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1989 DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

Piscataway, New Jersey

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INTRODUCTION

1989 will be remembered as a watershed year in New Jersey politics. For the first time in almost a decade, the difference between New Jersey Democrats and Republicans is more than a difference in degree. This year, the parties -- and the candidates who embody their aspirations -- differ in kind.

This election is about what we New Jerseyans expect from our government and from ourselves. As the principles and programs discussed in this Platform will demonstrate, the choice has never been more clear.

ENVIRONMENT

Safeguarding our drinking water, insuring that our children will be able to enjoy the shore, improving our air quality, and protecting our rapidly vanishing open spaces will require quick and decisive action. Promises are no longer enough. Business as usual will not do. The actions of the next Governor and legislature will determine whether our quality of life will improve or rapidly deteriorate.

Tough Enforcement -- New Jersey has among the strongest environmental laws in the country. Yet violators are rarely punished. For instance, a 1988 report by the N.J. Public Interest Research Group documents D.E.P.'s dismal enforcement record against even self-reported violators of the Clean Water Act. Between October 1984 and September 1986 there was no government response (excluding the annual inspection reports) for over 90% of the documented violations.

New Jersey Democrats will make tough enforcement of our environmental laws their highest priority. To highlight and focus our enforcement efforts, we call for the creation of an Environmental Prosecutor. Only the Governor can impose the organizational discipline needed to make the system effective. The Governor should appoint an Environmental Prosecutor, accountable directly to him, with the power to cut across agency boundaries and to impose a uniform set of policies and objectives on all of the agencies involved in environmental laws. From routine inspections through criminal prosecution, the Environmental Prosecutor would have the powers and resources to more effectively identify offenders and to deter others from engaging in similar conduct. When the midnight dumpers start going to jail, the midnight dumping will stop.

Passage of the Democratic-sponsored Clean Water Enforcement Act will force polluters to comply with their discharge permits by establishing mandatory minimum fines and jail sentences for repeat offenders.

Safe Drinking Water -- The quality of new Jersey's drinking water is increasingly threatened. Serious well field contamination has already been discovered in more than 75 towns. A 1989 survey by the National Wildlife Federation found that New Jersey leads the nation in the number of reported violations of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The presence of detectable levels of volatile organic chemicals has been found in water supplies of over 140 municipalities. That is one out of every four municipalities in our state affecting untold numbers of our children. Our groundwater, the drinking water source for nearly half the State's residents, is threatened by over 700 toxic waste dumps, as well as dozens of inadequately closed landfills.

New Jersey Democrats stand for swift action to safeguard our drinking water. To augment our program of tough enforcement, we propose the following actions:

1. Expedite toxic waste clean-ups.
2. Establish the goal of cutting hazardous waste by 50%.
3. Create a new office of Hazardous Waste Reduction within the Division of Hazardous Waste Management.
4. Extend the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act to the nearly one million New Jerseyans who rely on private wells.
5. Continue monitoring of the ground water near toxic waste dumps.
6. Establish buffer zones to prevent development adjacent to reservoirs and other environmentally sensitive areas.

A Cleaner Ocean -- Our beaches and coastal waters represent some of our State's most precious natural resources. Our second largest industry, tourism, is built mainly on the expectation of a clean, swimmable ocean. The reported beach closings of the past several years have cost millions of dollars in revenues. Just as important, the unique pleasures of the New Jersey coast should not be squandered and polluted, but enjoyed by our children and grandchildren. That is why the Democratic Party believes that protecting our coast requires hands-on gubernatorial leadership.

New Jersey Democrats support strict enforcement of the March 1991 deadline to stop all ocean dumping. New Jersey must reduce its response time to oil spills and control development along the shoreline that contributes to pollution. Closure of the 24-unit development loophole in CAFRA (Coastal Area Facilities Review Act) is important to controlling environmentally sensitive development. The largest single source of ocean pollution is combined sanitary and storm sewers. New Jersey Democrats are committed to

Jersey Democrats are committed to reducing the largest source of ocean pollution: run-off from new development construction, mining and agricultural sites, and stormwater.

Improving Air Quality -- Under a Democratic Governor and a Democratic Legislature, New Jersey enacted some of the most innovative programs to improve air quality in the nation. But the gains made by these programs have been overshadowed by the dramatic increase in the number of automobiles on our highways and the distances they are travelling. New Jersey remains a non-attainment area for ozone, regularly recording unsafe levels. On poor air quality days, people with respiratory and cardiac disease are forced to remain inside.

While we support Commissioner Daggett's recent initiatives to mandate less polluting gasoline and (along with the other Northeastern states) to tighten the pollution standards for automobiles, we Democrats believe New Jersey must go further. We must address the roots of the problem -- our over-reliance on the automobile.

New Jersey Democrats support strengthening and expanding N.J. Transit, and forging public-private partnerships to fund regional transit projects such as the "People Mover" which would connect Newark Airport to downtown Newark and Elizabeth.

New Jersey Democrats advocate sensible growth targeted to areas already served by public transit, as opposed to haphazard development which increases reliance on the automobile.

Protecting Open Space -- New Jersey Democrats believe that the protection of New Jersey's natural resources is a commitment which we owe to our children and grandchildren. These resources are necessary for an enjoyable quality of life and for economic growth. We support the passage of the Natural Resources Trust Fund. We also urge New Jerseyans to vote for the Open Space Bond Act.

Tracking Solid Waste -- New Jersey is facing a solid waste crisis. We generate more than 10 million tons of garbage each year and are running out of places to put it. In-state landfills are overflowing and environmentally dangerous; out-of-state disposal sites are likely to close in the near future for the same reasons. Not surprisingly, costs are skyrocketing, resulting in sharp increases in property taxes.

Republican leadership has abjectly failed to clean up the solid waste hauling industry (the 901 Waste Haulers Program) and has left county governments to struggle with a problem that demands statewide coordination and planning. This perfect example of a failure to govern must be redressed by a Democratic administration. The only thing that the State has done is to encourage a headlong rush to build an incinerator in every county -- a process that will cost several billion dollars. We don't need 21 incinerators.

This madcap, expensive directive by Republican leadership must be halted with a regional environmentally-conscious plan by new Democratic governance which both understands and is committed to the environment.

An essential component to an effective solid waste plan in New Jersey is reduction of the waste stream by increasing recycling. We can limit the amount of solid waste that is produced by developing less wasteful packaging methods and materials as well as by reducing the amount of hazardous materials in the waste stream, so that what remains can be disposed of more easily and effectively. Approaches to increasing recycling include improvements in State and local procurement of recycled goods, encouragement of product labeling and coding systems to facilitate recycling, provisions of new incentives for source separation, and stimulation of investment in new recycling plants.

New Jersey Democrats advocate the appointment of an Emergency Waste Assessment Task Force. The Task Force will be required to come up with a blueprint for a new, workable, cost-effective and environmentally sound solid waste policy.

LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Every citizen of New Jersey is now threatened as never before by the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime. The scale of crime in our society fueled by the magnitude of the drug crisis, has reached staggering proportions and in many respects has exceeded the capacity of the criminal justice system to provide basic protection for the public. A clear consistent message must go out from the Governor by both word and deed that the government of New Jersey has the capacity and the will to protect its citizens. The program we now propose will begin to deliver that message.

Tough Penalties -- The public, the Legislature and the Supreme Court have spoken on the issue of the death penalty. Notwithstanding the lack of uniform enforcement of the law, as well as endless delays and legal challenges, New Jersey Democrats support the uniform application of the death penalty. We need statewide standards in order to make sure that death penalty prosecutions are not constantly challenged. We must take every step possible to protect law enforcement personnel who face up to the drug pushers and criminal organizations, and demand imposition of the death penalty when these law enforcement individuals are killed in the line of duty. In addition, we support legislation to increase penalties for anyone who exploits children in the distribution of drugs, and to establish "drug-free zones" around our public housing complexes, many of which are sites for heightened drug activity.

But tough drug laws will be a hollow shell unless we can make them work in practice. All too often, serious offenders are arrested and turned loose on the streets while our seriously strained judicial system processess evidence and schedules trials. New Jersey Democrats believe that drug offenders and those accused of crimes of violence should be targeted for swift prosecution and trial. Getting and keeping dangerous criminals off the streets must be the highest priority.

Drug Abuse -- Drug abuse must be recognized as one of the most serious and complex problems we face as a society. It has no single, easy solution.

Some have suggested that we should seal our borders against the tons of drugs that arrive here each year. We now recognize that strategy alone cannot work. At best, only 10 - 20 percent of the drugs entering this country are seized, and the problems grow worse. We must ask ourselves how serious our commitment has been up to now.

The Governor of New Jersey must lead the campaign to resolve New Jersey's crisis. There should be no ambiguity in the message he sends to the public. The first part of that message is that government must stop fighting with itself over who has the authority and the responsibility to carry on the war against drugs. The myriad of agencies and organizations involved should be centrally coordinated by a single individual, a "Drug Czar" who answers directly to the Governor.

As a first priority, therefore, the "Drug Czar" should evaluate legislative and administrative initiatives and develop a comprehensive, balanced program to combat drug abuse, including the following elements:

- Military-type assault weapons should be banned from private ownership.
- "Boot camp" style facilities should be created for minor offenders whose values and behavior can be modified.
- Effective, responsible drug treatment programs should be expanded so that drug users who sincerely desire to change their lives can get immediate help.
- Criminal cases involving drugs should be processed more swiftly to maximize their deterrent value and remove drug dealers from the community.
- Penalties should be enhanced for the most egregious drug related crimes, including the exploitation of children. Those who kill law enforcement officials should face the death penalty.

- Communities should be encouraged and supported in efforts to rid themselves of the drug culture and to restore decent social values. This should include a massive education effort aimed not only at our youth but also at the adults and community institutions from which our values are derived.

Integrity in Government -- The people of this State place their confidence in their elected and appointed officials and rightfully expect that they will always act in the best interests of New Jersey. New Jersey Democrats believe in government that is honest and open and represents the highest level of integrity and character. New Jersey Democrats support a clear, tough, statewide ethics in government policy with stiffer penalties for violations.

The very recent HUD scandals, including those which have been identified in New Jersey, should make us even more sensitive to the importance of this initiative. Influence-pedaling and other forms of government corruption cannot be tolerated since they undermine the very fabric of our society and have a deleterious effect upon public morale and opinion.

AUTO INSURANCE

Everyone is familiar with the problem: New Jersey drivers have paid the highest rates in the Nation, and they are getting higher. In some cases, people drive automobiles which are less than the cost of their annual insurance premiums. There are over four million drivers in New Jersey and over half of them -- two million people -- are insured by the Joint Underwriting Association (JUA), the so-called bad driver pool. Insurance companies have refused to provide insurance to these drivers. It is impossible to believe that over half of New Jersey's drivers are bad drivers -- uninsurable drivers -- when in nearly every other state less than ten percent of all drivers are considered bad drivers. The JUA has a deficit of over \$3 billion, and every New Jersey driver pays over \$225 annually in insurance premiums to bail out the JUA. No other state has a system which relieves the insurance system of all liability.

The recent JUA scandal and other cases involving doctors, lawyers, auto repair shops, and adjusters who have submitted false claims to carriers, attest to the nature and scope of the problem. The Department of Insurance is the public's policeman for the insurance industry. This policeman must be retrained, re-equipped, and put back on the job of ending abuses and ensuring the lowering of insurance costs to New Jersey's citizens. To attack the problem of insurance fraud, a highly specialized investigative unit should be established with a base in both the Insurance Department and the Division of Criminal Justice. The Insurance Department should also create a regulatory climate which will provide incentives to

insurance companies to be self-policing and thus to begin to reduce the incidence of fraud.

Repeated audits and investigations have revealed the extent of the problem in the JUA. They include gross mismanagement, such as overpayment on claims; failure to audit; excess profits for services provided; lack of sound risk management; good drivers paying too much; and bad drivers paying too little.

New Jersey Democrats are committed to a 20 percent reduction in insurance rates in New Jersey. We believe that auto insurance rates in this state have resulted not from too much oversight of the insurance industry, but from too little. Accordingly, we pledge a vigilant, consumer-oriented Insurance Department. In addition, we endorse a good driver guarantee for New Jersey drivers who merit such status. Most important, we favor abolition of the JUA, and payment of the JUA's \$3 billion debt by those who are responsible for it: insurance companies and bad drivers (through the Merit Rating System and the Driver Improvement Program.)

The Republicans, on the other hand, respond to the reports of gross mismanagement, failure to audit, fraud, and waste by calling, incredibly for total deregulation. No explanation is offered of how deregulation will solve problems that have resulted from an absence of regulatory oversight. There is no better illustration of the rigidity of Republican ideology; it is, ultimately, as bankrupt as the JUA.

ECONOMIC POLICY

Everywhere we look in this State we see the symptoms of Republican neglect. Over the past eight years, we have seen steady evidence of wasteful State spending and fiscal mismanagement. State taxes have doubled. Examples of poorly coordinated and operated programs and misplaced priorities continue to crop up almost daily.

Despite Republican rhetoric about reducing State spending, State taxes have doubled during the last eight years. Yet, aid to localities, which would help reduce our property taxes, is down as a percentage of the budget from 58 percent in 1982 to 48 percent in 1989. Despite Republican rhetoric about streamlining State government, the number of public employees at the State level has jumped by 20,000. Despite Republican pledges to reduce waste, the State's motor vehicle pool now numbers 5,200 cars -- 2,000 more than the 3,200 which were in the motor pool in 1982.

New Jersey State Government agencies employ over 100 people for the sole purpose of lobbying the legislature. Fifteen of the 20 New Jersey Cabinet officers have chauffeurs for their state-issued cars at a cost to taxpayers of nearly half a million dollars.

Despite the rhetoric, what we have is government out of control. This cannot be allowed to continue. New Jersey Democrats are committed to restoring efficiency in government and reducing wasteful spending. New Jersey's Democrats call for a full government audit of State spending and program operations to insure that New Jersey residents get efficient, effective service. They deserve no less. And New Jersey Democrats are committed to insuring that all funds intended for local government are returned to local government to defray property taxes.

For suburban New Jersey, the Republican failure to respond to the consequences of growth has meant demographic chaos. Skyrocketing housing costs have forced many citizens to commute great distances in order to find affordable housing, if at all. This, in turn, has contributed to erosion of New Jersey's agricultural base, as homes are developed on what was once farmland. It has also led to crises in transportation, as many of this State's roads have become impassable during rush hours and in the environment, as increased use of single-occupancy vehicles has exacerbated greatly this state's air quality problems. Tourism -- this State's second largest industry -- has been devastated by Republican neglect of the environment; repeated beach closings have cost this State millions of dollars in revenue.

For urban New Jersey, participation in the State's overall prosperity has been a system of too little, too late.

Ominously -- particularly for those who have yet to share in it -- the economic expansion of the 1980's appears now to be slowing. The burgeoning budget surplus of prior years has been squandered by an ineffectual bureaucracy, that has been fed on years of Republican "tax and spend" policies without any rigorous budgetary discipline.

We have heard repeatedly during our platform hearings this summer from business persons and civic leaders their concern that businesses are beginning to choose locations other than New Jersey precisely because of the exigencies outlined above. Housing is too expensive. Commutes are too long. Roads are too congested. Auto insurance rates are too high. Urban areas are too impoverished. Labor shortages are too acute.

New Jersey Democrats believe that the best way to assure future prosperity is by working with the private sector to

address both the beneficial and the problematic consequences of growth. We propose to do as follows:

Housing -- Housing prices have risen so astronomically in the past five years in New Jersey that a large portion of middle class households cannot afford to live in their own homes. Employers and workers both express concern about finding affordable housing within commuting distance of their jobs.

New Jersey Democrats favor the creation of business incentives and the streamlining of regulations to make housing more affordable, including (1) tax credits for employer-assisted housing; (2) matching loans for employers undertaking housing initiatives for low-and-moderate-income employees; (3) State low-interest down payment loans to assist young families with down-payments; (4) expansion of lease-purchase programs; and (5) establishment of a renter's purchase assistance program. In addition, Democrats favor utilizing the Urban Development Corporation, in conjunction with non-profit organizations, to convert targeted buildings to rental housing.

The existing regulatory structure, estimated to add up to 30% to the cost of housing, must be streamlined, and agencies such as the Department of Community Affairs, the Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, and the Urban Development Corporation must coordinate their efforts. Democrats favor increased commitment to the award-winning "Homeless Prevention Program," as well as public-private partnerships such as Harmony House in Newark, in order to address the plight of the homeless. Finally, Democrats endorse the creation of New Jersey Neighbors, a state-wide volunteer program whose initial focus shall be housing and neighborhood revitalization. By working to make affordable housing available to all of its citizens, the State will make itself more attractive to potential businesses and assure its future prosperity.

Transportation -- New Jersey depends on a highly complex system of roadways, bus and rail transportation systems for economic survival and a decent quality of life. As New Jersey continues to grow, it is painfully clear that our roadways are incapable of keeping up with that growth, and that transportation management is virtually non-existent. We have seen \$55 million spent on Turnpike expansion programs that never occurred, secret and illegal meetings to plan toll hikes on the Parkway, higher prices for deteriorating service on mass transit; and a projected 140% increase in toll charges to commuters on the New Jersey Turnpike.

New Jersey Democrats would eliminate the confusion that comes from having too many entities in the transportation

business, each spending its own funds on separate projects which are poorly coordinated with the State's other transportation needs. We advocate creation of a Transportation Executive Council, which would be responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive policy for New Jersey's transportation system, so that transportation priorities can be set and met.

The Workforce -- New Jersey's ability to offer assurances of adequate labor may become, in the future, the single most important incentive to new investment. Democrats believe that the groundwork must be laid by improving the quality of education afforded by New Jersey's public schools -- particularly those in the inner cities. In addition, we support the formation of incentives for improved day care, especially employer-based child care centers. Our economic future depends on having a well-trained and educated labor force, capable of performing the jobs of tomorrow. We also favor the provision of health and life insurance coverage for unemployed workers. And we continue to support a vigorous and well-informed trade union movement.

Our Cities -- Our cities are essential to future economic development in the United States. Our cities and their immediate surrounding suburbs represent major investments in high-density infrastructure and housing. They are also home for a large percentage of our population. The Democratic Party believes that our cities' human and capital resources are as important to the future well-being of New Jersey as are our natural resources. We also believe that our cities represent the key to future economic development consistent with maintaining the quality of our environment.

The goals of the Democratic Party for a clean environment, good schools, safe neighborhoods, adequate shelter, meaningful employment opportunities, and effective government will benefit citizens living in our urban centers as well as citizens living in our suburban and rural areas. New Jersey Democrats believe that the State must provide the targeted, long-term assistance necessary to rehabilitate New Jersey's aging urban infrastructure, commercial buildings and housing stock, so that our cities can once again become magnets for economic growth and development. Democrats advocate aggressive and imaginative use of State community development UDAG (Urban Development Action Grants)-style grant programs to encourage private sector investment. In addition, we encourage continued private/public partnerships, and the provision of tax incentives to offset relocation costs to our urban areas. In particular, we are committed to the establishment and flourishing of small, local, and minority-owned and operated businesses.

EDUCATION

New Jersey Democrats believe that a quality education is essential to a society of opportunity, and that our State and local government should do everything possible to provide every child in New Jersey with a "good start" in life to insure a good future for New Jersey. It is through a strong public education system that individual success benefits the entire state. The Democratic Party has traditionally supported a multitude of educational programs and public funding for education so that all New Jerseyans at every level are afforded educational opportunity.

The foundation of a quality education begins prior to the birth of a child. There is an undeniable link between proper prenatal care and nutrition and a child who is alert and ready to learn once in school. Accordingly, the Democratic Party supports programs which promote prenatal care and appropriate nutrition for expectant mothers. But the commitments to health and education should not end once a child is born. The State has an interest and an obligation to insure that children are fed and healthy through their public school years. This early investment will pay dividends once these children enter the working world as literate, trained and productive adults.

The benefits of these programs are verified by statistical research. For example: every dollar spent on prenatal care saves \$3 in the cost of later care for low-weight babies; every dollar spent on childhood immunization saves \$10 in future medical costs; and, every dollar spent on early childhood education saves \$5 in special education, public assistance and fighting crime. Lastly, studies show that children enrolled in early education programs are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, and be employed as productive members of society.

New Jersey Democrats remain committed to programs which encourage and stimulate our gifted and talented students. We cannot afford to let these students languish and must find ways of identifying these children early in the educational process.

A strong public education system can also be a part of the solution to the drug problem in our State. We must develop and fund programs which educate our youth, at every level, about the evils and dangers of drugs. It is also essential that we develop programs which encourage our youth to stay in school. New Jersey Democrats are committed to working with parents, teachers, students and the private sector to develop a partnership which can result in increased attendance and ultimately in successful job placement.

A competitive higher education system in New Jersey is the cornerstone of the State's future economic success. New Jersey is still far behind its sister states in aid to higher education. The Democratic Party is committed to programs which will address the needs of handicapped, black, hispanic and other at-risk students at the college level. We must encourage the development system-wide of facilities and programs which provide access to all handicapped students. In addition, the resources of our higher education system should be utilized in developing a system of cooperative urban and suburban education programs for public K-12 education. These programs will have a dual effect: (1) improve graduation rates for at-risk students; (2) develop a bond between New Jersey students and New Jersey colleges and universities.

New Jersey Democrats are equally committed to programs which enhance the literacy rate in our population as well as provide compensatory education for those in need. If New Jersey wishes to maintain its economic growth and attract employers it is essential that we provide literate and trained employees.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

New Jersey Democrats support a woman's right to choose. Further, New Jersey Democrats believe that as long as women have the right to choose, that right should be available to all of New Jersey's women, regardless of ability to pay. In the event the United States Supreme Court decides that a state may constitutionally pass statutes allowing family involvement in the exercise of the right of choice by a minor, New Jersey Democrats support legislation which would appropriately balance the desirability of family participation with the protection of the right to choose.

There is an inescapable conclusion: in the second wealthiest state in the country, the State government is failing abjectly even to provide minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter and medical care for its destitute. The situation is rendered all the more poignant by the realization that forty percent of the victims of this neglect are children, and other significant portions are the elderly and the mentally or physically impaired.

New Jersey Democrats support meaningful efforts to break poverty's cycle of dependence by matching jobs with employable welfare recipients. But we also recognize that such efforts will succeed only if significant incentives are provided, and disincentives removed, to working. Any such program must also assure that there is an adequate, safe and affordable day care program available to take care of a welfare recipient's children while that recipient seeks

further education, training or employment. And such a program must also correct the deficiencies in the inner city school systems which lead to early drop-outs, functional illiteracy, and ruined dreams. Finally in this regard, we must work to remove the incentives for fathers to leave the home, and support efforts to hold both parents of disadvantaged children responsible for their maintenance and upbringing.

Despite being one of our smallest states in land mass, New Jersey has the second largest senior citizen population. Their welfare has been, and must remain, one of the Democratic Party's top priorities. We believe that home health care programs provide a viable, more appropriate, cost efficient alternative to nursing home care. Housing is another concern of senior citizens that must be addressed through flexible programs that address the individual needs of our senior citizens.

Achieving the Democratic goals of quality health care for all requires hard but compassionate decisions. The answers are not to be found in Republican policies of shifting heavier medical costs onto Medicare recipients, interfering with the traditional relationship between doctor and patient, imposing government regulations on painful and private decisions concerning the use of artificial life support systems, shifting costs to younger and self-insured patients, and freezing payments to health care providers while related costs increase. Such programs don't solve these serious problems -- they just make things worse.

New Jersey Democrats believe that quality health care is a right, not a privilege. We support adequate provisions for home health care, as well as national and state programs of financial assistance for catastrophic illness. We also support increased funding for AIDS, cancer, and other life threatening diseases, research, treatment and education, with adequate safeguards to protect the identities of AIDS victims. And we urge that Congress reverse years of Republican attacks on the Medicare program, and restore realistic payment scales and an efficient claims administration. Finally, we support programs that would provide prenatal and postnatal care for pregnant teenagers and other "high-risk" mothers, together with enhanced health care for their infants.