

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
Wendi Patella
609-777-2600

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Governor Whitman Signs Shore Protection Legislation, Teaches State History to Fourth Grade Class in Belmar

Gov. Christie Whitman today taught New Jersey history to a fourth grade class at the Belmar Elementary School in Belmar, keeping a promise to volunteerism that she made during her State of the State address in January. After discussing the legislative process with the students, Gov. Whitman signed a bill increasing the amount of the Shore Protection Fund to \$25 million each year.

"I made a promise to add to my commitment to volunteerism by teaching the New Jersey history and government curriculum in one fourth grade class every month," the Governor told a school assembly after finishing her stint in the classroom. "I have to comment on how well the class treated their substitute teacher!"

After speaking to the class, Gov. Whitman attended an assembly of all fourth and fifth graders, where she signed the shore protection legislation.

S-1676, sponsored by Assembly Members John Gibson (R-Cape May/Atlantic/ Cumberland) and Steve Corodemus (R-Monmouth) and Senators James Cafiero (R- Cape May/Atlantic/ Cumberland) and William Gormley (R-Atlantic), increases from \$15 million to \$25 million the amount that is credited each year to the Shore Protection Fund. Monies for the fund come from realty transfer fees.

The Shore Protection Fund pays for beachfill projects to improve beaches suffering from storm damage. Among the projects funded are those that increase the width of beaches, and construct dunes and bulkheads.

In 1998, Gov. Whitman challenged more New Jerseyans to volunteer to help their fellow citizens, and throughout the year Gov. Whitman spent time each month reading for Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic. The organization provides audio tapes of books for those with vision problems. She added teaching to her list of volunteer activities in her 1999 State of the State address.

"In my class, I spoke about how one of my favorite things about being governor is that it gives me a chance to make a real difference in people's lives. Teaching a class each month is one small way of making a difference," Gov. Whitman said. "But if I can set an

example for others to follow, maybe they will volunteer - not only in schools, but in organizations and communities around New Jersey."

Gov. Whitman told the students that they, too, should strive to make New Jersey a better place to live, play, and go to school. "You don't have to be a governor to make a difference in people's lives. Each one of you can set an example for others to follow. You can work hard in school. You can be kind, tolerant, and demonstrate respect for all people," she told the students.

Belmar Elementary School was chosen for the Governor's volunteerism project after the class was in a school bus accident on its way to a field trip to the State House several months ago.