

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor's Weekly Radio Message Discusses a Financially Healthy New Jersey, Property Tax Relief

Gov. Christie Whitman provides a weekly radio message to radio stations throughout the state. Each week, the message focuses on a different concern or event of interest to New Jerseyans.

This week the Governor discusses New Jersey's financial health and how her FY2000 budget will provide vital services in the areas that matter most to its citizens. In the Governor's budget message, she spoke about the state's strong economy and the revenues that have grown along with it. The budget fulfills the state's commitment to provide more support to seniors and caregivers. It will improve our roads and make new investments in law enforcement. It will help us improve our parks and keep our water clean.

The budget also provides for the Governor's property tax relief plan. This plan will give taxpayers of New Jersey \$1 billion in tax relief. Under the plan, the state will offset a portion of school taxes that each homeowner pays. In five years, when the program takes full effect, it will mean an average check for \$600 every year.

Attached is the text of the message.

The radio message can be accessed by calling the Governor's actuality line at 609-292-3249. It will be available today, beginning at noon, and will run through the weekend.

Governor's Weekly Radio Message January 29, 1999 Fiscal Year 2000 Budget

Earlier this week, I delivered my Fiscal Year 2000 budget message. I spoke about our state's strong economy - 325,000 jobs stronger than when I took office. I reported that revenues have grown along with our economy. And I declared that with this budget, our six-year average growth rate is lower than that of any administration in at least the past three decades.

My proposed budget invests in our schools, colleges, and cities. It promotes the health and safety of our young people, through an aggressive campaign against smoking, and one aimed at preventing youth violence.

It fulfills our commitment to provide more support to seniors and caregivers, and to people with disabilities. It improves our roads and bridges, and makes new investments in law enforcement. It moves more people off the welfare rolls, and helps us improve our parks - urban, suburban, and rural - and keep our water clean.

This budget also sets aside a three-quarters of a billion dollar surplus, which includes a record amount in our rainy day fund.

And it returns to the taxpayers that which is rightfully theirs. What I said in my budget address bears repeating: property tax relief must be our highest priority.

My property tax relief plan will ultimately give you, the taxpayers of New Jersey, one billion dollars in tax relief. It's the single most significant property tax relief that New Jersey has ever provided. And with quick legislative action, you'll see your first check by Labor Day.

Under my plan, the State will offset the school taxes each homeowner pays on the first 45,000 dollars of assessed value on that home - providing an average 33 percent discount. In five years, when this program takes full effect, it will mean an average check for 600 dollars every year.

We've had widespread support for this plan. From mayors and taxpayer groups, from homeowners, and from both sides of the aisle in the Legislature.

With so much support, I've urged the legislature to pass this program quickly, and I'm confident they will.

But let's be realistic. While we can provide unprecedented property tax relief, we must also do all we can to promote property tax reform.

That means making hard choices in every community in our state.

Real reform means getting involved. It means showing up for your town council and school board meetings. It means voting in your local elections. It means supporting your elected officials when they call for consolidating services, and demanding that they stretch your tax dollars as far as possible.

The next time your mayor or school board suggests a way to cut costs and save tax dollars, hear them out. The money you save will be your own.

Let me close on this note. As we move into the new millennium, our fiscal house is in order. New Jersey is financially healthy. We are providing vital services in the areas that matter most to our citizens.

In these prosperous times, let's continue to keep up our guard. Let's continue to spend wisely. Let's continue to exercise even greater fiscal responsibility.

If we do, the budget I have proposed this year will become a blueprint for our future. A future of prosperity that will continue to mirror our hopes and dreams for this great state we call home.

