formula issues of spending

14 and it looked at what is the most rational way to

15 conduct ourselves in terms of how we pay for things

16 and I think that's appropriate. But I don't think

17 it's -- part of its scope should be to cut the level

18 of spending.

19 MR. VAN HORN: Senator Van Wagner?

20 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: You know, you all

21 -- all of you have really touched on what I think is

22 the core of the issue that we have to present I

23 guess. And if I missed -- if I'm reading this

24 correctly, when we present the question of the

25 convention, whether or not to have the convention,

88

1 what our recommendations of that, the scope of the  
2 convention, we have to delineate what should and  
3 shouldn't be discussed.

4 Is that correct, Mr. Chairman?

5 MR. VAN HORN: That's my

6 interpretation of our charge, yeah.

7 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: And it seems to

8 me that land use is at the core of what you said,

9 what everybody is saying, and the taxing

10 jurisdictions and where -- where they all fit into

11 the scheme of things. And I don't think anybody --

12 no one on this commission, I'm sure, and on this

13 task force and no one in New Jersey who has any --

14 any understanding of government in New Jersey knows

15 that we have too much government in New Jersey, too

16 many layers of government, the race for ratables at

17 the local level and the state government and the

18 county governments attempting to in some manner,

19 shape or form duplicate things like that.

20 So whether or not this convention, you

21 know, moves forward on those issues. When we --

22 when we get to the point where we make our

23 recommendation and there was a division it seems to

24 me in terms of whether or not to have it in November

25 or a separate election, and I -- you know, I'm sort

89

1 of ambivalent about it. I kind of agree with all of

2 you.

3 What would you think if there was a

4 process by which people could vote electronically,

5 over the internet for example? What if we were to

6 be able to craft a system where -- and there should

7 be an easy enough way to craft a system that would

8 allow people ease of access to the voting process.

9 MR.TITTEL: The Sierra Club which is,

10 you know, a national organization, is very active in

11 the enfranchisement issue. And I don't know if

12 people realize, but in the state of Oregon which

13 have been very active in -- at all their elections

14 are vote by mail today. And they have the highest

15 turnout in the nation.

16 And so I think that we should be

17 empowering the public.

18 I've never thought there would be a

19 problem with -- you know, we've got ATMs, we could

20 have automatic voting, you know? I think that quite

21 frankly I'd love to see the legislature, you know,

22 actually have -- could be overturned by a bunch of

23 people watching it on cable and plugging in their

24 cards and overturning a vote, quite frankly.

25 I think the more we can empower people

90

1 -- I know as a former legislator you probably

2 wouldn't agree with that.

3 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: I wouldn't agree

4 with that.

5 MR. TITTEL: Yeah. There's a few

6 times where --

7 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: I think that

8 makes for mischief.

9 MR. TITTEL: But my point being is I

10 think that we have technologies available today,

11 either electronically or through the mails, that we

12 can actually get more people to vote and to be more

13 involved as citizens. And I think that's what we

14 should be looking at.

15 And it's the same thing with the

16 convention. I would hope that we can get the

17 convention televised, you know, from gavel-to-gavel,

18 either on cable or on New Jersey Network so that --

19 that we have an informed public that is watching the

20 debate so that when it comes time to vote on the

21 recommendations they're there and it's not about,

22 you know, catchy slogans or ads or whatever, but

23 because people have actually been reading and

24 watching and been involved in the process.

25 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: What would you

91

1 think if the task force among its recommendations

2 were to set forth a recommendation that money be set  
3 aside for let's say a public educational process  
4 prior to the vote on the convention so the public  
5 understood exactly what the task of the convention  
6 delegates would be, what the convention was about in  
7 essence, et cetera?

8 MR. SHURE: I think that kind of a  
9 public education campaign would be a good thing.  
10 I'm a little bit concerned about  
11 internet voting. We've done some work in our  
12 organization about ways to expand turnout and get  
13 more people to be more accessible to voting.  
14 But the experts tell us that internet  
15 voting is not ready yet, that there are -- that  
16 there are kinks that need to be worked out of it to  
17 make sure that it's protected.  
18 So I'd be concerned that the  
19 technology is not quite there yet to have an  
20 internet election with no fear of hackers or trouble  
21 counting votes or --

22 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: How about voting  
23 by mail?

24 MR. SHURE: I think voting by mail is  
25 a good idea.

92

1 SENATOR VAN WAGNER: Okay, thank you.

2 MR. TITTEL: I also just wanted to say

3 that as part of when you do the convention setting  
4 up, you know, a blog site (phonetic) and other  
5 things where you could have your experts answer  
6 questions would also help get the public more  
7 engaged.

8 MS. CAMBRIA: Nobody feels more  
9 strongly than the league about giving more people  
10 the ability to vote. So, yes, we would be for that  
11 and certainly also for any informational campaign to  
12 help them understand it. Yes.

13 MR. VAN HORN: Ms. Gordon?

14 MS. GORDON: Yes. This question is  
15 for Ms. Cambria.

16 You say in your testimony that  
17 delegates should not be affiliated with any  
18 particular party, that they should not have slogans  
19 or any other kind of special interest on ballots;  
20 yet, you say that they should be prepared to  
21 advocate for themselves and their position.

22 And I guess I'm kind of curious how  
23 you would envision that happening.

24 MS. CAMBRIA: It doesn't mean you  
25 can't be a Republican or a Democrat. It means you

93

1 can't run as a Republican or a Democrat with that D  
2 or R next to your name.

3 I'm asking them to run as a person --

4 we will want them to run as an unaffiliated person  
5 who's going there to work on re-crafting and fixing  
6 a very broken property tax system.  
7 And so they can talk about all the  
8 things they want about, but I just don't want them -  
9 - I guess they could say something about, change the  
10 property tax system because we'd all agree to that.  
11 But other than that, I really don't want -- the  
12 league really does not want partisan politics in it.  
13 And the reason we don't is because our  
14 legislature has become deadlocked over this. It's  
15 part of the reasons we can't do anything is the  
16 partisan politics included.  
17 When one side is in they say the same  
18 thing as the other one says when they're in. Cut --  
19 when the Democrats are in the Republicans say, cut  
20 the costs; when the Republicans are in, the  
21 Democrats. It's -- it just -- it just becomes  
22 partisan bickering. And that's not the purpose of  
23 this.  
24 The purpose of this is to get to a  
25 problem that really is affecting every single person

94

1 here in this state, every person.  
2 MR. VAN HORN: Dr. Cole?  
3 DR. COLE: This question is for Mr.  
4 Tittel.

5 I think that Mr. Shure and Ms. Cambria  
6 have been very clear about how they might see the  
7 question phrased. But I don't think, unless I've  
8 missed it, you've talked about that.  
9 MR. TITTEL: No, I didn't because I  
10 thought they would do it better.  
11 No. Actually, the Sierra Club  
12 supports the concept of the convention and we  
13 actually had a long internal debate on deciding to  
14 support the idea of the convention. And Senator  
15 Lance was actually part of that with a lot of  
16 questions being asked of him.  
17 We believe that the convention should  
18 just deal very narrowly with the property tax issue  
19 and not go off into other tangents, you know,  
20 because we think that quite frankly you don't know  
21 what you end up with. And I know that -- I think  
22 that's really where we stand.

23 DR. COLE: Thank you.

24 MR. VAN HORN: Dr. Reock?

25 DR. REOCK: If there is a convention

95

1 it almost certainly will come up with a rather  
2 complex set of recommendations.  
3 Would you foresee the possibility of  
4 multiple questions being submitted to the voters or  
5 should it all be wrapped up into one yes/no answer

6 or would it be possible to put up alternative  
7 solutions to the property tax problem from the  
8 convention?

9 MS. CAMBRIA: We discussed that in  
10 great depth and it is our position of the league  
11 that it's got to be an up/down because when you  
12 start breaking it into pieces or providing all --  
13 I'm not sure. We haven't thought about the  
14 alternative or any -- I'll hold off. I'll hold off  
15 on that one.

16 But in terms of the way we're  
17 structured now, we see that it has to be -- because  
18 there's going to be -- in any plan there is going to  
19 be the parts that people will say, oh, that's nice,  
20 and the parts they're not particularly happy about.  
21 If we allow more than one vote we  
22 cherry pick. Oh, that's good, and I don't like  
23 that. Well, what you get is not a plan that would  
24 be workable. It would be a total disaster that  
25 simply won't work because it won't match up. The

96

1 parts won't match up.

2 MR. SHURE: I agree with that. I  
3 think that if a convention, for example, were to  
4 come up with a comprehensive tax plan that had ten  
5 elements to it and each was separately on the ballot  
6 and the public approved five and rejected five, then

7 they wouldn't have the plan that the convention  
8 recommended and you wouldn't have a system that  
9 really worked.

10 But I hadn't -- I also now thought of  
11 the other option which is to say there could be more  
12 than one comprehensive alternative. It's these ten  
13 things or these ten things, one or the other or  
14 neither. That might -- that might have some merit.  
15 But by and large, I think that we need to ask the  
16 public to vote for a plan and not parts of a plan.

17 DR. REOCK: And you think this should  
18 be defined in the enabling act and not left to the  
19 convention itself?

20 MR. SHURE: That's right. And my  
21 understanding from the legislation that's been  
22 introduced previously was that there would be a  
23 question on the ballot.

24 And I do think that that should be  
25 part of what is approved when a convention is

97

1 approved and the delegates know that going in.

2 MR. TITTEL: We think that there  
3 should be one key question, but then you can look at  
4 things differently.

5 Michigan, when they did their  
6 referendum banning property taxes, they actually  
7 gave the public different choices on how you would

8 replace that spending, whether it would be an  
9 increase in sales tax, an increase in I believe the  
10 income tax or a combination.  
11 So I think that the public can have  
12 the ability to look at certain choices. And not if  
13 it's -- you know, you don't want to set up a menu  
14 where you pick one from Column A and Column B, but I  
15 think you can in a simple way have different options  
16 for the voters.

17 MR. SHURE: And I think the public can  
18 handle it as long as they're being asked to pick one  
19 comprehensive solution or another comprehensive  
20 solution.

21 MR. TITTEL: Right. That's what I'm  
22 saying. Yes or no on the top and then different  
23 ways of getting there.

24 MR. VAN HORN: Seeing no other  
25 requests for questions -- yes, Judith?

98

1 MS. CAMBRIA: Can I say one thing?

2 MR. VAN HORN: Okay.

3 MS. CAMBRIA: In case you had any  
4 chance of thinking that you didn't need -- and there  
5 isn't a -- I brought this the other day but it was  
6 raining out so I didn't bring it in.

7 This is 1990. It took over 200 years

8 for us to get to about \$10 billion in property

9 taxes. In the next ten years we added 4.4 -- \$4.3  
10 billion. In the next two years we ended up -- we  
11 added \$4.3 billion. We have added \$8.7 billion in  
12 fifteen years to our property tax burden. We can't  
13 live with it.

14 Thanks. Thanks for letting me bring  
15 this.

16 (Participants confer)

17 MR. VAN HORN: Good photo op there.

18 Thank you, lady and gentlemen, for  
19 sharing your thoughts with us today. We appreciate  
20 it very much.

21 I'm going to excuse the panel.

22 There's one more piece of business

23 that I just want to announce that on Friday at 10  
24 a.m., on our usual afternoon sessions, we're going  
25 to meet again in Winetzs Hall (phonetic). Is that

99

1 right, Mr. Malloy?

2 MR. MALLOY: Winetzs.

3 MR. VAN HORN: Yes. At ten o'clock

4 where the parking is better. And we will be hearing  
5 from several education groups and the -- we'll also  
6 hear from the NAACP, the League of Municipalities,  
7 the AARP, the Coalition for the Public Good, and I  
8 believe Greg Edwards who is also a policy analyst.

9 The name of the group escapes me at the moment. But

10 he is going to be presenting to us as well.

11 I am also going to be distributing a

12 memo which describes how the transcripts of the

13 first several hearings can be accessed. These are

14 of course available both to the public, the press

15 and of course to the members of the task force.

16 And, of course, in due time all of the

17 transcripts will be made available.

18 And I'm also distributing a memorandum

19 that was prepared by staff which is an analysis of

20 some of the key issues before us in relationship to

21 how these issues were handled in the '47 law

22 enabling that convention and then in some of the key

23 legislation introduced by Assemblyman Roberts,

24 Senator Adler, Senator Schluter, Senator Lance,

25 Assemblywoman Allen and so on. And I think the

100

1 staff certainly did a good job with this; however,

2 the authors of these who are members of this task

3 force may want to look at this and provide whatever

4 additional comments that they see fit, certainly, if

5 there has been any mischaracterization.

6 But I think this will be helpful to us

7 to -- as we begin to think about the different

8 options before us in our next phase.

9 And, again, unless there are any

10 objections or any other business, I would adjourn

11 the meeting now. And we'll reconvene on Friday

12 morning at ten o'clock.

13 Thank you.

14 (Proceedings concluded)

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

101

1 C E R T I F I C A T I O N

2

3 I, Coleen Rand, do hereby certify that

4 the foregoing transcript of proceedings by the New

5 Jersey Property Tax Relief Task Force, recorded on

6 audiotape on October 26, 2004, is a true and

7 accurate non-compressed transcript of the

8 proceedings to the best of my knowledge and ability.

9

10

11

[12 Coleen Rand AD/T 419 Date](#)

[13 For Guy Renzi & Associates](#)

[14](#)

[15](#)

[16](#)

[17](#)

[18](#)

[19](#)

[20](#)

[21](#)

[22](#)

[23](#)

[24](#)

[25](#)

[contact us](#) | [privacy notice](#) | [legal statement](#) | [accessibility statement](#)



statewide: [njhome](#) | [citizen](#) | [business](#) | [government](#) | [services](#) | [departments](#) | [search](#)  
Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2004