

66
14
6

201
177
177
177

F O C U S G R O U P

March 2, 1994

Trenton City Hall
Trenton, New Jersey

"Urban Problems in Trenton"

PARTICIPANTS

Bob Giaquinto
Ed Cortesini
Abdul-Malik Ali
Joe Constance
Tim Losch
Father Brian McCormick
Carmelita Aponte
Bea Scala-Fischler
Joanne Bullock

Alan Mallach

Alma Hill Byron
Tav Suarez
James Wells
Mary Gay Abbott-Young
Reverend Hubert Hunter
Mayor Doug Palmer
Lionel Kier
Bill Watson
Senator Dick LaRossa

New Jersey State Library

SENATOR DICK LaROSSA (Chairman): In terms of the layout here, I have a written statement I would like to make, only because there are certain points I want to make that, if I don't write them down, won't be made.

One of the things about the forum we have here today is, there is no press here. One of the reasons for no press being here is, we want the discussion to be open, candid, and frank. You know, this is not something where we are looking to establish policy issues in any given particular community. We are talking about systemic urban initiatives that are going to impact all of us, and we are really trying to look at doing things.

We are going to have these types of focus groups at least 10 other times through the next six months, and then try to develop a policy and plan through this entire format.

As I said, going back to when we started the Committee process, if we are ever going to really begin to solve these problems, we have to talk to the people who not only deal with them on a day in, day out basis, but the people who live them on a day in, day out basis. You can't make policy sitting in an office. You have to be there knowing what is going on, and those are the people who are in the community on a daily basis and the people who live there.

The microphones are not for amplification. They are for transcription purposes. The transcript will not be made available to the public. It will be an internal document for us to review so that we can hopefully recapture some of the comments that are made, which we can hopefully put into some policy initiatives somewhere down the road. I think we are going to try to do this as frequently as possible and transcribe it, because we do not want to lose what has been some very, very, you know, gray and substantial commentary.

Also, please speak into the microphones, or as closely as you can, and one person at a time, because what happens is

they can only record one person at a time. Two voices at the same time will just overlap and make it next to impossible to transcribe. So what I will try to do is-- I think I know everybody at the table, so I will try to-- If you will just give me some head sign, or whatever, I will try to acknowledge you, and we will go from there.

I welcome each of you here today for this very important focus group as part of the newly established New Jersey Senate Urban Policy and Planning Committee, of which the Senate President has designated me the Chairman.

However, I do want to spend a few minutes on a quick overview of the goals of the Committee and to say a few words on the process.

The Senate President, in establishing this Committee, stated that over the past two years the Senate has taken its responsibility as a partner in urban revitalization efforts seriously. I believe that in the years ahead of us a more aggressive and a more targeted urban agenda will be needed, and that the Senate will have in place the mechanism by which to ensure that such an agenda is developed with the formation of a new standing Senate Committee.

We want very much to support key initiatives that will help our cities balance their budgets; help them clean up once abandoned properties; repair aging and damaged schools; encourage tenant input in public housing decisions; and leverage economic development opportunities.

The Committee will have a very distinct responsibility; namely, to seek solutions that are as unique in nature as the problems facing our urban communities. We have been encouraged to take this Committee into the urban areas and meet with those individuals and leaders who have the ideas that make sense for their communities.

So we are here today as Trenton is the first community we have selected to hear your ideas. We have carefully selected for this focus group a cross section of elected

officials, civic and religious leaders, as well as other individuals whom we know, in total, will make a substantial contribution to the identification and solution of the problems which are with us. As stated before, we are not looking for the solutions that have been tried and failed, but for creative and unique approaches. Therefore, we want each of you to know that your ideas and thoughts are very welcome.

I will try to facilitate the discussion for the next couple of hours or so. I would ask that with this group, and with the limited time, that we try to make our comments as direct and succinct as possible. I want to emphasize again that the session today is one in which -- you are going to like this -- we desire to bring more light than heat to the problems. Therefore, I ask each of you to refrain from, you know, any confrontation or attack here, because, as I say, we are trying to solve problems here, but again, because we want people to participate freely and openly. That is the most important thing.

The discussion is within these walls. You will note that the transcriber is from the legislative staff. The purpose of the transcription is so that the Committee members and staff will not lose the ideas and thoughts which are presented today. Copies of the transcripts are not for public dissemination, but solely for the purpose that we may study and evaluate, as we prepare the legislation, the policies needed to solve these problems. This is an action-oriented Committee. We intend to give the urban areas the support needed and facilitate your job and your City in as positive a way as possible, and include you as active participants in that process.

With that in mind, I would like to very, very quickly go around the table, starting from my left, so that everyone will know who else is at the table as well. We will do this very quickly.

MR. WATSON: I am Bill Watson, Chief of Staff to Mayor Palmer.

MR. ALI: I am Abdul-Malik Ali, Thiam Masjidut-Thuwa.

MR. SUAREZ: Tav Suarez, North Hermitage Business Association.

MR. KIER: I am Lionel Kier, Director of Trent Center, an elderly housing project in Trenton.

MR. WELLS: James Wells, Wells Deli, of Trenton.

MS. BYRON: Alma Hill Byron, Executive Director of LIFT, Inc.

MS. ABBOTT-YOUNG: Mary Gay Abbott-Young, Rescue Mission, Trenton.

REVERENT HUNTER: Hubert Hunter, Pastor of St. Phillips Baptist Church, Hamilton Township.

MS. APONTE: Carmelita Aponte, a business owner on South Broad.

MR. CONSTANCE: Joe Constance, Freeholder/Deputy Chief of Police.

MR. LOSCH: Tim Losch, from CoreStates.

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: Bea Scala-Fischler, Trenton Council of Civic Associations.

FATHER McCORMICK: Father Briam McCormick, from the Martin House for Community Housing, Trenton.

MR. GIAQUINTO: Bob Giaquinto, from R. Giaquinto Shoe Repair in downtown Trenton here.

MR. CORTESINI: Ed Cortesini, semiretired businessperson and civic activist.

SENATOR LaROSSA: I want you to know who staff are also, on the perimeter. Pat?

MR. GILLESPIE: Pat Gillespie, with the Senate Democrats.

MS. JOHNSON: Liz Johnson, City Department of Recreation and Natural Resources.

SENATOR LaROSSA: And, Hannah, would you please introduce--

MS. SHOSTACK: I am Hannah Shostack, with the Office of Legislative Services.

SENATOR LaROSSA: And your guest?

MS. SHOSTACK: Anat Kuhn, who is a visiting scholar and City Planner from Israel.

MS. WIERZBIKI: I am Kathy Wierzbiki. I am Senator LaRossa's legislative aide.

MS. NUTT: Rita Nutt, Office of Legislative Services.

MR. CALLAHAN: I'm Jack Callahan, Senate Majority.

SENATOR LaROSSA: And our OLS transcription staff?

MR. WHITE: My name is Harry White, also from the Office of Legislative Services.

MS. MARRERO: My name is Eve Marrero, also from the Office of Legislative Services.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Just so you know we did not go into the budget to fly our representative from Israel in, she's-- (laughter) It seems we always have to qualify all of these things anymore, just to be--

MR. ALI: That's good, because I was going to ask -- frivolous funds to the City.

SENATOR LaROSSA: With that in mind, again I thank you very much.

We will take a little bit of a repeat of a format we used before. One of the things we did, which I thought was very, very interesting-- If we could do this, just quickly around the table, unless anybody doesn't want to go into this--

Two primary questions. If you were asked to define urban, how would you define it? Does anyone want to take a shot?

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: It simply means a city.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Anyone else?

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: That should be a neutral connotation to the word "urban."

SENATOR LaROSSA: Are all cities urban, or are all urban areas cities?

To take it a step further, if you were going to name three problems that you would like to see dealt with in terms of urban policy and planning, what would they be? Jim?

MR. WELLS: Housing, economics, and education.

MR. WATSON: I was going to give the other participants an opportunity, but property taxes, education, and economic development. I need to add a fourth, which is equally important, if not more so -- crime, or the perception of it.

FATHER McCORMICK: I would like to add property taxes, either a countywide tax -- property tax -- or a personal property tax. I don't think it is possible for the City to finance what we have with the base we have, without getting compromised in false programs.

SENATOR LaROSSA: I think that would be kind of -- almost like if it is mandated, pay for it. If the State or county mandates, they pay.

FATHER McCORMICK: There would be a lot more freedom and flexibility for the administration to act.

SENATOR LaROSSA: So we will talk about the financing of initiatives. I am trying just to crunch it down a little bit for purposes of--

FATHER McCORMICK: I think the property tax has to be countywide -- equal. Like one county, Mercer County, have a home tax base.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Almost a revenue sharing type of situation.

Alma?

MS. BYRON: Better health care, particularly for senior citizens and children.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Reverend Hunter?

REVEREND HUNTER: I would say drugs, less crime, jobs, housing.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Ed?

MR. CORTESINI: Welfare programs and -- this may come under economic development -- a closer working relationship with the private sector. The government can't do everything.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Private sector involvement?

MR. CORTESINI: Yes.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Okay. Like I say, that is where we have the cross section. We have also our small business community, as well as CoreStates, which has been forever in the City.

Well, economic development--

MR. WATSON: Can we ask some of the business community that is here what-- Tim?

MR. LOSCH: I would say crime, jobs, education, health care, a public/private partnership. I would add another one from the business community, and that would be the ECRA, or ISRA, or whatever you call it today -- the environmental problems. When I think of the deterrent they are to having business come back to the cities--

MS. APONTE: Excuse me, Senator. I would say the same thing, but mostly in crime and in education -- school dropouts mostly.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Joe, I know you are chomping at the bit.

MR. CONSTANCE: What you can see real quickly is, all these problems that are being mentioned are not just urban problems. They are State problems. The problems of the State are the problems of the urban centers, and vice versa. So I think everyone has the same concerns.

SENATOR LaROSSA: You must have read me, because the next question was going to be: Okay, now name three problems that exist in suburban centers as well.

MR. CONSTANCE: You will probably get the same list.

SENATOR LaROSSA: We are going to get the same list. All right. The point is-- The Mayor, the other night, made a very cogent comment at the Community Conscious Visual. It

was: Crime is now, all of a sudden, a very hot, a very topical issue, but it is a topical issue outside of the cities, outside of the urban centers. Why? Because now, all of a sudden, it is beginning to impact on people in a more direct way, because now it is in their backyards. Now, all of a sudden, all of the people who say, "Well, I have never seen it go beyond the urban center" -- whether it is crime, whether it is environmental, whether it is housing, whether it is welfare, whether it is health care, whether it is ECRA, whether it is economic development--

Now, all of a sudden -- not so all of a sudden, but over the last 40, 50, 100 years -- all of the-- I am not saying perceived in terms of that they are real or not, but all of the problems that were perceived to only exist in the urban centers, now are beginning to exist in the suburban centers as well. The point is, part of--

One of the comments I think somebody made very early on was perception. There is a very, very real -- whether it be in politics, whether it be in the business community, or whether in the police, perception is reality. So part of the, you know, things I would think we also need to work on is realizing-- Maybe one of the things -- and I will throw this out as an idea -- that our urban centers suffer from is an identity crisis, and sometimes an inferiority complex, because they are not worse than everybody else.

Tav?

MR. SUAREZ: Yes. You know, I heard a Chinese proverb a couple of days ago and it really stuck to me. It said something like this: We must change the course of our direction unless we want to get where we are heading to. I think this is what we are being faced with today, you know, in our society; that many efforts have been made to improve things, but yet the very important one, which is at the

grassroots level, is where most of the problems start. The people are disadvantaged. They continue to be disadvantaged even with a lot of initiatives.

I personally would be much in favor of beginning to look into microeconomic planning; perhaps microeconomic plans, where the very small individuals will have an opportunity to either start a business, or whatever, you know, that sort of an approach. I think as long as we don't take care of the very ground root level problems, you know, no matter what else we do, it is going to be very difficult to bring it to a real successful story.

SENATOR LaROSSA: I agree with that.

There is one thing which was conspicuous by its absence, but I am going to put it in here anyway. I know it was only because we just find it-- We did say housing was one of them.

Bear with me for just a quick second. I am looking for-- I guess it is really a combination of things: the idea of the family unit, or the lack of a head of the family unit. There is no focal point. To a certain extent, I think what Chief Constance said before, it is looking to government to do everything. Part of it having-- It is just like-- I will use the analogy: It is like the government says-- Each level says it is the other level's responsibility.

But the problem is, if you want someone to do something, you have to give them the tools. You know, it is kind of hard to build a house with sticks and rocks. It is a lot easier with a hammer, nails, wood, and so on. You have the proper tools and the proper materials.

Joe?

MR. CONSTANCE: Another problem that I did not hear discussed is regionalization, or actually the lack of regionalization. I think that is probably a direction we want to start heading in, in this State. I am not just talking about the schools.

MR. WATSON: Briam was touching on that when he talked about a countywide tax -- a property tax system versus a citywide, because then there is one central pot of revenue.

SENATOR LaROSSA: I think, following along with that, and with what, I think, Tav started to say also, the perception that the problems only exist-- Now they are beginning to get into other people's backyards. Maybe those ideas, if you brought them up in a forum five years ago, you would have been tarred and feathered and run out of town very quickly. But now, all of a sudden, it is a very intriguing question: Which is more expensive, doing something or not doing something?

It is not just a matter of coming up with policy. It is also coming up with-- Remember, it is important, and I think it is part of what we also want to get from you as well-- In order for these ideas to work, you have to participate in the ideas. But part of that participation is: How do we bring these ideas back into the community to create a sense of participation? Because again, it can't just be 25 people in a room dictating agreements, because if I have to go out and sell an idea-- The same way a business has to sell an idea, the same way we have to sell the idea to the people who are there and mobilize them. The more mobilized they are, the stronger the voice is. Unfortunately, it tends to be: "The squeaky wheel gets the grease."

But the thing is, now maybe the attention is going to be focused when people begin to realize that these are not just urban problems; they are problems across-the-board. It is just that what we have here is that there is a density of the problem in the urban centers, simply because there are more people. The problems, in their purest sense, are probably-- You are not going to see too much of a differentiation.

I taught school, starting in 1968; I started at Hunterdon Central. Now, Hunterdon Central, in Flemington, would seem to be a fairly pristine suburban environment, you

know, basically unaffected, except that the story I like to tell is: One afternoon I saw a student sitting in the corner of the cafeteria with his head down on the table, obviously asleep. It was about 12:30. I came back at about 3:00, and the same student was still sitting in the corner with his head down on the table. I went to try to wake him, and I couldn't wake him up. It happened at lunchtime. This was in 1969 at Hunterdon Central in Flemington. He had taken some bad LSD. It's been there for a long time, folks.

Part of what we have to understand -- and this is how-- It's like, whatever is happening here, is happening there. I think part of what we have to deal with is a mentality, you know, a psychology -- all right? -- that this is not a bad place to be. Yes, there are things we need to do, but what-- Tim said ECRA is one of the problems. Anybody, at least in the greater Trenton area-- I guess, Bill, you might know better, or Bea would know with the TCCA. How many nonfunctional sites-- I don't know, but there has to be a lot of them. I am not talking about individual homes that, you know, somebody-- How many nonfunctional--

MR. GIAQUINTO: I can tell you there are a lot of businesses.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Okay.

MR. GIAQUINTO: Just in one block, I can give you a whole corner. That is at Front and Warren Streets -- West Front and Warren Street, that whole corner, from the alleyway all the way around to the (indiscernible) building.

MR. WATSON: But are you pointing to how many nonfunctional buildings are the result of ECRA, or because of any number of factors?

SENATOR LaROSSA: I think we need to separate them, too, because obviously-- You know, I think you are right. Let's take any number of factors, you know, initially, and then

bring the ISRA/ECRA situation in there. When we have some ideas about dealing with them, I would like to throw those ideas out as well.

MR. WATSON: May I speak to that for a minute, though? If you look at urban centers, especially old urban centers, ISRA is especially important to us, even more so than suburban and rural communities, because of the way cities grew. They grew based around old factories. You know, that was the work. In many cases, the factory owners built the housing around it, and, you know, after the '50s, all that declined and we had an empty factory in the middle of a neighborhood. We have examples of that everywhere, in every ward in the City of Trenton.

One of the primary reasons you can't even address some of those areas is because of ISRA. The City refuses to foreclose on those properties because of the-- I am not sure what the new law says, but I know what the law said a year ago; that if you took the property over, you also took the responsibility of cleanup. Since there is no means of addressing that issue -- I mean, there is no pot of money to do that with -- we leave those properties alone.

If there is a way of addressing that -- and, Senator, I know you have talked about creating-- I hope you talk about that a little bit today -- about creating a revolving pot of money to deal with those issues. Then we will all be better for it, because we will have stabilized the neighborhood. We would either bring back in some new industry, or housing, or some other use of the facility, and would reduce a whole group of other things we have to do as a City, in order to deal with blighted areas. You would need less police protection. You would have less problems with vandalism. You would have less problems with weeds and debris. All those things change as a result of one action. I think we need to focus on that.

I know you said for us to be brief, but I do have another point: Someone talked about family structure, and I hope we address that here today as well, because it is key. But one of the things that is real important to me-- I don't think you can legislate values or morality; I do not think government can do that. But what government can do is, they can help us to put into place programs and systems to help families that want to be good families. I will suggest to you that you have more people living in the City that want to be good parents -- or a good parent, if it is a single-parent family structure -- than those who really want to sit there and just see themselves sitting in a bad situation.

In our experience in dealing with people throughout the City, if given an opportunity, and given some tools to work with, they want to pull themselves up. The problem is, though, if it is a second- or third-generation welfare family, which has not been able to receive the skills they need-- They are not going to change unless someone can sit there and--

Briam, you do a lot of this over with your programs. Unless you can sit there and build in that structure to help people to do some things that are very basic, such as sitting down with their children and helping them with their homework-- But you can't help your child with his or her homework if you don't understand it. So unless we start addressing those types of problems, we are really missing the boat.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Mr. Ali?

MR. ALI: Yes. I want to get back to, I guess, the definition of "urban," because I have heard urban and I have heard urban centers. They are two different things, and they mean two different things to me.

In terms of urban, yes, we are talking about cities, but we are talking about the size of cities. When you think of urban or urban centers, some things come to your mind,

especially on the outside of the urban areas: blacks, poor people, crimes, Hispanics, lack of education, no jobs, deteriorating cities, fear. These things are conscious. When I speak about urban, I am not speaking in terms of where it's at, the size of the city, or the cities that come around it. I am speaking in terms of what other people perceive it to be.

I had a Muslim from Saudi Arabia come over. He was visiting one of the plasma companies one time. They called me up to ask me, "Where is a place where he can make prayer?" Naturally, I told him about us. They came. The gentleman who brought him was Caucasian. He brought him here and we made prayer. After it was over, he said, "Boy, I like what I heard. This was nice," this, that, and the other. He said, "But what seems to be the problem in Trenton? I didn't see a lot of things going on." It is the perception. That is the other part I want to get to.

The perception that the media has put out is that this is a bad place to come to. The perception that the media has put out is that whites are leaving the City, when actually it is the opposite. They are coming back. We have some people who understand what is going on. The perception in the media is that crime is running rampant.

I mean, I am from Camden. Anyone who knows Camden knows that Camden looks like a World War II zone. Anyone who knows Newark, anyone who knows Harlem, anyone who knows these cities, knows that these cities are devastated, in some respects. We don't have a real ghetto in Trenton, but that is not put out.

The perception is, yes, we have to get back to education, true education, and clear up the perception in the minds of people, because something else has come out. We talk about people having low self-esteem, understanding about themselves. They crippled their own selves in the City, and they are crippled by the media and the educational process they

have. But when they begin to see there is hope, begin to see that there are people who care -- I mean, really care, not just money-- I know we need money, don't get me wrong. I know the cities need money; they need money bad. But I don't believe that money is always--

MR. WATSON: Yes, we do.

MR. ALI: I don't think money is always the answer. I believe also we need people. We need people to become empowered; we need people to get out in the community and begin to understand. I believe all the religious places should be open all day long, all night long, with access for all people. I believe the schools should be open all day long, all night long, Saturdays, Sundays, and in the summertime. That would give the children someplace to go. The kids tell me, "We have no place to go."

I am going to stop here. There is a whole lot more, but I will stop at this point and let someone else talk.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Jimmy?

MR. WELLS: I think the biggest problem I see is -- and I go along with a lot of other people -- we are not sharing the solutions. My God, I have been living in Trenton for approximately 40 years. I have been in business; I have owned the building for about 14 years.

I just don't think we share enough where I can be a neighbor and say to another neighbor, you know, "Did you see that problem?" That type of thing is not shared in the community. Like, take for instance, there is a project going on next door to me. It really has nothing to do with me. I felt that since I have been in the neighborhood that long, I should have been part of it somehow, part of the decision making. Some of my thoughts should have been in it. I think these housing things, with the Section 8 certificates, should be shared with some of the people who own their homes. In other words, take, for instance, a duplex, where a person

downstairs works for the State, and has no more than one kid or something. She could get a Section 8 certificate and guarantee her mortgage. That way she could watch the people upstairs and watch the neighborhood.

What we do now is, we put everything in one area and expect it to work. Unless we share some responsibility, I think we are always going to have problems. Every time I find a problem in our community, the problem we have is that we do not share the responsibility, even crime. I mean, gosh, we know where the guys live, we know that, but nobody wants to say anything. If we were allowed to share some of the responsibility, I think we could get help with some of the solutions. I feel out of it personally, in my community. I think a lot of people in my community feel the same way.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Ed?

MR. CORTESINI: Yes. I just want to echo a little bit what Bill said about the industrial aspects of the City. Obviously, in our heyday we were an industrial giant in many respects. I would venture to say that any of the industrial facilities we have in the City are probably contaminated to some degree or another. It may be fine not to want to foreclose on those properties or to take them over, but my understanding of ECRA is that the current owner has a responsibility to that property, and it cannot be transferred until they get it cleaned up.

So it presents two problems: The person who owns it does not have enough in it anymore to make it worth spending another dime to clean it up. Certainly, it is going to be very difficult to have an outside business or concern come in to acquire that property and be willing to clean it up. So until the State or the Federal government comes up with some program to help fund this ECRA cleanup, nothing is going to happen in industrial cities, which I think are primarily our urban cities throughout the State.

With regard to education, which Ali was talking about, I have some concerns here with education. I think that even though the ABCs of education are extremely important, somehow or other a school district in an urban environment has to make up for that education that does not come from the family unit. I guess I am just really surprised to see how many people are not familiar with some of the very basic procedures and necessities of life, which do not come from a broken home, a poor family, or perhaps the parents not even having that knowledge or not having been exposed to it. We have had babies in our high school having babies.

So where is this process going to come from? Maybe that has to come from our educational system. We have to teach our children in school, besides the ABCs, some of the basic procedures and necessities of life; things that are so basic and so simple that I am afraid to even mention them, because you would think they would be absolutely ridiculous.

That is one way I think we could help our youth in the future. Also, I think in our educational system, we have to prepare our students for society. It is not just history lessons, math lessons, and your science lessons. They are not all going to be scholars. They are not all going to be athletes. They are going to be our citizens of tomorrow. They are going to be working in the cities, and they are going to be our basic workforce. However, so many of them do not know what it is to report to work at 8:00 in the morning.

I have been involved in programs around the City where we have tried to take children out of high school and take them to a manufacturing facility or an office facility, just to show them what it is like to be at the workplace at a specific time, on time, spend the day, do your work, and come every day. As basic as that may seem, it is a real problem in the workplace. So when a child or a young person is not oriented or educated in that manner, when they do go to the workforce, and they are

fortunate enough to get a job, they won't be able to hold that job, because they do not know what the basic importances are that they must comply with every day. I think that has to be added to education somehow.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Bea?

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: I would like to dovetail on two concerns that fit very neatly together. Joe Constance mentioned the need to regionalize some services, etc. The TCCA has some concerns about housing and the creation of low-income/middle-income affordable housing. I can't actually specify which groups these are, but I want to talk to you about something that is of real concern to the TCCA on both of these subjects and how they dovetail.

Specifically, I want to talk about the regional contribution agreements that are permitted under what I consider to be a fairly well-watered-down Mount Laurel decision. The City of Trenton needs a great deal of housing for people who cannot pay market rates. We at the TCCA understand this fully. We are also-- The TCCA is not in the least bit hesitant about the idea of having those communities that need to meet their Mount Laurel obligations use their RCAs here in our City. What we do object to, however, is the very low amount of money that the suburban communities are allowed to get away with to buy off that obligation. We do not think that obligation is just for the initial building of housing. We see that as an obligation to maintain the housing and provide services to the people who live in that housing.

So what we would like our cities to be able to do, not only here in Mercer County and the other counties that are being offered \$29,000 a unit to build this stuff, is to politely tell the communities which have their Mount Laurel obligations to fulfill -- because certainly we have fulfilled ours already -- to go away and build it in your own community, unless you are willing to come up with something like a trust

fund. We don't want you to congregate the poor in our cities, although we know it is the most likely place for them to live, because that is where the real estate values are the lowest and where we can get most of this housing put.

We do not object to that in the least. We just do not think that the service obligation needs to be dumped on a continuing dwindling middle class which, in many ways, gets to pay for this through their property taxes. I don't have to begin to tell you what property taxes are like in this City. Where they will go from here is really nearly a crime.

What we want to find a way to do, is for the State Legislature to be able to build something into these RCAs that says certain minimums, or build it in your own community.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Just so you know, one of the ideas which, again, came out of one of the other focus groups was around Mount Laurel II. It dealt with the fact that even though the RCA agreement was met by, you know, in essence, making a payment to the urban centers, the difficulty is that now, fine, what do you do now that the housing is there; now that the people who are living in them cannot afford to make a full market value payment based on what the property taxes would be? What is happening is, you know, now it tends to become a bigger drag on the resources in the community, in the first place.

So one of the ideas that any suburban community which, in fact, was going to have their RCA allegations be met by putting housing into the city, was to have them have a continuation of the five-year hook, if you will, for lack of a better choice of words, that, in turn, would make them pay fair market value on the property taxes over that five-year period of time. Then what would happen is, hopefully, part of the infrastructure would catch up. One of two things is going to happen: Either it is going to slow down the concentration of what is happening, or it is going to have the other communities take a little bit more of the obligation upon their shoulders.

I am going to make a very personal statement here as to what I see happening. Again, it goes back to part of the crime issue in terms of why it is such a big hit, because it is happening in places other than the cities. That is the only reason why it's-- Now it is in other people's backyards, not just the cities.

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: So now it is legitimate.

SENATOR LaROSSA: That part has been legitimized. It has been legitimized, because now it is in somebody else's backyard.

I think what has happened for so long is that taxes in every area have been used as an artificial barricade, if you will -- forgive me for using the phrase -- in containing the problem. Now what has happened is, there are not enough tax dollars to contain the problem and keep the gates around the problem. That is why reality is beginning to happen outside of the urban areas.

MR. WATSON: May I ask a question, though, to Bea? Is the goal, though, by asking for additional dollars or saying, "Take care of your own"-- Is it so that urban centers would then reduce their populations of poor? One of the things that happens today with Mount Laurel dollars, balanced housing dollars, and affordable housing that is being built-- Two things: First, there isn't any public subsidy to do market rate housing, and there are no private developers willing to do it because of the market.

The second thing is, the balanced housing moneys that are used in areas like Trenton -- and I would suspect in most urban centers -- are taking care of the poor who currently live within the City. You know, it is not a generator of people who are out in Hamilton or Lawrence moving into the City to take advantage of it.

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: Yes, we understand that.

MR. WATSON: You know, 99.9 percent of the people who go into affordable housing, who have a house or an apartment after coming out of a substandard property, are already here. So, in essence, even the services you are providing to those individuals, the City has been providing over time anyway -- schools, infrastructure, and so forth.

So on the one hand, clearly there should be additional dollars attached to that RCA responsibility.

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: Absolutely. We do not expect that this will lower the poor population in Trenton. This is where people live; this is where they should continue to live. We have no objection in the least to housing being built for people who cannot afford market rate housing. But if it is being built with RCA money--

MR. WATSON: Right.

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: --we expect the communities which are buying off their Mount Laurel obligation to pay a great deal more in order to buy off that obligation.

MR. WATSON: I would like to add a caveat, though, to your -- or an addendum to your recommendation; that is, I would also like to see the Legislature really do a study of how Mount Laurel I and II were implemented within those communities, because what you will find is that the poor did not get the Mount Laurel housing out in the suburbs.

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: Griggs Farms.

MR. WATSON: Right. The poor did not move into those homes. Second- or third-generation children, like my children who are 21 years old, when they start their first job and make \$20,000 a year, they are qualified to take those properties. What you see in those homes -- because we have done a study of our own-- You will see that they are who moved into the Mount Laurel units within the suburban communities in New Jersey.

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: That's right.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Alma?

MS. BYRON: I suppose I should begin by saying that this is a wonderful group. Of course, I suppose everyone knows by now how I admire and support Senator LaRossa.

I feel that sometimes when all of us get together in these -- what? -- very important, learned groups, that we have a tendency to still extol the virtues of problems, without actually getting to solutions to those problems that are going to trickle, you know, from the top, and reach those people we should be so concerned about. Those are the ones who are so helpless and hopeless and need our help so badly.

I also feel that, you know, no matter what happens-- We are a group, yes, but we have to begin with self. I am certainly no psychologist. I do not have a Ph.D. or anything like that, but I think I have lived long enough in this City -- for 37 years -- working with the poor, and it has always been that someone is concerned only about things that affect them personally. So then, why not begin to look within ourselves personally for the things that we can put on the table -- our strengths that we can put on the table -- to begin to make changes in the lives of those people whom we do some things for collectively.

There are some great things happening in this town, certainly from the time I have been here, 37 -- 38 years now. Corporate people, banks, big businesses are now joining forces with people who are working through agencies to do something to help the poor, so that they might have a life -- longevity. In a decade or so, when these children who now are not being taken care of properly, and the families whom we call "hard core" poor, who cannot contribute anything to society at this point--

Why not work and use these people who are so learned, so prepared, and so willing to work with our families? We know what the problems are. We have gone around the room and named them all. I feel, you know, that we should use the CoreState

Bank, Mobil, AT&T, and all the other people who are so willing to work with us now, and begin to put our minds into solving the problems.

Maybe I am still rooted in the grassroots movement and can't understand, you know, this business of who -- whether you are middle class, poor, rich, or whatever, what that has to do with our being so concerned about things that are going to be happening. Why are people still being poor? Why are teens still having babies? Why is it that no one takes the responsibility, or why don't we make people accountable for all the things that are written down on paper and sent down to us, when we look at, or call an agency or a group, and say, "Well, you say that you do thus and so and so, but it is not being done"?

I certainly do not want to talk very long, but that is kind of where I am, Senator LaRossa. I would hope that somehow or other, a process, a procedure -- a forum can be formed, or we can go through a process that will make us ready and prepare us for some real work that is going to solve the problem.

Teenage pregnancy: I started in 1966, and do you know, it is worse now than ever, and it should not be that way. That is a whole lifetime. It is just because people do not want to look, actually, into any deeper situations and do something about those problems.

I hope I don't say anything else today, but that is the way I feel. I am totally frustrated, because it has taken me too long to build an infant care center for teen girls who, if they come every day, we can see them and begin to change their lives, and then change the lives of those families. But it is how you think about those poor girls, the young men, and the single-parent families, who are not making it.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Reverend Hunter?

REVEREND HUNTER: I think what has been said is good, but one of the major points which I believe we must go back to is, we have a great breakdown of the family. Heads of families

are more or less a lot of women. Our children don't have respect. They do not have anything to do outside of just coming home and getting into trouble.

We cannot blame our City government, our county government, our State, or our Federal government. I think our churches must be accessible, and I think we must go back to our pulpits and provide an outlet for our children who have nothing to do but roam the streets and get into trouble. Our children are reaching out to us; they are reaching out to the church. They are reaching out to City government to help them to develop programs and things.

We must stop blaming the City, and get more houses. You can take a pig out of the mud and dress him up, but if you don't do something about the mud hole, he is going right back there. You have to get rid of the mud hole.

During the last few years at my church, we started some programs to help youth. We started a church bowling league, 12 teams, four persons on a team. We have volleyball teams for the girls. We have basketball. We have sewing, we have cooking, and we also have training for our young people -- leadership counseling and training. We are now in the process of-- They are in training for drug counseling. All of those programs will be coming out of the church.

We are not asking Hamilton Township, the City, or anybody else to fund it. We are doing it through the funds that our congregation brings. I think we as churchmen put too much of a burden on the shoulders of our cities and our government to supply these programs. We ought, as families and heads of families, to do it ourselves. We cannot blame the principal of a high school or the superintendent for the high dropout rate. We ought to blame the parents. In the days when I grew up, momma was momma, poppa was poppa, and the children knew the difference between the two. Even the dogs and the cats knew when the man came into the house, because he had authority.

We have lost that. We can do anything we want. We can build any kind of a facility we want. But until we go back to the family structure, until we restructure our families-- Most of us sitting around here know the things that our kids get into and know the things they do and say. I didn't play hooky but one time in my 12 years of school. My dad found out, and what he gave me made me aware that playing hooky was not the thing to do. (laughter)

I think we need to go back to some of those times. We cannot blame our police officers for not doing their job. You must go back to the family and restructure the family. Programs like Alma Hill's and like the City is trying to do -- the Weed and Seed Program, Make Them Safe Havens-- The churches must get involved. How many safe havens do our churches have? How many programs do our churches have to help our own youth? Right today, if you come to my church, with about 325 members, 200 of them are young people between the ages of 18 and 40. Why? Because we are trying to structure something to keep them out of trouble; to give them a social event outside of shouting and singing on Sunday.

The churches ought to be involved on Monday. That is where the problem is.

MS. APONTE: Excuse me, Senator.

SENATOR LaROSSA: The Mayor, and then Joanne.

MS. APONTE: Oh, I'm sorry. I just wanted to add something to what he just said.

There are a lot of talented children out there, a lot of talented kids who are dropouts. They are dropping out of school because of the problems that are going on. They need an opportunity, I think. They need a place, an environment where they can develop, you know, what they know and the talent they have.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Joanne?

MS. BULLOCK: Hello. My name is Joanne Bullock. I am the President of the Trenton Ecumenical Area Ministry. I wasn't here initially, when you first got started, so maybe some of the things that I have to share you may have gone over already.

I think, number one, that I agree with Reverend Hunter in terms of family structure and with respect to the family. I think, number two-- Someone mentioned identify in terms of how we identify who we are in Trenton, and not to allow a newspaper to identify who we are. We have to say, "This is what we are about."

I think underlining any change is motivation, and also knowing that we can make the changes if we want. The thing is, we have to be serious about making those changes.

When we talk about the family, we talk about how the churches and the City can work with the families. In some of our projects we can have workshops to help with the parents -- in the different projects, total workshops. This is one way that the City can help with the resources they have, with the agencies within the City to go into some of the areas and hold workshops.

I think another thing we need to do is try to see how we can empower the people in certain communities. We are doing that through our stations, I think -- the different community stations -- but even more, trying to get them to feel like a community within a community; feel that everyone is tied into it together. You know that African proverb: "It takes a village to raise a child."

This past summer you read in the paper where my nephew was stabbed to death on Martin Luther King Boulevard. Prior to that, we had tried to get some of those boys off the corner. We had taken them bowling, about five of them. When they went bowling, they were very, very excited about it, to the point that we started having meetings in my sister's house. He was

living there. They wanted to form a group, an organization, at which point we contacted Weed and Seed and had some of them get involved with Weed and Seed. Two of them joined the Job Corp.

What we found out was that reaching out to the kids works. When they know we care, they will be okay. But we are not reaching out enough. Not only that, but not enough are reaching out. If more people would reach one child-- If one person reaches one child, you can see a difference in them in terms of attitude. Even if the father is in the house, and although we would prefer to have the father in the house, we need to have workshops that encourage fathers and mothers to stay together, because it is all about that trend anyway. I think these kinds of things can be done, and it is very important for churches to get involved.

Our team will be starting a series. I think some of your churches may have received a letter about nonviolence workshops that we will be holding. We are going to make a greater effort in that area of nonviolence.

But I think number one is attitude, and also again identity. I don't know how we can encourage our newspapers to write some positive stories. Every time we read the papers-- Most of the time, in one particular newspaper -- and I will not name it -- the stories are always negative. If there were some way that we could have more publicity on the positive side, people would start thinking that way. It is a matter of how you think. We have gotten to the point where we are not thinking positive. We have to think that way, and I think you would start to see some changes.

Recreation is very, very important -- ice-skating, bowling. Our kids need something to do that is exciting to get them off the streets in the evening.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Mayor?

MAYOR PALMER: First of all, Senator, I want to commend you for your sincere willingness and dedication to getting this Urban Policy Committee moving forward. Those of

you who know the Senator, know him to be very dependable, dedicated -- a pit bull, if you will. If any other person in the Legislature had been made head of this Committee, I would be a little leery of what was happening, because sometimes people just like to say they're doing something, but they are not doing it. But with you heading this up, I have great confidence that with what you hear here, and what you see, we can achieve some results.

I just have a laundry list real quick when Joanne was talking about the media. The media really does a job on our City. We do need to band together to tell the story about what is happening in Trenton.

I talked to a gentleman, who said, "Trenton is so unsafe." I am the first to tell you that Trenton is not safe. I mean, we know we have our problems. He was talking about how unsafe it was, and I said, "Well, how many people were murdered in Trenton last year?" He said, "About 500," and the year wasn't over. It was in November. He said, "The year before, it was about 500." I said, "Well, how many do you think have been murdered in 1993?" He said, "Well, it was 500 in '92, and you still have another month. About 512."

Now, one life lost from murder is too many, but we had 11 people murdered in Trenton last year. I told that guy, I said, "If 500 people got married in Trenton, I wouldn't live here. (laughter) But, you know, reading the newspapers, the Kristen Huggins murder was a tragedy. That could have happened in any city or any municipality. But why would The Trenton Times run a one-year anniversary piece every day in the newspaper -- five days -- and expect people to want to come downtown to shop, or to come into the City? How can you want to improve business, and then you are going to have the one-year anniversary? Are we going to have a two-year anniversary? Are we going to have a five-year anniversary, and 25 years later we will look back--

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: Only if it is a slow news week.

MAYOR PALMER: I mean, you know, those are the kinds of things, even the media about our young people. If you read the papers you think every young black, every Latino kid who lives in the City of Trenton steals cars, when, in fact, 98 percent of them do not. So that is important.

One thing we definitely-- We have already talked about this. I am just saying it for the record. The City of Trenton is the State capital, and we need to be treated like a State capital, instead of all the time going hat in hand. One of the things we can do -- that the State can do to be partners with the City of Trenton is something that we have talked about -- hopefully we will be able to move forward on it -- and that is an Economic Development Corporation fueled, actually, with the help of the State and the private sector, mainly with the private sector. So no matter who is Mayor, or who is in the Legislature, or who is Governor, if you had the business community work with the City to form a corporation to retain businesses here--

I mean, we've got the people who build the Hummer, the tires for the Hummer -- Hutchinson. They are right here in the City of Trenton, and they are looking to expand their business. They make the bulletproof tires for the Hummer. They are making millions of dollars. They want to expand. They have hired 100 employees right from the City of Trenton and these neighborhoods to work there. They are looking at places by which to expand. The corporation could sell the City the message of public relations about, "Come to the City. This is a place where things are happening."

The business community has a lot to gain or to lose if that is not done. The State could be the catalyst, because the State deals with the Fortune 500 companies in New Jersey, to begin to do that. That is something they could do.

The other part of it is -- as was mentioned -- with ECRA, we've got-- We are an old industrial town. We have

Magic Marker, Blakely Laundry, and all the other sites that litter our area. At one time, it was fashionable to have industry here so that people could walk to work. Now, these are eyesores, and we have battled-- They are eyesores sitting in our neighborhoods, and we can't do anything with them. If the City forecloses, then we are responsible for cleaning them up. We can't do that.

You are right on target with your \$150 million bond appropriation. I think it is dedicated as a revolving fund to remediate the sites so they can be clean, and then at the sale put the money back in the pot. Even with the State plan, development has to come into the City. If we had a company that wanted two million square feet, we wouldn't have anyplace to put them. We need to have that happen to push economic development opportunities in the City through ISRA, in helping cities bring development in.

Property tax: Reform relief is the key. I mean, it is essential. I appreciate your stand on the income tax. This is crazy. How many people in the City of Trenton you know, are going to benefit by a 5 percent income tax cut? You know, the money we are going to lose from the budget-- What is it, about \$300 million if the tax--

SENATOR LaROSSA: Next year, \$435 million.

MAYOR PALMER: Four hundred, thirty-five million dollars out of our budget. All right? I don't know. If you make \$100,000 -- and believe me, I don't-- Joe Constance does, but-- (laughter)

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: Maybe we think that.

MAYOR PALMER: No, he is in investment. But that is less than \$40 in your pocket you are going to get.

Now, if we would take that money -- and I have it based on \$300 million -- and divvy the money up per capita in the cities, the City of Trenton would receive \$3 million extra. Now, that \$3 million could be used to reduce your

taxes. You would save \$250 on your taxes -- on the property taxes, rather than the \$40 you are going to get in your pocket. I mean, who's kidding who here?

We have to provide the necessary municipal services here, and we are always between a rock and a hard place. We just had to present a budget because we were short \$1.8 million from the State, which they had promised us. So we're fortunate that more people paid their taxes and we could do some other things, so we don't have to lay off people. We had to eliminate eight positions. Eight positions today; next year, another eight. The next thing you know you will only have garbage once a week. There will be nobody to trim trees. That is what it is all about. So it really needs to be put on the agenda -- property tax reform and relief.

Everybody is on the bandwagon now about crime, being tough on crime. "Three strikes and you're in" and, you know-- We have to be careful and let people slow down a little bit, because I know you might get elected by saying, "Let's lock them up," but it will cost more money, more tax dollars to send a person to jail than to Yale. We can continue to just build prisons, but we don't do anything in education. What is really disturbing is, if you look at what is happening -- and I want to speak to Bob Prunetti about this as well -- the State inmates who are in our county workhouse -- okay? -- the county gets millions, maybe \$5 million, \$6 million. If they were in State institutions -- where there is no room -- they would at least be eligible for training. They could get-- The county does not have the facilities or the money to do that, so these individuals sit in there and lift weights for two and three years, do nothing, have nothing, and when they come back out, a lot of them will come right back to the City of Trenton. They will have less skills than they had when they went in. Now we have to deal with more crime.

MR. WATSON: Mayor, before you even get off of that issue, what is even more frightening is what I read in The Star-Ledger, I guess Sunday. They are talking about now the violent prisoners -- giving them hard labor for seven days a week, with no TV, no contact with anybody, isolation. I mean, that scares me, because if the State is going to supplement that and these folks are going to wind up coming out of those prisons, what are they going to do? They are going to be worse. That is what's happening.

What I am suggesting-- I am not talking about coddling criminals. I am not talking about that, but we better begin -- the ones who want to-- The people I talked to up there said, "This is called the workhouse, but we don't do no work." You know, if you can train them in upholstery, landscaping, recycling, doing things where they can get some self-esteem, when they come out they will at least have a skill, and then I think we will be a little better off than just having them away for five, six years, then coming back out into a community with nothing going on. They are going to do whatever they are going to do to survive.

MS. BULLOCK: We had installed a chaplain at Mercer County Detention in November. I talked with the Public Safety Director who was there. I asked him about the recidivism rate. It's 66 percent. That means that when they leave with nothing to do, and they are in the same environment, with no training, it causes them to get back into the criminal element, and on a rotating basis they are back in jail. Now you are talking about possibly three strikes and you're up for life. I am concerned about that bill.

MAYOR PALMER: Immediately, they come back out with less skills and no self-esteem.

MS. BULLOCK: Yes.

MAYOR PALMER: Like a guy said to me, "I am going to do what I have to do. If I am going to survive, I am going to do what I have to do." So we should look at some real training

for those who need it in jail, programs like the Family Development Program, which the City is working on. We are training people on City welfare in skills and jobs. We have been one of the models in the whole State. We have taken 132 people who were on welfare for three or four years. They are now working in meaningful jobs. I am not just talking about low-skills jobs, but jobs at all levels. Those kinds of programs work.

Demonstration programs help to build the City and empower people like Father Briam McCormick-- He has taken people who were on the corners, trained them, gave them the skills to build houses all over the City. He has changed people's lives. Those are the kinds of opportunities we need to empower people. We have abandoned houses here. If people get the right training, some of them in those neighborhoods can help to begin to build, you know, their own neighborhoods. All this reduces crime.

We continue to work with our banks and, of course, CoreStates has been very good. Our banking institutions need to do more in terms of providing loans to small businesses, more working capital, looking at mortgages for people who live in the City. The disproportionate number of blacks and Latinos who are not getting loans-- They get turned down at a rate far greater than whites. Even whites who live in the City, because of their policies, are not able to get the kinds of loans they want because they live in the City. I mean, these are things that the State could look at -- banking, commerce, and those kinds of things.

Of course, education-- We need education that is relevant, that can teach skills to people. We need more mentors. I put this out to Governor Whitman's Deputy Chief of Staff, Brian Somebody, about getting mentors from State government to come in and work with our Weed and Seed, or with other programs we have -- State workers to do that.

I want to say, in the City we just don't want-- We'll be partners, but we need to have opportunities and things that make sense so that we can provide jobs in the City, so we do not need State money all the time.

The last thing is -- just to make everyone here aware, and most of you probably get letters, if not all of you -- next Tuesday we are applying for a grant -- Enterprise Communities. It is a part of President Clinton and Al Gore's approach, and Janet Reno's, to crime and drugs. They have these empowerment zones that will be, I think, six cities; the large cities which know how to combat drugs and crime with a comprehensive approach. Then there are grants like we fall under -- Enterprise Communities -- where we want to have the whole process of education resources. It's Wednesday. It's the 9th, whatever date that is.

MR. MALLACH: Right, Wednesday.

MAYOR PALMER: Looking at what resources you have, looking at health issues, education, crime and public safety -- a grassroots approach, a comprehensive approach. Community organizations of people are putting together a plan that we can submit for grants of up to \$3.5 million in a targeted area to do, you know, child care, health issues, parenting, economic revitalization and development, job training, and things that can empower a community and help.

Those are the kinds of models I think you talk about when you talk about empowerment. Giving people those opportunities is something that the Urban Policy Committee can do. You need the will to do it. With your help, Senator, I know we can do it, because the State is going to have to recognize sooner or later that if you do not have strong cities, you are going to have a weak State. People are going to move out, and you are not going to be training people. That is what has to happen. So they have to look at this whole thing, not as handouts, but as investments.

MS. BULLOCK: Excuse me, Doug. When is that meeting?

MAYOR PALMER: The 9th.

MS. BULLOCK: Where is it going to be held?

MR. MALLACH: Nine to twelve at the Kerney Campus, Mercer County Community College.

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: Doug, I would like to add one other thing that I am sure you agree with me on that the State could help us with here in the City; that is, when the State determines-- As the State determines how much aid it will give the City, that number has to either stand firm and/or it has to arrive in a timely fashion, so that the City can strike a budget and a tax rate before we are at least halfway through the fiscal year.

MR. WATSON: Three-quarters of the way.

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: This is driving us crazy. The City did, in fact, change its fiscal year in order to be able to--

MAYOR PALMER: We had to.

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: --in order to get this process in the works. Now it still gets delayed -- more delayed, and more delayed.

SENATOR LaROSSA: I think Bill and Doug know that I am probably one of the few members of the Legislature who probably knows more about that entire issue than a whole bunch of people do. Whether it is going to be solved today, next week, next month -- God knows when -- it is on the desks of an awful lot of people in terms of the explanation of the whole thing that happened with their whole transition year.

The thing is, you know, getting people to move forward, with the will to do it, because, again, it goes back to one of the things that is coming through very loud and clear; that is, perception is reality. One of the major things that is going to have to be addressed very specifically is to begin -- unfortunately, is to begin to change the perception.

You can change a fact and not change the perception. So part of it has to be, for lack of a better choice of words, merchandising the positive things that are happening, rather than continuing to publicize the negative things that are tearing us down.

Tim?

MR. LOSCH: This conversation has been really stimulating and on target. There is no question about that. But moving a little bit more towards solutions has been mentioned a lot of times here. That is money. I mean, all this, sooner or later, is going to take money.

If you take that with the backdrop of what all you are talking about in everyday life, whether you are talking about State government or your own personal affairs, everybody is looking for ways to save money; looking at how to cut money. It presents a real dilemma, and how do you deal with that?

In private industry the way we deal with it is to get more efficient. I don't think there is any question about listening to the litany and depth and breadth of the problems we have been discussing today. These problems are not going to go away. I mean, they are here to stay. People are going to rely more on social services, whether they are delivered by government-- As government starts to back off because of funding, people will start to look at the nonprofits. So the problem then is shifted from the government to the nonprofits. The nonprofits, when they can't look to government, look to private industry. So then they ask private industry to step up and ask more.

So it is kind of a vicious circle. If you step back and take a real good, hard look at it, the only possible solution -- and certainly it doesn't come without its political problems or without some of its built-in inefficiencies -- is regionalization, you know, the delivery of all services. It has been painted in the newspapers. We all know the numbers.

There are over 600 school districts in the State of New Jersey, 560-some municipalities, and it goes on and on. Clearly, until we get people in the suburbs -- whether you debate whether you are a suburbs or an urban problem-- Until people step up and take ownership of the problems, they are not going to get solved.

I honestly believe the way you are going to get them to take ownership is to hit them in the pocketbook when they realize, whether they live in Lawrence, or Ewing, or whether they live in Flemington, Lambertville, or Trenton, they have an ownership of this problem. I don't think we are really going to get their attention. I think sooner or later we will have to step back and just say, "It is not a question that we have too much government. We have too many governments, too many agencies, stepping over each other," and it just gets passed, as I said, from one sector to the next.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Mary Gay?

MS. ABBOTT-YOUNG: I don't want to digress, because I agree with you 100 percent. I am glad somebody finally said the issue is money. But I think the gentleman sitting next to the Mayor made a good point earlier when he said we need people too.

Joanne, I respect what you said, but to me the problem has gone beyond simply crime is urban, urban is crime. Crime has become entertainment in our society. The whole thing with the Olympics, you know, we relish this. It moves us so far afield from what the Reverend spoke of in terms of values.

I think we need money to correct problems from taxation or however the powers that be decide to do that. But unless we bring people's attitudes -- people feeling good with a sense of well-being-- I keep going back to the very basics of this country. Creating a feeling of well-being was one of our main purposes. We have drifted so far afield that the perception is that 500 people were killed in Trenton.

I work on Perry Street. I go there at midnight or 2:00 in the morning. I have no problem with this. But we do not have a sense of community, because we do not have a sense of family. We do not have a sense of family, because we do not have a sense of individual well-being. To look to nonprofits, government, private industry to combine to create this-- It is not going to be created by money; it is going to be created by people. That is my problem with government. We need to go back to the very, very basics here.

When I hear about the money wasted in corrections my own personal thing is, the first time someone is in trouble with the law, put as much money into him as you intend to over the course of that criminal's history. Put the money up front. When he is young, you have a chance at rehab. You don't take someone who has a 20-year record and start a rehabilitation process. We're finished; we missed the boat.

Our programs are back-ended all the time, in my opinion. At the Rescue Mission we see an awful lot of people. You know, the reality of this world is that they are probably not going to be rehabilitated to the standard term of rehabilitation, but they are very functional members of our community within the Rescue Mission. They should be respected for that. I am tired of seeing in the paper -- anybody who has ever come near the Rescue Mission when they were arrested -- "Resident of the Rescue Mission Arrested for Rape." You know, what difference does it make that he was from the Rescue Mission. There are 100 other guys there today doing what they are supposed to do. We take no respect to people in institutions. Until we put a basic respect out there, we are not going to solve these problems. We have to go with people, not just money. That is the issue for me.

Thank you.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Bill?

MR. WATSON: I want to get back to Tim's comment about regionalization and how important it is, New Jersey being well-known for being a home rule State, and how difficult it is to get municipalities or governments -- State or county governments -- to recognize the value in that.

But, Tim, I also want to point out that I think if you look at most urban centers, they are operating efficiently. I mean, clearly there can always be improvement, but take Trenton as an example. You know, the Mayor has a Trenton Management Review Commission studying various departments. The Senator, through the additional pilot dollars we got, made a condition that the State would come in and audit our various -- do operational audits of our various departments.

They are seeing that the City has done more with less for a number of years now. So it really is boiling down to either regionalization or -- and, Bea, your group has stated this loudly on a number of occasions -- a reduction in services, a reduction in the things that municipalities do and provide. I mean, we all, I think, are in government because we want to create a quality of life and a standard that we can all enjoy, irrespective of where we live. But it is getting to a point of: Do you collect garbage twice a week? Do you maintain and operate parks? Do you provide cultural activities? Do you provide after-school programs? Those are the hard choices that cities like Trenton are facing today as to whether or not they can deliver those services.

The Mayor presented a budget yesterday to City Council for introduction. That budget reduces services, because it is either reduce the services or raise taxes. What we are hearing every day is that people are not going to pay more taxes.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Joe -- Chief?

MR. CONSTANCE: I have so much to say that I have to force myself to stay brief now. I think we are going to turn the heat up a little bit.

Bill Watson just hit on a very, very succinct thing about raising taxes. I did hear the Mayor talk about a 5 percent reduction. I will get to that in a minute, but Reverend Hunter is hitting on it. It has to start from the pulpits in the churches, because what we are seeing is what Dan Quayle was mocked for, and that is family values going askew. They no longer exist.

Because family values no longer exist, you are seeing a societal breakdown. You are seeing the breakdown of our institutions. Education is costing multimillions of dollars, billions of dollars, in this country. The Mayor talked about jail costing as much as Yale. That sounds great, but Trenton education costs as much as Peddie Prep, and costs as much as Pennington Prep. Something is wrong here. When you are graduating functional illiterates, something is wrong with our educational system. It has to be junked. Get rid of it. The educational system has to be junked. Tenure, the whole bit has to go out, and we have to start all over again. That is what the Legislature can do.

Our criminal justice system is breaking down. It no longer works. The police are locking up-- We can lock up carloads of people and throw them into the system, but the system is just simply clogged. There are no rooms at the inn. The jails are crowded.

Let me get on "three strikes and you're in."

MS. BULLOCK: For life.

MR. CONSTANCE: All the statistics prove that a very, very tiny percentage of violent criminals commit most of the crimes. Do we understand that? A very, very tiny percentage commit most of the crimes. Those people started out as young juveniles. They have maybe three, four, five bites of the apple before they are arrested as a juvenile. Then they are diverted from the system maybe another three or four times. Then they are finally institutionalized. Now they are adults.

They commit one violent crime. Now it is an armed robbery. You're right, that first armed robbery what we should do is try to steer this person back to society. Let's try to save him. Let's spend some money -- and they do.

They give him a GED. They give him a college education. They attempt to give him a skill, etc., etc. He comes back out, and now he commits a rape. Let's do it again. Let's try to save him again. But, ladies and gentlemen, the third time let us not shed a tear for this person. He has had his chance. There are very, very few of these folks out there. They have had their chance. They have shown us that they cannot be with us. They should not be allowed to walk amongst us. That is a very, very tiny percentage of the people out there.

Let us shed a tear for the 18-year-old kid who graduates Trenton High, and he can't fill out an employment application. He has a baby. He can't afford to go to school -- higher education. Let us shed a tear for him. Let us try to do some programs for him. So I absolutely support "three strikes and you're in."

When we talk about the media -- the Mayor is right about the media -- Kristen Huggins didn't cause the downfall or perception of our urban centers. I'm not just talking about Trenton, because the Mayor is 100 percent right. The Kristen Huggins crime could happen in Hopewell Township, and it has happened in Hopewell Township. The Reverend Hunter is also right when talking about the media. When you can have MTV showing Beavis and Butthead, and that is actually the dunning of America; when you can see these two cretins and people look up to them-- Do you know why we look up to them and we laugh at them? Because they are real. I know people like Beavis and Butthead. That is what is scary; that's what's scary.

The media has to take on family values. Hollywood has to take on family values -- local newspapers, and certainly the pulpits of our churches, and certainly education. Mr. Ali

mentioned education before, saying how they teach values and they do this and they do that, but that also points out the failure of education, because it is not working. So we have to jolt those kinds of institutions and start all over again.

Property tax relief? Absolutely; absolutely. A 5 percent reduction in taxes is only a start. There is nothing wrong with reducing taxes. We have to downsize. Private industry downsizes all the time. We have to downsize our institutions. We have to downsize our government. The way to do that is through regionalization, which I said an hour and 40 minutes ago. Regionalization is the way to go. We have to save money that way. It is the only way we are going to do it. The Legislature can do a giant service towards regionalization by ending some of these school districts and by forcing some police departments, etc., etc. to regionalize. There is no reason for 567 municipalities. I think there are 531 police departments, which is insanity. That is where your money is going. Your money is going into education and your money is going into public safety. That is where we have to look. If we want to save big bucks, that is where the big bucks are.

I'll let somebody else have the floor.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Father McCormick?

FATHER MCCORMICK: I'm glad you are open to preaching from the pulpits. (laughter)

MR. CONSTANCE: Can I get a job, Father? (no response)

FATHER MCCORMICK: When I was a little boy, my pop let me go to political meetings with him and so on. I remember it all very clearly. I promised myself a long time ago that-- I watched in my hometown of Somerville when the poor whites were removed for the development of that area. I watched the blacks being removed where the high school went. I watched the blacks being removed from Manville, New Jersey. I watched the blacks being moved down South, Bound Brook, for Green Acres.

I really think that moral values before family are-- Racism is not just black and white or anything else. It's superior to inferior. I think we all ought to think about it.

I think a second problem that is very big, is that the whole country is very greedy. There are no reasonable expectations. The way I got into housing was-- When I was working with little children and they would be calling me these interesting names, after you put something into their lives for a period of time, that would change and all of a sudden they would move. So I am thoroughly convinced that housing isn't going to change it, but it is where it starts. No values of either church or school, I believe, can take place in the heart of people unless you stabilize the people in a place.

The distinction I make is traveling three blocks in Trenton -- in really the subculture -- is more traumatic than traveling a couple of hundred miles in the United States of America. You are always under threat. You are not allowed in that community. So you end up with folk who are survivalist in mentality. Irrespective of what church they go to, irrespective of what school, they have to survive. The only value is staying alive.

So the question I had was housing. I would like to address that point. I have asked the State on numerous occasions, "If we changed the Mount Laurel II from 50 percent median income to 45 percent median income, how many units have been built?" I would bet you that there are not 100 units built in the State. So if that were true and we change the discussion to 45 percent for low income-- (After the conclusion of the proceeding, Father McCormick indicated he wished to also state, "we have done nothing," following the word, "income," of the preceeding statement) Perhaps we may talk about the poor, but in actual fact we never, under any condition, address the issue. We create image realities and we breed the same problems.

The second thing is, for the suburbs-- I gave a talk to just CEOs of savings and loans recently. I ended up by saying, "We are going into armed camps of "haves" and "have-nots." I won't go through the whole talk. At the end of it, two executives stood up and said, "I don't agree with you, Father. We are not going there. We are there. We have removed those people. We do not let them invest in our bank. We do not lend them any money. And the politicians won't let them in."

You cannot be sending these kinds of messages, keeping it quiet, and thinking it is okay. So I am suggesting that the Mount Laurel II does have to address building houses or units in those suburban communities. They must be built.

I think, number two, when we talk about efficiency, if this greed syndrome I am suggesting is correct, then the way of building is way out of line. If we have a crisis on our hands, we have to sit down sooner or later and talk to everybody about what they are willing to give to make this thing work. To assume we are good guys and they are bad guys is a very easy way of approaching it. It is much, much more difficult than that. Our slogan has been, on donated property where there is infrastructure present, with a proper organization of fiduciary institutions, vendors, mechanics, professionals, politicians, and permit people, we will develop 50,000 (sic) -- a unit of 1200 (square) feet for \$50,000. I think that should be a going lot. It ought to be debated.

I think another point that we really have to begin to look at very carefully, is what is the actual experience of what is taking place in the City of Trenton? In our homeless shelter when folks come out, there are just no apartments available. There are just not enough Section 8s in proportion to the need. My perception originally was that folks were getting bad apartments. My perception now is that we are putting five people in one-bedroom apartments, all over the place.

If one tries to beat that, you hit problems with the permit people -- very bad and very serious. So the question is, where are people really going to live? I also came to the conclusion that even if you get home ownership or an apartment, an overcrowded apartment is the same as mobility. No one gains any values or strength. Unless we address these in some kind of numbers, we are way, way, way out of whack.

The last thing I suggest is that literature seems to indicate that homelessness will continue; that as older girls or women become pregnant in their family, when this house becomes overcrowded, the oldest child with children is leaving. That is still a predictable phenomenon in this City in our area.

So I am back to housing; that it has to be done in the suburban community on its own. It has to be renegotiated between those seven groups that I suggested to bring it in at cost. It is the only way to negotiate if we are going to talk about efficiency with respect to delivery in proportion to the need. I think in the cities we have to look at what is really available to these overcrowded situations that, in actual fact, we have.

The last thing I would like to address would be, I think there is a tremendous possibility, especially for our young male population, to be involved in the development of construction. But all of the training programs I have ever seen in my 20 years have usually been done by some broken-down construction person who couldn't push these kids. I don't know where you would get the people to lead these children with the enthusiasm, energy, and power to snap them out of their despair and have them go somewhere.

I think there is a lot of thinking to be done. I have been involved since 1966 in watching what happens. Usually the leadership of this is weak. How do you create the power to

take these young men especially and go through a process of them becoming vigorous construction workers? This is a lot bigger than a program. I think it could be designed.

That's my two cents.

SENATOR LaROSSA: There is just one quick good piece of news. The storm has been downgraded. (referring to weather outside) It has been downgraded, so we are going to--

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR LaROSSA: --go ahead with the tour and, you know, the continuation of the program. I just wanted to let you know that. We should be able to wrap up within about 10 minutes.

We'll have Alan next.

MR. MALLACH: Just a couple of very quick points, I think.

I think first, in terms of housing, there is no question that the City desperately needs to do more housing. I think probably in my mind the single biggest constraint-- You have here a City that I think nobody will question -- a City that is absolutely committed to doing whatever it can to further affordable housing, to the extent that the person running for Mayor now has come up with-- The sole issue seems to be that the City is doing too much to further affordable housing, and yet we cannot create more than a fraction of what we need, because the process is so cumbersome, so slow, so inefficient. The amount of money that is available is so limited. The number of different funding sources that have to be assembled to do each house is absolutely mind-boggling. The system simply does not permit us to address this need in an even remotely efficient fashion.

I think this is something that really should be looked at in terms of the delivery system the State -- in terms of the State's housing programs, both in terms of subsidies,

financing, and resources to make affordable housing possible. I think it is a major area that desperately needs both reorganization, as well as additional resources.

The second issue is the whole question of the State's role toward Trenton, and the concept of trying to create a partnership between the State and its capital City. We don't have a partnership. To give one small example: I think for the last three years we have been begging the State on one very simple issue. State leases are extremely important: where they go, what happens to them; where they leave; where they come in. This is crucially important to the economic viability of our downtown and our neighborhoods.

We have been begging the State for three years, not to give us any authority over State leases -- we realize that is for the State to do -- but just to sit down and discuss when something is available or when a decision is about to be made to put a lease in a building or to take a lease out of a building; just to sit down with us and discuss it and hear the concerns we may have about this issue. Despite the fact that people are invariably polite, we have never been allowed to be even a part of a discussion in that process.

It is a small thing, but I think it is symptomatic of the lack of a partnership. There are many areas in which the concept of a partnership could bring major benefits to the City, the whole area of working with the City to develop a program to encourage State employees to live in Trenton, to create benefits for State employees who live in Trenton, to even use those as a way to create more housing -- more new and rehabilitated housing in the City. There are techniques available. The dollars involved would not be out of line with other things. It is a technique that could be used. Also, a partnership to create a downtown hotel and conference center, which is desperately needed.

Another area which I think is little appreciated is the extent-- It is ironic that New Jersey calls itself a "home rule" State, and yet so many things that local government does are regulated down to the last detail by the State. Just a small thing: The fact that the City of Trenton, even if it wanted to-- The City of Trenton cannot adjust its building codes to reflect the fact that it has old buildings with certain physical conditions in them. We are legally required to enforce a State code that was basically designed for new construction, to the letter. That alone-- I can cite again hundreds of examples in every area from finance, to taxation, to personnel, where we cannot address our needs in an efficient and responsible fashion, because we are required to function in a very narrow straitjacket established by State government.

So I would urge-- One thing is to really focus on the State's housing support system. Secondly, really look at what is involved in creating a partnership between the State and its capital City.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Just two more comments, and then we are going to summarize. I just lost the note that Jack just gave me. (referring to Mr. Callahan)

It becomes very apparent that one of the major issues, aside from all of the litany of issues that we have identified-- It is very interesting, the comparison to the first focus group we had over at the State House; the commonality of two totally different groups, that there is such a tremendous overlap of the commentary being identical. Only three or four people, you know, were in that meeting before. It is just absolutely mind-boggling that it is that consistent. I think staff would agree with that.

We are going to do a separate focus group on housing. It is tentatively scheduled for March 30, which is a Wednesday, at New Jersey Network. It will be a national and local teleconferencing seminar. So we will do this on a national

basis as well, because it goes back to part of-- If you are going to talk regionalization, and talk about systemic answers to systemic problems, you obviously-- I think Joe Constance said it before. If you look at each block, a block that is separate and apart from everything else, the solutions never happen, simply because the mind-set is-- You just build a psychological barrier around it.

So part of what it is, is if we begin to open up and realize that it isn't a suburban problem, it isn't an urban problem, it is a problem, and it has to be addressed no matter where it is-- Part of it is, again, to-- "Raise the level of consciousness" is a phrase I think someone used. No matter what the problems are, there is a level of consciousness that has to be raised.

If I may just go to Ali-- I'm sorry, Ed. You, and then Ali.

MR. CORTESINI: Obviously, we are not all going to agree on some issues, but I would just like to make a couple of comments with regard to housing.

Number one, the BOCA Code and the Uniform Building Code dictate primarily new construction. The ordinances that-- The laws that you are saying, Mr. Mallach, come from the State, do not. Those are City ordinances that require those problems. We can discuss that at any time, as you like.

With regard to housing, I am an advocate of affordable housing. I have done affordable housing in the City of Trenton. I would not do it again. I think our housing programs are needed, but we are only addressing the low- and moderate-income people. I don't think there is enough being addressed to the very low and the poor population in the City of Trenton. That becomes a major concern, because these people are not necessarily buyers; they are rental assistance. Father Briam, Bea Scala-Fischler, and a few other people have already commented on that area.

I guess my concern is that even though these things exist, we are really doing too much Mount Laurel in the City of Trenton. We have to get it back out into the suburbs. I would like to address that with an example that I know takes place here in the City as to why cities have to look at this.

Before I tell you that, I just want to tell you a very brief story: I wanted to build a low-income housing project in another county, in another urban environment. The Planning Board refused me that opportunity. Their reason was, "We have too much affordable housing in our community. We cannot afford anymore." With that story, let me go back to the City of Trenton.

We have 46 units that are being developed. Out of those 46 units, we may have 200 people in them. Out of the 200 people, it would be fair to say that there is probably going to be a minimum of 100 children -- 100 children going into our school system, which would cost us \$10,700 per student. Times 100 children, that is \$1.7 million in additional school costs.

Now, I remind you, the State will pay 80 percent of that cost, but the other 20 percent, which is only \$340,000, will be added to the City tax budget. Out of that City tax budget increase of \$340,000, these 46 properties are going to generate a total new source of revenue of \$11,000. You don't have to be a rocket scientist or a mathematician to figure out where the other funds are going to come from. They have to come by disbursing those expenses around the City to the other taxpayers.

The reason I mention this is because I think we need assistance for solutions to our problems. We need help at the State level and we need help at the Federal level. The reason I say this is because we have over 4000 families living in the City of Trenton in public housing. They're poor. They deserve housing. But none of those 4000-plus families pay five cents in taxes. The reason they don't pay five cents in taxes is because it is a subsidized program by HUD.

Now, if those 4000-plus families have 2.3 children -- which is the national average and there are probably more -- you would be talking about over 8000 children out of that public housing project alone who are going into the City school system which only consists of 13,000 students. What we need from the State legislators as a solution is to get the Federal government to have HUD pay their fair share of taxes in all urban cities, in order to help to compensate for the taxes the rest of the cities are paying. We would address the tax issues as well. I think we have discussed this before.

MAYOR PALMER: There is money that the Federal government gives local school districts based on subsidized public housing. But, Ed, the statistics you mentioned-- They sound good, but, in fact, those kids who are now a burden to the system -- who are going into the school system, they are going there already.

MR. CORTESINI: No, sir, Mayor, they are not, because--

MAYOR PALMER: Poor people are moving into the City of Trenton.

MR. CORTESINI: Well, I think there are other people moving into the City of Trenton. The reason they are moving into the City of Trenton is also because of our welfare program. If you have a poor family that goes to welfare, they won't allow them over \$430 a month to get a two-bedroom apartment. You can't get a two-bedroom apartment in the City of Trenton for that kind of money, not a decent place to live. So we are being hamstrung by the State and by the restrictions through welfare to do that. Because we are a poor City, and because we do have probably the largest source of affordable housing, or cheap housing in Mercer County and surrounding counties, we have additional poor people coming into this City every day. I see that. I am a landlord. I am a property owner. I have people calling me from surrounding communities.

They want to come into Trenton because it is the only place they can find a reasonable place to live. So we are getting additional people.

MAYOR PALMER: How about all those families -- five and six families -- living in one apartment? (no response)

MR. CORTESINI: Affordable housing is great, but we must retire a certain amount of affordable housing. If you are going to build new, good quality housing, you have to do away with the decay, the rotten housing that is out there. Do away with it. Do not allow them to continue to exist.

SENATOR LaROSSA: We are going to go to Tim, Mr. Ali, and then we need to summarize, because we are supposed to leave shortly to do the tour.

Tim?

MR. LOSCH: I would just like to make a comment on a positive note. Bill Watson hit the nail on the head. I think the cities have been doing a remarkably good job with the resources they have had. I would pose an interesting question. I even mentioned before that families gravitate -- a little bit along the lines of what Ed was saying -- to the cities, because housing is inexpensive. I also think people gravitate to the cities because the infrastructure from a social network is very strong, as opposed to some of the suburbs.

So it poses an interesting question, I think, that people do come to the cities because they have been successful. They have good programs, whether they be religion oriented, community oriented, the health programs, or all the other City programs in general. It really puts people in leading cities, such as the Mayor, in the question: How do we get the attention of the suburbs? Do we shut down these systems to force people back to the suburbs? I think that would cause an interesting dilemma. If we do not solve these problems, gradually we are going to force people back out of the cities.

I think it is a question that we really all have to think about, because people have come to the cities. Why? We could debate for an hour whether they come because of the housing, or whatever, but at the end of the day there are only so many resources, and the Mayor will have to make a decision: Do we put our resources into housing, like Alan would like to see, or into social programs, or into crime? It almost begs the question: Should we shut down one or two of these to see what happens? God knows, that would create an even worse problem.

MS. SCALA-FISCHLER: Sure, because the people who would leave first would be the people best able to leave. The City would then be-- There would be a smaller, viable population, but a much larger population of people who need services.

MR. LOSCH: Exactly.

SENATOR LaROSSA: I am going to go to Mr. Ali, and then we are going to have to summarize, because-- We can continue part of it on the tour, too, for those of you who are going with us.

MR. ALI: What I am going to say now-- I don't know what it borders on; I don't know what it is going to bring up; I don't know how it is going to affect you, but I want you to think about it.

Father McCormick was talking about the children, the youth, and he touched on the idea of racism hate. Most of the urban cities are predominantly African-American or Latino. We wonder why Khalid Abdul Muhammed attracts these people. We wonder why the Arian nation and other people attract these people. We wonder why the skinheads attract these people. They attract these people because they feel no part of what is going on. They feel no responsibility. They have no involvement in what is happening. Everything is happening above their heads for them, but they have no say on what is

going on in the process. They have to become socially responsible somehow. The educational process has to begin where they begin to understand at a young age that they have a social commitment and a social responsibility.

I have worked in prisons. I have been involved in prisons since 1968. Every one of the gentlemen I talked to said the same thing to me. I never knew whether they were crooks or what they were. I didn't check their jackets. I didn't know what they did; I didn't even care. They would end up telling me. Education hurt them. Living in projects hurt them. Lack of employment hurt them. Not feeling involved in the system hurt them. Being black, Latino, and of color hurt them. These people would come along with their emotions and attract them to it, and then they become the dissidents who create the problems in our cities. Until we begin to address that problem--

I don't know how we-- I mean, I do know how we could address that, but I don't have time to say it now. But until we address that problem, we cannot solve the problem. We can give the City all the money it wants. We can give the business all the money it wants. If the people themselves don't feel committed to it and a part of it, they are going to tear it down. So we need to change that somehow. We need to give citizens responsibility, proper information, proper education. We need to address adult education at the same time we are addressing youth education. We need to address the problems in a two-pronged approach.

We need to look at the criminal justice system -- I mean the total criminal justice system -- and find ways where these overlapping things will not happen, but we will be working together to begin to address those things in a multipronged way.

I will go back to what I said before. I firmly believe that money is not the solution. I am not saying that we do not need money. Don't get me wrong. I don't believe

money is the solution. Until you get people committed and responsible and involved, you will have nothing. I mean, I am fighting for what I am fighting for, and I know what you are fighting for. I think we are all fighting for the same thing; that is, a better Trenton, a better City, a better State, a better country, and ultimately a better world. We better look at the real problems in society. That is what is causing these undercurrents, rather than them being connected to the financial aspects of it. Downsizing usually means making more money. Is always making more money the answer? I don't know.

SENATOR LaROSSA: On that note-- I think it would be very hard to follow that up. I think it becomes also obvious that we can very easily spend another two or three hours, and it would be very substantial. As it was, you know, we have been here for the last two hours.

We are going to take the tour, for those of you who would like to join us. The dinner is at, what, 4:30, right here?

MS. ABBOTT-YOUNG: Whatever time you get here.

SENATOR LaROSSA: Whenever we get here.

We thought it would be interesting, and thanks to Mary Gay's, you know, gracious offer, we are having dinner tonight at the Rescue Mission, so we can see the other 99 people who are doing what they are supposed to be doing, rather than reading about the one lunatic they put in the paper.

We thank you for just a phenomenal session. I hope it was as uplifting-- It was fun. See, I think the one thing to take out of this is that it is a start. I personally believe-- I feel very uplifted, because if there is this much strength, this much focus, and this much energy, all we need to do is harness it. I said when I was campaigning, you know, everybody has their stomp speech: There is a big difference between people who say they can't do something. What it

usually means is that they won't get involved. So let's just, instead of saying we can't, let's say that we can, and we will get it done.

I thank you very, very much for this phenomenal session. Thank you.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)