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HEARING IN THE MATTER OF
THE CASINO REVENUE FUND
BEFORE
NEW JERSEY CASINO REVENUE FUND ADVISORY COMMISSION
-----X

DATE: December 9, 2008
TIME: 9:40 a.m.

Hearing in the above-entitled matter,
at the above date and time, held at the Bergen
County Freeholder Chambers, One Bergen County
Plaza, Hackensack, New Jersey, by Joanne Bryan,
RPR, a Certified Court Reporter and Notary Public
of the State of New Jersey.

B E F O R E:
MISONO MILLER, Chairperson

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A P P E A R A N C E S:

- MISONO MILLER, Chairperson
- JAMES THEBERY, Vice-Chairperson
- SENATOR LORETTA WEINBERG
- LAURA RAMOS, Public Member
- KAY NEST, Public Member
- MARILYN WHITE, Representing the Department of
Health and Senior Services, Division of Aging
and Community Services
- JOSEPH TYRRELL, Representing the New Jersey
Casino Association

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CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Hello, everybody,
and welcome. I want to thank each and every
one of you for being here and for coming to

4 speak or to listen and to hear on behalf of
5 the senior and disabled community, and
6 whether you're here to speak or to listen, I
7 know that we all are advocates for seniors
8 and disabled, so thank you all for being
9 here.

10 We will start the hearing proceedings
11 with a flag salute from James Thebery, who
12 is the vice-chair of the Casino Revenue Fund
13 Advisory Commission.

14 (Flag salute was performed.)

15 VICE-CHAIRPERSON THEBERY: As
16 vice-chair, I'd like to welcome all of you
17 here to the last of three hearings. The
18 first was in Atlantic City, the second was
19 in Trenton, and this culminates as the third
20 and final hearing today.

21 Just as a few housekeeping items, the
22 restrooms, for those of you who are visiting
23 with us today, are out the double doors and
24 to your left and by the elevators, and
25 there's also a drinking fountain there as

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1 well, should you desire that. Right now,
2 I'm just going to proceed and give this back
3 to our Madam Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. I'd like
5 to first introduce to you members of the
6 Casino Revenue Fund Advisory Commission that
7 are here today to hear your comments. We've
8 had various members of the Commission in the
9 southern area hearings and in the Trenton
10 hearings, and we're very happy to have seven
11 members of the Commission scheduled to be
12 here today, so I'd like to start with Laura
13 Ramos, who is a public member.

14 Would you like to say something?

15 MS. RAMOS: Good morning. I'm Laura
16 Ramos. I am a public member appointed by
17 the governor to represent the disabled for
18 the State, and I came from Hunterdon County
19 this morning.

20 MS. NEST: I'm Kay Nest, and everyone
21 knows that my whole life is for seniors and
22 to help every way we can, and I'm so happy
23 to see everyone here, and we're open to hear
24 everything you have to say. We're
25 listening.

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1 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I guess I should
2 introduce myself. I'm Misono Miller, and
3 I'm glad to say I made it from Bridgeton,
4 New Jersey today, and I am a representative
5 of the New Jersey Association of Area
6 Agencies on Aging, and that is my ex officio
7 membership on this Commission, and I am
8 the -- my job is that I'm the executive
9 director of the Hunterdon County Office on
10 Aging and Disabled, and I've had over
11 30 years of experience in working on
12 planning for services for seniors mostly,
13 and disabled.

14 VICE-CHAIRPERSON THEBERY: James
15 Thebery. I'm director for Bergen County
16 Division on Disability Services, and serve
17 on this Commission as president of the New

18 Jersey Association of County Disability
19 Services.

20 MS. WHITE: I'm Marilyn White. I am
21 with the Department of Health and Senior
22 Services Division of Aging and Community
23 Services. I serve as administrator of the
24 Congregate Housing Services Program and I'm
25 happy to be here today because formerly I

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1 was the county liaison serving Bergen County
2 as one of my counties, and it's good to see
3 some of my old friends.

4 MR. TYRRELL: Good morning, everyone.
5 My name is Joe Tyrrell. I am the Casino
6 Association representative. I actually work
7 for Harrah's Operating Company, which also
8 has Caesar's, Bally's, Show Boat in Atlantic
9 City. As the casino representative, I live
10 in Northern New Jersey; I actually live in
11 Caldwell. I just recently moved there from
12 Hackensack. I lived here in town, pretty
13 much a lifelong resident of Bergen County
14 and actually graduated from Ridgely Park
15 High School across the river, so it's good
16 to be home.

17 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. We started
18 a little bit late. We have approximately 30
19 persons who want to speak today, and I just
20 wanted to let you know we're really not that
21 far off schedule. We -- let's see. What
22 time is it? Okay. We're probably about ten
23 minutes off schedule, if I take ten minutes,
24 so I wanted to start the hearings with some
25 introductory remarks about why we are here

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1 and what the purpose of these hearings are,
2 and I'll do that now.

3 The New Jersey Casino Revenue Fund
4 Advisory Commission is holding these
5 hearings for the very first time. The
6 purpose of these hearings is two-fold. The
7 Commission was established by New Jersey law
8 to provide recommendations to the governor
9 and the legislator regarding the programs
10 funded or able to be funded by the casino
11 revenue funds.

12 The Commission's charge is to evaluate
13 the need for existing additional or expanded
14 programs and advise the legislator
15 accordingly. This hearing will assist the
16 Commission in having the information needed
17 to make those recommendations with resolve
18 and understanding from the feedback that
19 you're giving us today. It is hoped that
20 the Commission hearings will provide a
21 much-needed opportunity to focus on the
22 needs of the seniors and disabled residents
23 of this state and that public awareness,
24 attention, and support of these needs will
25 assist in making the necessary decisions

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1 that need to be made on behalf of the
2 seniors and disabled residents of the state.
3 It is intended that your statements today
4 will contribute to increasing the support
5 from the general public, elected officials,

6 and decision makers that will be necessary
7 to make changes where they are needed.

8 I thank you all for your presence
9 here, both those who are providing comment
10 and those who are here to listen and
11 advocate on behalf of seniors and disabled.

12 You were given handouts today, and one
13 of those handouts was the annual report of
14 the Commission to the Legislator that was
15 submitted in March of 2008. Another is a
16 very recent report of the Casino Control
17 Commission in regards to the status of the
18 existing revenues of the Casino Revenue
19 Fund. Another is also -- another handout is
20 the annual report of New Jersey Transit,
21 which gives a very good summary of the
22 status of the transportation systems that
23 are operated on behalf of seniors and
24 disabled in each one of our 21 counties.

25 The annual report of the Commission

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1 has been completed by this Commission on
2 an -- since at least 2004 on a yearly basis,
3 okay. There was a period when there was not
4 an annual report as is supposed to be
5 produced, but since 2004, the reports have
6 focused on increasing funding for the
7 programs providing crucial, effective,
8 essential, and underfunded services in this
9 state.

10 In many cases, the programs
11 recommended for funding have not received
12 funding increases from the Casino Revenue
13 Fund for years and years. For example, the
14 Meals on Wheels program is included in the
15 Casino Revenue Fund program; however, it has
16 not received a funding increase from the
17 Casino Revenue Fund since 1988, okay. The
18 only program that provides minor repairs
19 which is really an essential program for
20 seniors is the Safe Housing and
21 Transportation Program. I'd like you to
22 know that the Safe Housing and
23 Transportation Program actually received
24 more funds a decade ago, and it now receives
25 approximately \$1.7 million a year.

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1 The 2008 annual report recommends that
2 six essential programs historically funded
3 by the casino revenue funds receive funding
4 increases. These programs are
5 transportation, Meals on Wheels, the state
6 RESPA program, the safe housing program for
7 home repairs, and escorted transportation,
8 adult protective services, and congregate
9 housing.

10 The Commission is very aware of the
11 recent downturn in casino revenue funds.
12 However, over the course of the years, there
13 have been huge savings that could be
14 considered for reallocation to these crucial
15 programs. I think you will hear about some
16 of these huge savings in some of the
17 testimony that's being presented today.

18 In addition, in years of increasing
19 casino revenue funds when times were good,

20 these programs that we are saying that need
21 funding, they have been consistently
22 overlooked for additional funds, and they
23 have not received what is needed to continue
24 to meet the demand.

25 These are difficult times. We all

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1 know that. But especially in difficult
2 times the needs of the most vulnerable must
3 be recognized and addressed. That is why it
4 is not the worst time to have these
5 hearings; it may be the best time to have
6 these hearings.

7 Now, the governor does -- is
8 considering and has -- I have to say I
9 believe it has passed, parts of his economic
10 incentive plan, and I think that our funding
11 has been determined to be allocated for very
12 crucial programs. I think it's our
13 challenge to speak to the legislators and
14 the governor in regards to some of these
15 programs as being crucial enough to be
16 included in an economics incentive package
17 or just in the budget for their due funding,
18 so anyhow, just to let you -- also to
19 summarize, your comments on not only these
20 programs, but any program that should -- or
21 you feel should be funded by the Casino
22 Revenue Fund is relevant and is welcome, so
23 at this point, I will begin the public
24 comment portion, and I will call our first
25 commenter, who is Nina Levinson from Fort

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1 Lee, New Jersey, and -- oh, some other
2 housekeeping before you start,
3 Mrs. Levinson, is that we have a timer and
4 we do have 30 -- right now we have 30
5 scheduled to speak, so that would be several
6 hours, so we are asking that you attempt to
7 keep your comments to five minutes. We will
8 have a bell, but that -- you can go on.
9 That's just to let you know five minutes has
10 gone by.

11 Okay, Mrs. Levinson, the floor is
12 yours.

13 MS. LEVINSON: Thank you. I want to
14 address this Board because in the past, the
15 revenues were abundant and used for all
16 kinds of other purposes than they were
17 intended. They were allocated for seniors
18 and I believe for schools or for children.
19 That was both ends of the spectrum.
20 However, in the past, they were used for all
21 kinds of things. Now that the revenues are
22 low, all the other stuff has to be thrown
23 out -- have to be thrown out, and the
24 seniors have to get their appropriate
25 allocation, and the funds have to be

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1 directed at what they were intended for.
2 The primary need of anybody is food.
3 Without food, we don't live. And therefore,
4 I think the Meals on Wheels and whatever it
5 takes to provide these Meals on Wheels --
6 transportation -- whatever it takes -- the
7 drivers -- whatever -- has to be funded

8 first, and in full, because if people are
9 hungry, it is very serious, and more serious
10 for seniors than for many of the middle
11 people that exist. Seniors are hurting
12 badly, and more and more seniors are
13 dependent upon these meals, and I think that
14 should be your priority.

15 The second need is a roof over the
16 head, and parallel to this, health care,
17 because if your own roof over the head is no
18 longer functioning, you can't go into some
19 other place where you will find some
20 housing. It may not be to your liking, but
21 you do get some housing. So the next thing
22 that has to be funded is health care, with
23 its transportation requirement, because
24 transportation is required for everything.
25 People can't get to the doctor, then there's

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1 a problem. They need -- they also need
2 their medications.

3 And I think you have to consider the
4 priorities, and from the priorities first,
5 and everything else second, and that is
6 really what I want to say. Do not allow
7 this fund to be raped by other purposes.
8 That is my fundamental message. Thank you.

9 (Audience applause.)

10 VICE-CHAIRPERSON THEBERY: If I could
11 just ask the audience to refrain from
12 applause. As much as I -- we started it
13 probably, but I can't -- I can't really
14 upset Juni or here. He's got that look in
15 his eye. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Senator Loretta
17 Weinberg -- I would like to introduce to you
18 another member of our Commission, Senator
19 Loretta Weinberg. Would you like to say
20 something?

21 SENATOR WEINBERG: First of all, my
22 apologies for being late. I came home from
23 California late on Sunday night and I'm
24 still on California time, and I have a cold,
25 in case you haven't heard. But I would

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1 officially like to welcome the Commission to
2 Bergen County, to the City of Hackensack,
3 which I represent in the state senate, and I
4 know we have two wonderful Bergen County
5 residents here, particularly with my
6 colleague, Kay Nest, who is also a
7 Commission member, and I hope this hearing
8 will be meaningful to all of you, as well as
9 to all of us up here, so thank you very
10 much.

11 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Our next
12 person that is scheduled is Maureen
13 McCormick. Maureen is with the Bergen
14 County Volunteers, Chore Handy Man.

15 I do believe we talked.

16 MS. McCORMICK: Good morning,
17 everybody. Can you hear me? Okay.

18 I'm Maureen McCormick. I'm the Chore
19 program director and I'm here this morning
20 -- thank you very much -- to tell you a
21 little bit about what your -- the Casino

22 Revenue Fund funds through the Chore
23 program, why it's an important program, and
24 hopefully by what I say, you will continue
25 funding us, and maybe you can give us a

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1 little bit extra.

2 Chores program is a volunteer program
3 in Bergen County. We've been in place since
4 1977. We provide minor home repairs for
5 seniors and disabled people who live in
6 Bergen County, most of whom are low income.
7 Such repairs allow the seniors to remain
8 safe and independent in their own homes.

9 The Chore service is exemplary in that
10 it addresses several specific and critical
11 needs of the growing elderly population, and
12 it does so in an efficient and
13 cost-effective way.

14 Bergen County ranks among the top 100
15 of the most populous counties in the
16 country. We're actually number 52. People
17 live longer in Bergen County than in any
18 other county in Northeastern United States,
19 basically an average of 80 years old.
20 According to the U.S. Census, there were
21 over 134,000 people in Bergen County over
22 the age of 65, and the number of those over
23 age 65 who live alone are reported to be
24 over 7,000. Although Bergen County is
25 considered an affluent area, there are over

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1 43,000 households living below the U.S.
2 poverty level, and 7,000 of those are age 60
3 and over.

4 As the elderly is the fastest growing
5 segment of the population, the demand for
6 Chore's handyman services have never been
7 greater. Elderly or disabled persons need
8 minor repairs to keep their homes safe and
9 allow them to live independently, thus
10 avoiding costly and often unwanted
11 institutionalization. However, many are not
12 able to perform the repair themselves, or
13 they lack the income to pay for somebody to
14 do it, or even can't find a professional to
15 come in and do really small repairs. It
16 also may be a concern or danger to the
17 elderly to admit unknown workers in their
18 home to provide estimates or to do work.

19 Last year, Chore served almost 1,600
20 people and completed almost 4,000 home
21 repairs. 94 percent of the population Chore
22 serves are of moderate means or less with
23 72 percent at the low or extremely low
24 poverty level. Chore performs necessary
25 home repairs for these elderly and disabled

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1 clients free of charge, except for the cost
2 of parts needed for the repair.

3 Chore visits are prescheduled, and
4 handy persons arrive in one of two vans,
5 special marked vans, with the Chore logo.
6 The volunteers wear clear, easy-to-read
7 identification tags, thus ensuring that the
8 client feels confident and comfortable in
9 allowing them into their home. We go out

10 five days a week all year long.

11 Chore is also unique in that it is
12 seniors helping seniors. It addresses the
13 need for seniors to be active and feel they
14 are contributing to their community, because
15 my Chore volunteers are also senior
16 citizens. They range in age 60, 70, 80, and
17 I got a couple of 90-year-old guys going out
18 there.

19 They -- in recent studies, more than
20 60 percent of people aged 70 and older
21 experience some form of loneliness,
22 including isolation. The senior handy
23 persons benefit from the interaction they
24 get with other volunteers and staff, and
25 also derive great satisfaction from being

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1 able to use their skills in a productive way
2 that helps others. Chore volunteers enjoy a
3 strong sense of camaraderie, which combats
4 loneliness, and also the Chore clients whom
5 they visit also benefit from the interaction
6 with the Chore crew. In many cases, Chore
7 crews are the only visitors who bring a
8 piece of the outside world to our lonely,
9 isolated, or disabled clients.

10 Chore focuses on providing services to
11 those with the greatest needs, the most
12 vulnerable elderly who cannot make needed
13 repairs themselves, can't afford to pay
14 someone, and have no other resources to help
15 them.

16 Housing costs in Northern New Jersey
17 rank among the highest in the country. The
18 clients of our Chore service typically are
19 aging in their own homes. Many cannot
20 afford to move, and some of the houses are
21 literally falling apart around them.

22 We just celebrated our 31st --
23 (Time bell rings.)

24 -- anniversary, so by virtue of our
25 longevity -- do I have two more minutes?

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1 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yeah. I notice
2 that you have very detailed --

3 MS. McCORMICK: I'm flipping through
4 it.

5 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: It's very good
6 that you have this here and you're one of
7 the few speaking on this service, I know
8 that too, but if you can give it a few more
9 minutes, and then --

10 MS. McCORMICK: I'll wrap it up.

11 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Your most
12 important points is good.

13 MS. McCORMICK: Sure. Okay, well,
14 basically you kind of get the point, but
15 we're only kind of scratching the surface
16 with the funding that we have now. We do
17 have critical needs. Volunteers are the
18 backbone, but basically as you may know,
19 volunteering is not free -- or volunteer
20 programs are not free, so funding is really
21 necessary in a couple of key areas.

22 We have a backlog of about six weeks'
23 worth of waiting because we only have two

24 vans, a handful of volunteers, so extra
25 funding to help us staff, like crew chiefs

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1 for our drivers are very, very important.

2 We need extra money to maybe even get
3 additional vans. We have to maintain the
4 vans, insurance is a big issue, and
5 basically we're basically just staffing with
6 part -- I'm a part-time employee that kind
7 of coordinates all the -- all of this. As I
8 said, we're just hitting a dent. It's only
9 a dent.

10 So basically we're very proud of what
11 we have accomplished with your help. We
12 hope that you can continue to help fund
13 Chore, and as I said, maybe give us a little
14 bit extra because there's so many more
15 seniors that need our help.

16 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Thanks
17 very much.

18 MS. McCORMICK: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Noreen Best.
20 Noreen is with the Bergen County Division of
21 Community Development, and I believe she's
22 going to speak on transportation.

23 MS. BEST: Good morning. My name is
24 Noreen Best, and I'm the director of Bergen
25 County Division of Community Development. I

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1 manage the county's 11 senior activities
2 centers and I want to thank you for the
3 opportunity to bring to this hearing the
4 need for increased funding for
5 transportation for both seniors and senior
6 centers.

7 One of the privileges of working so
8 long in one place is that you learn the
9 institutional history. With the advent of
10 casino revenue funding in the late 70s, the
11 decision was made to consolidate all of the
12 county's transportation under one roof.
13 Previously, all the senior centers had their
14 own vehicles and senior services operated
15 the Meals on Wheels program. This
16 consolidation was to provide additional
17 transportation for medical trips,
18 transportation for the disabled, and to
19 expand the Meals on Wheels routes. It was
20 done with the intent that there would be
21 more opportunities for both senior and
22 disabled communities. This worked well for
23 the first few years, but as additional needs
24 came about, such as the tremendous need for
25 transportation for dialysis treatment in the

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1 county, transportation for senior centers
2 was eroded to the point that there was
3 almost no opportunity for recreational
4 transportation for the seniors and very
5 little opportunity for additional seniors to
6 attend our centers. One of our county
7 centers doesn't even have transportation
8 anymore.

9 Our senior centers serve over 8,000
10 seniors throughout the county. The fastest
11 growing segment of this population is the

12 85-plus cohort. These seniors are the ones
13 who are most dependent on the centers for
14 the hot meals, socialization and health and
15 wellness programs. Because they often live
16 alone, our centers provide them a vital link
17 to activity, while the staff and other
18 participants offer the comfort of someone to
19 watch over them.

20 Many of them don't drive or shouldn't
21 be driving, and are very dependent on Bergen
22 County Division of Community Transportation
23 for getting them to and from centers for
24 food shopping, doctors appointments,
25 recreational opportunities, etc.

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1 As these seniors age in place and lose
2 their ability to drive safely, they are left
3 with few options, and last month we had an
4 86-year-old senior struggling with whether
5 to give up her car. She recently had a car
6 accident and knows if she gives up her car,
7 she will be home alone because
8 transportation can't take her everywhere she
9 needs to go. Our frail, older seniors must
10 depend on family, friends, and neighbors for
11 transportation or remain isolated in their
12 home, and socialization has been shown to
13 attribute to both physical and mental
14 deterioration.

15 The ability of our elderly population
16 to get to a senior center is of paramount
17 importance for keeping them involved in the
18 community instead of starting the slow
19 decline toward living in a nursing home.
20 That's why the need for additional money for
21 transportation is so important.

22 All of our centers have a nutrition
23 component, which is vital to the well-being
24 of our older, frailer seniors. Without the
25 socialization, nutritional, and health and

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1 wellness programs available for these
2 seniors, they would be home by themselves
3 vulnerable to depression and not eating.
4 Participation at senior centers is vital for
5 our frail, elderly seniors in Bergen County
6 and without transportation they can't get to
7 a center.

8 I cannot stress enough the importance
9 of these increased funding for
10 transportation and the lives of the seniors
11 in Bergen County. Transportation is the key
12 for our senior population to age in place
13 with dignity and success. Thank you.

14 SENATOR WEINBERG: Which senior center
15 no longer provides transportation?

16 MS. BEST: Palisade Park doesn't have
17 it anymore. It was probably eroded about
18 10, 12 years ago.

19 SENATOR WEINBERG: Is that because
20 they cut it out or because the county cut it
21 out?

22 MS. BEST: You know, I'm not sure
23 because they didn't have the census ten
24 years -- it was only ten years ago and it
25 wasn't there when I took it.

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1 SENATOR WEINBERG: Okay.

2 MS. BEST: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I have to say I
4 went out of order. I was looking at my
5 alphabetical list. So I'll go back to the
6 agenda list, and Beverly Oliphant was not
7 here, so I'm going to ask Tom Murphy from
8 Bergen County Transport.

9 MR. MURPHY: Good morning. My name is
10 Tom Murphy. I'm the director of community
11 transportation for the County of Bergen. I
12 promised to be short, and I will.

13 In '07, Bergen County drove about a
14 million one hundred thousand miles and we
15 transported about 305,000. For '09, we have
16 received a \$300,000 cut in our casino funds.
17 That, because of some of the policies we've
18 implemented and some of the savings that
19 we've provided, will not cause a decrease in
20 service. In fact, for '09, we expect to
21 maintain all the services at the present.

22 The problem is the year '10. From
23 present funding sources, we expect another
24 \$200,000 cut from Jersey Transit, and that
25 along with a \$300,000 cut will mean

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1 substantial cuts, not only in Bergen County,
2 but statewide.

3 There is a partial remedy before the
4 State. The legislation, as I'm sure you all
5 are aware about, from the assembly and the
6 senate, it will move the percentage received
7 from 7.5 to 8.5 percent. If those bills are
8 passed and signed by the governor, we should
9 be able to maintain services at the present
10 '07/'08 levels.

11 The reason for transportation, I can't
12 articulate it better than the first speaker.
13 We have a plethora of programs -- local,
14 state, county, and federal -- but without
15 transportation, they cannot be utilized to
16 their greatest, so again, I thank you, and
17 if you could use your influence to have this
18 legislation passed.

19 SENATOR WEINBERG: Tell me about the
20 legislation again that you said is in the
21 assembly and senate.

22 MR. MURPHY: There's two bills. The
23 one is sponsored by Assemblyman Wisniewski,
24 I believe, and the senate is sponsored
25 Senator Sacco that will increase

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1 transportation from 7.5 percent of the
2 casino revenue money to 8.5 percent. For
3 Bergen County, that will be approximately
4 \$300,000, so that will restore the cuts that
5 we've suffered in '09.

6 MR. TYRRELL: There was assembly bill
7 2046 and senate bill 1830.

8 SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you.

9 MR. MURPHY: You can support these
10 bills and help them to move forward. It
11 should maintain our services and I thank
12 you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Did you say

14 305,000 seniors that you served?

15 MR. MURPHY: Our ridership last year
16 was that.

17 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: And 1.1 million
18 miles?

19 MR. MURPHY: Almost 1.2.

20 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: And that 305,000,
21 is that trips or is that seniors, actual
22 seniors?

23 MR. MURPHY: That's trips. We have
24 approximately 8,000 registered riders.
25 That's people who have used our system at

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1 least once in the last six months.

2 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you very
3 much.

4 MR. MURPHY: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Walter Jacobs.

6 Mr. Jacobs is with the Essex County Senior
7 Services.

8 MR. JACOBS: Good morning. Thank you
9 for the time to discuss the better quality
10 of life for the seniors in Essex County.
11 Census tells us that there's over a million
12 plus people who have reached the age of 60,
13 and then there's another million plus people
14 who have reached the age of 65 for
15 retirement age, but the fragile 85 plus is a
16 growing population, along with the people
17 that's 75 years old and traveling up to
18 another point in their life.

19 The tearful part about this is that
20 they live alone, no one to come in and say
21 good morning, no one to say goodnight to
22 them, no one to talk to them during the day,
23 and what makes this so heartbreaking and
24 tearful is that they have to look around the
25 room and look for something that can bring

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1 them back to when they were viable, when
2 they could walk, when they could drive
3 themselves, when they could get out and
4 communicate with the people outside. So
5 what they do, they sit in the building, the
6 room, and look around and just think, and
7 what happens?

8 Just one thing that they can look
9 forward to during the day between 11 o'clock
10 and 1 o'clock, and that's the Meals on
11 Wheels. That person comes in with a
12 two-fold activity. He brings a nutritious
13 meal and it's hot. That may be the only
14 meal that they have all day. They can't
15 cook, a lot of them, and a lot of them, they
16 can cook but they don't care to cook, for
17 some reason. You get a certain age it seems
18 like your mind go back and you don't want to
19 do a lot of things that you used do. And
20 the person doing the Meals on Wheels makes
21 sure that the health is sustaining them for
22 that particular day because a lot of times
23 these people that live alone could fall on
24 the floor and there's no one to pick them
25 up, there's no one that knows that they're

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1 on the floor, and a lot of them pass away

2 during that.

3 So what we're doing now and what we're
4 trying to do is try to get the Meals on
5 Wheels program keep going in the casino
6 revenue program, and to do this, we're going
7 to -- well, what we're already doing
8 actually is make some plates we have seniors
9 and other people sign we want to take to our
10 legislators in Trenton to show them we have
11 seniors doing it and people of middle age
12 that's coming up to being 50 and 60 because
13 you have to look forward for your years of
14 being an elderly person, which is fine. I
15 remember when I was younger I used to say,
16 wow, when can I get to this age; now I'm
17 here, and there's a lot of programs going
18 for us but we have to eat first. We have to
19 have energy, so we're looking forward.

20 I'm glad you took the time to listen
21 to me and I hope the casino program keeps
22 going forward. Thank you. Any questions?
23 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I just have a
24 comment. I take it that you say that you're
25 going to communicate to our legislator and

0032 1 the governor with paper plates.

2 MR. JACOBS: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: And I'm glad that
4 you say that. I understand that so far
5 30,000 paper plates have been sent in New
6 Jersey, but we -- that's so far.

7 MR. JACOBS: Okay, 30.

8 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: 30,000, right,
9 but it appears that we need some more.

10 MR. JACOBS: We're still working on
11 it.

12 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Thank you.

13 MR. JACOBS: You're welcome.

14 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay, Thelma
15 Fedele, Center for Food Action.

16 MS. FEDELE: Good morning. I serve
17 the Center for Food Action as a director of
18 community and government relations and I'd
19 like to speak to you today about what we see
20 are the needs of the seniors and disabled.
21 CFA does not receive any funding directly
22 from the Casino Commission, but we deal with
23 its population on a daily basis. Since
24 1976, our agency's mission has been to
25 reduce hunger and prevent homelessness in

0033 1 our local communities. We have assisted
2 Bergen County by providing seven different
3 locations for our food pantries so that they
4 are easily accessible, although
5 transportation is an issue, and there are
6 rare occasions, but some people do take the
7 transportation -- Bergen County
8 transportation to get to our pantries, but
9 most of them are accessible within the local
10 communities. We also have an additional
11 pantry in Passaic County.

12 In 2007, we served over 38,000 people.
13 Now, this is surprising for many because
14 Bergen County is thought to be an affluent
15 community. When I first started with the

16 agency in 1992, the senior population
17 accounted for 2 percent of the people we
18 served. That has now risen to 11 percent,
19 and it's a growing concern for us. Just
20 since last year, we've had a 15 percent
21 increase in the number of seniors who are
22 coming for food packages.

23 People, as we know, are living longer,
24 and whereas people years ago were in their
25 70s, we are now helping many people in their

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1 80s, and now our most-senior client is a
2 103-year-old woman who lives with her
3 82-year-old daughter. The 82-year-old
4 daughter comes to pick up the food. In 2008
5 so far, we have assisted 3,500 seniors,
6 which is a large number for us to handle.

7 In addition to our food program, we
8 have a homeless prevention program, and this
9 is where we see tremendous need. We can
10 provide rent and utility assistance to keep
11 people in their homes. We also pay security
12 deposits to allow people to move into
13 affordable housing, and there are many
14 seniors who need that security deposit in
15 order to move into an affordable apartment.

16 The Social Security is the basic form
17 of income for most seniors. Many, many do
18 not have any kind of pension above and
19 beyond that, and I see ranges from \$631 a
20 month to the highest of \$1,160 a month. The
21 average price -- monthly rental of a
22 one-bedroom apartment is \$947. That doesn't
23 leave very much left over to pay for utility
24 bills and other expenses. Money for food
25 becomes discretionary spending, so we

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1 certainly would encourage you to provide
2 help to whatever food programs are available
3 through the government.

4 We also refer seniors to the adult
5 protective services program because many
6 seniors are not able to look after their own
7 financial well-being.

8 (Time bell rings.)

9 Just one last comment. As
10 homelessness is increasing, we ask you to do
11 everything you possibly can to help the
12 low-income seniors and disabled. Thank you.

13 VICE-CHAIRPERSON THEBERY: Thelma, I
14 just wanted to ask you -- and we know good
15 work that you do and your organization.
16 We've experienced it here in the food pantry
17 in human services, and I'm sure you have
18 too. Have you just seen about double the
19 amount of people coming from '07 to '08 for
20 food?

21 MS. FEDELE: It's more like 30 percent
22 right now.

23 VICE-CHAIRPERSON THEBERY: 30 percent.
24 Because I know that that obviously impacts
25 the overall stock that you have to give out

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1 to people that the Casino Revenue Fund could
2 fund with aging and disabled, and so I fully
3 understand that, and you have our support.

4 MS. FEDELE: Thank you very much.

5 SENATOR WEINBERG: Thelma, since
6 you've seen such an increase in the number
7 of seniors -- you say it went from 2 percent
8 in 1992 to 11 percent in 2007.

9 MS. FEDELE: Yes.

10 SENATOR WEINBERG: Do you coordinate
11 anything with Meals on Wheels? Is there any
12 coordination between your program and
13 theirs?

14 MS. FEDELE: Well, most of the people
15 that come to our pantries are able to
16 physically get there, or they have a
17 relative or a friend who picks up the food.
18 We do encourage people who are homebound to
19 participate in the Meals on Wheels program,
20 but we also understand the stress that that
21 is -- that that program is under, so if
22 they're physically able to get to our
23 pantries, we think that is beneficial to
24 them, and we do provide special packages for
25 people who might have diabetes, so we do

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1 adjust the packages based upon their medical
2 situations.

3 SENATOR WEINBERG: Well, I will say
4 I'm particularly familiar with the work that
5 CFA does and with the work that Thelma
6 Fedele does, and the homeless prevention
7 program is really terrific because we have
8 had constituents who are under great stress,
9 and this is one of the programs that will
10 help keep somebody in their home or get them
11 an apartment when we're at the 11th hour,
12 which usually ends up being 4:30 on a Friday
13 afternoon, generally speaking, and the
14 program is always available for that, and I
15 just want to emphasize, you know, we are
16 pictured -- we in Bergen County -- as being
17 so affluent, and we certainly have sections
18 that are, but when you read or hear these
19 kind of statistics about basic hunger, and
20 people also seem to have an unwillingness to
21 apply for food stamps because they look upon
22 that as meaning that they've given up and
23 they're now part of the welfare system, so
24 they'd rather go to the food pantry as a
25 temporary --

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1 MS. FEDELE: We do encourage people to
2 go to apply for food stamps, but the food
3 stamps, some of the seniors based upon their
4 economic situation only get \$14 a month
5 because it's based upon the federal poverty
6 guidelines, and that has nothing to do with
7 the reality of living in Bergen County, so
8 if the food stamps last them one to
9 two weeks, they're lucky, so that's why even
10 though they get food stamps, they still have
11 to come to the food pantry.

12 SENATOR WEINBERG: Well, thank you for
13 the work you do.

14 MS. RAMOS: Ms. Fedele, I actually was
15 homeless with a disabled person this year,
16 and Hunterdon County is also considered a
17 very affluent county, but most of the safety

18 nets did not have accessible lodging of any
19 sort to help I and my roommate while we were
20 homeless. What kind of programs do you have
21 for hooking people up who need accessible
22 accommodations for homeless prevention?

23 MS. FEDELE: If we can -- if we have
24 the funding, we'll pay a security deposit
25 for someone to move into an apartment that

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1 is accessible for handicapped people, and we
2 do that many times during the course of a
3 year, because the security deposits are so
4 high and if you're low income, where are you
5 supposed to get that, so that -- as far as
6 people who are homeless and disabled, that
7 is a problem within the homeless community.
8 Our mission is to prevent the homelessness
9 before they don't have a place to live, and
10 the only problem we have with that is the
11 funding is insufficient to meet the need.

12 MS. RAMOS: Thank you.

13 MS. FEDELE: I know it's not a very
14 good answer.

15 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you very
16 much.

17 I have to say at the Southern Jersey
18 hearing too there was a -- testimony that --
19 from the homeless director of one of the
20 counties that homelessness among seniors has
21 increased to 25 percent of the homeless
22 population from only a few percent in years
23 before, so that one really needs to be
24 looked into.

25 Okay, Gloria Chambers-Benoit is in

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1 place of Beverly Oliphant who was number 3.
2 Is she here? Okay.

3 MS. CHAMBERS-BENOIT: Gloria
4 Chambers-Benoit. I'm director of inservice
5 programs for the Essex County Division of
6 Senior Services, and I just want to talk a
7 little bit about Meals on Wheels and how
8 important it is for Essex County.

9 Doing direct services and dealing with
10 seniors directly, I see the need is just
11 greater than ever. We have waiting lists
12 all over the county, people are just -- have
13 a list of people waiting for Meals on Wheels
14 and we're talking about now coming up to
15 January 1 when we're consolidating with all
16 of the waivers plans. We have Global
17 Options coming and we're trying to keep
18 people in their homes longer. That's going
19 to mean more meals. That's going to mean
20 more people coming home from nursing homes
21 who need services, and one of the main
22 services is going to be Meals on Wheels and
23 transportation.

24 They have to get back forth to the
25 doctors, and these are people on top of

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1 people that we're already serving who we
2 still do not have enough monies to provide
3 the meals for. It's really sad when we go
4 into a -- to see a senior to a visit and
5 we're doing an assessment and someone needs

6 Meals on Wheels and we say, well, you know,
7 you really need the meal, but we have to put
8 you on a waiting list because we don't have
9 any spots open, and that's really sad to
10 say, but sometimes we have to do that and we
11 have to continue to do reassessments so that
12 we can try to service those people that
13 really need the meal, so we just hope that,
14 you know, you guys really look at it and
15 just say -- and see the need not only in
16 Essex County, but throughout the state
17 because once Global Options really become a
18 reality and everybody gets on board and
19 we're bringing all these people home from
20 the nursing home to live in their community,
21 they're going to need services and it's
22 going to cost money to put those services
23 into place and meals is going to be
24 number one in order to keep them strong
25 enough to be able to live independently in

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1 their own homes, so we hope you can think
2 about that and give us some consideration.
3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you.
5 Doug Struyk, and you are from the
6 Christian Health Care Center Board of
7 Trustees.

8 MR. STRUYK: Yes, good morning all
9 members of the Commission. Thank you for
10 this opportunity. I'm CEO of Christian
11 Health Care Center, which is located in
12 Bergen and Passaic Counties, but I'm also
13 here primarily in my role as chair of the
14 New Jersey Association of Homes and Services
15 for the Aging.

16 We have 140 non-profit members
17 throughout New Jersey who provide a full
18 continuum of services to the elderly, and I
19 particularly want to address this morning
20 those members who participate in the
21 Congregate Housing Services Program, which
22 of course Commissioner and Administrator
23 White is very familiar with.

24 2,700 residents, 63 providers across
25 17 counties in New Jersey have a history of

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1 receiving support from the funding that you
2 oversee, and it has certainly made a
3 difference. My testimony also includes
4 letters that we've received from members and
5 consumers that participate from this program
6 as well.

7 It has certainly been a success. It's
8 a win because seniors are able to live in a
9 setting that they choose rather than
10 necessarily looking to an institutional
11 setting, which seniors continue to tell us
12 is not their first choice. While those
13 settings are appropriate in some cases, when
14 a senior can stay in their home, and if it
15 happens to be a subsidized setting, that's
16 certainly more preferable. It's also a much
17 more efficient use of public resources. The
18 Congregate Housing Services Program enables
19 nutritious meals, housekeeping, and other

20 important services that are needed for
21 seniors to remain in those kind of settings,
22 and it enables them, again, to be used most
23 efficiently.

24 New Jersey, you're aware, is seeing a
25 significant rise in its senior population.

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1 Thankfully, Governor Corzine and others are
2 supporting the need to increase affordable
3 housing which will provide greater options
4 and opportunities for these kind of monies
5 to be used that much more efficiently.

6 The JAP and the CAP programs are
7 successful. We'd encourage the Commission
8 to look at ways by which your funds can be
9 perhaps eligible for federal matching. Are
10 there opportunities under existing or
11 proposed or potential waivers where your
12 monies could be stretched even further by
13 looking for those who access the CHSP
14 program and who meet federal criteria to
15 enable the State to pull down more funding?
16 Might that be an opportunity to stretch?

17 You have many worthy programs to
18 support. I'm joined here today by people
19 who I'm very impressed and humbled to be
20 among who have great needs that they're
21 supporting. You have the work of Solomon to
22 do in figuring out how to stretch all these
23 dollars, but we're thankful that this
24 program has been among those that has been
25 supported for so many years, and as you

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1 continue to work, we encourage you to
2 continue to support this program and the
3 seniors whose lives it makes a tremendous
4 difference in.

5 Thank you very much for your time.
6 SENATOR WEINBERG: Doug, do you have
7 any specific ideas that we might share in
8 the future on how this money can use waivers
9 to get more federal funds?

10 MR. STRUYK: There are many -- if not
11 most of the seniors who live in subsidized
12 housing, many of them meet the federal
13 poverty income criteria that would enable a
14 conventional waiver, federal waiver, for
15 funding provided to them for these services
16 to potentially meet that federal criteria,
17 and it's our understanding that the JAP and
18 the CAP programs have to some extent been
19 structured in a way to do that, but for
20 those seniors who access the CHSP program --
21 and Commissioner White can probably speak to
22 this as well -- it's somewhat complicated,
23 but if there is a way to carve out those
24 seniors accessing the CHSP program who do
25 meet waiver criteria, and understanding that

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1 a waiver is a complicated federal matter and
2 there are many layers and many components to
3 that and it's not as easy as I might
4 necessarily project here this morning, but
5 nonetheless, it's something that would be
6 worthy of looking at, and as waivers are
7 modified whether that's the 1915 or the 1115

8 or the other waivers that are proposed, if
9 there's ways to stretch those dollars and
10 pull down more federal monies, that's a win,
11 and I'd be happy with our association both
12 in New Jersey as well as nationally to work
13 with the Department of Health and Senior
14 Services to see if we can suggest ways in
15 which that might be done in a way that
16 doesn't add more extensive administrative
17 burden, that is a win in a sense of being
18 able to draw down more federal dollars, so
19 I'll certainly pledge that support.

20 SENATOR WEINBERG: Hopefully
21 Mr. Struyk's association will work I guess
22 from somebody from the office -- I don't
23 know -- or from the casinos that might find
24 a way to enable us to use this money to
25 access more federal funds.

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1 I don't know, Joe, if that's something
2 that your group can do, or. . .

3 MR. TYRRELL: From the Casino Revenue
4 Association itself, keeping the funding in
5 the fund, and I guess we are in charge to
6 kind of direct where the treasury should be
7 spending the dollars and allocating it.
8 From a federal point of view, there's really
9 no role for the Casino Association itself
10 because all are regulatory and all our taxes
11 are really on the state level, so it is
12 probably with the treasurer's office.

13 SENATOR WEINBERG: So we should ask
14 the treasurer's office perhaps to contact
15 their association and explore this.

16 MS. WHITE: As administrator of the
17 Congregate Housing Services Program, I am
18 not sure what -- what I'm at liberty to talk
19 about here as a presenter since I'm here
20 just to hear testimony and always am
21 concerned about what public affairs is going
22 to be saying about anything that I say
23 publically, but as far as the Congregate
24 Housing Services Program and federal funding
25 taking advantage of waivers that are out

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1 there, our program works in conjunction with
2 a number of the waiver programs in the
3 senior housing sites, and I know with
4 consolidation of some of the waiver programs
5 in the big picture over the next several
6 years, there -- there may be ideas out there
7 on how we can expand the services and take
8 advantage of the federal match, but right
9 now, that's sort of -- we're working on
10 consolidating waiver programs to provide
11 services in the community. Those services
12 are also available to folks who live in the
13 same buildings where the Congregate Housing
14 Services Program operates, and we sort of
15 complement each other at this point and are
16 able to expand services to some folks who
17 may fall through the cracks in some of the
18 other programs.

19 MS. RAMOS: I realize that most of the
20 people who use your services are seniors,
21 but what percentage, if you know, what

22 percentage of the people that you serve are
23 disabled? I know that some disabled also
24 qualify for congregate services.

25 MR. STRUYK: Laura, I'm not familiar

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1 with the percentage. I know that there
2 certainly are -- throughout our many
3 programs there are -- there are many from
4 the disabled community who we also serve.
5 I'd be happy to gather that information and
6 have it supplied to the Commission and have
7 it available for you.

8 MS. WHITE: I have some ideas about
9 that also. In the buildings that have the
10 Congregate Housing Services Program in them,
11 every person who is a resident of those
12 buildings is eligible to be a participant in
13 the program, and I know that it varies from
14 site to site, about the number of folks
15 there, adults with disabilities in those
16 sites. Some may have 10 percent of the
17 people on their program who are people with
18 disabilities, some may have more, some may
19 not have any in their program, but everyone
20 who resides in that particular building is
21 eligible to participate in the program.
22 Thank you.

23 MR. STRUYK: Thank you very much.

24 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay, Mary Anne

25 Ross.

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1 MS. ROSS: Thank you for the
2 opportunity to be here today. I really
3 appreciate it. I'm the coordinator of a
4 statewide resource center for older adults
5 who suffer from dementia and their families.
6 I am with the COPSA Institute for
7 Alzheimer's Disease at the University of
8 Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

9 We're part of the University of
10 Behavioral HealthCare, and for 20 years I've
11 been working with older adults and their
12 families not only regarding dementia but
13 regarding other mental health issues for
14 older adults, and this is an area that's
15 overlooked. Primarily, for the most part
16 older adults have been underserved in terms
17 of mental illness, they have been -- there's
18 been very little research. Older adults
19 were thought to be non-compliant, they were
20 thought to be uncooperative, and for the
21 most part, mental illness isn't identified
22 as such. How many times have we heard
23 people say, you know, "Ever since dad had
24 his heart attack he doesn't seem like he
25 used to," or, you know, "Aunt May has gotten

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1 to be a real nervous Nelly," or "Grandma's
2 really kind of changing," and people don't
3 identify those things as anxiety,
4 depression, perhaps dementia, confusion, but
5 older adults are really at risk for this
6 because a lot of the conditions, the
7 physical problems that people have, like
8 high blood pressure, diabetes, heart
9 attacks, can also have these core morbid

10 conditions of anxiety and confusion and
11 depression, and it's very important that
12 those things be treated because they're
13 associated with very poor health outcomes.
14 They're associated with increased mortality.

15 In the case of depression, we often
16 see older adults who eventually commit
17 suicide. Older adults have the highest rate
18 of successful suicide of any population in
19 the country.

20 One of the things that happens is that
21 because of the stigma and because people
22 aren't identifying these conditions and
23 these problems as mental illness, people
24 aren't being treated for it and the people
25 who are treating them are their primary

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1 doctors, and some of these doctors are doing
2 a good job, but some of those doctors just
3 like a lot of people in our society are
4 ageists, so when an 80-year-old comes in and
5 says, you know, I don't have any get up and
6 go, I don't know what's wrong with me
7 lately, I don't know, I feel lonely, I feel
8 lost, you know, they don't identify that
9 person as being depressed. They'll say
10 well, let's see if we can change your
11 arthritis medicine, let's see if we can do
12 something else for you. They won't identify
13 and what happens is some of the statistics
14 indicate that 40 percent of people that
15 commit suicide, older adults who commit
16 suicide, have seen their primary doctor
17 the week before. That's astounding and
18 horrifying, so it's an issue that we need to
19 address.

20 One of the things that we have done at
21 COPSA -- COPSA originally started in 1973 as
22 a geriatric outreach program because older
23 adults were identified as being underserved
24 for mental illness, and part of the mission
25 of the Community Mental Health Center, which

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1 is now University of Behavioral HealthCare,
2 was to work with these families. We have an
3 outreach program that goes out into the
4 community and works with families and
5 patients.

6 And one of the things that's different
7 about this program is that these model
8 programs have proven to be very successful
9 is that they're very time intensive. People
10 have to go out and they have to establish a
11 rapport with a person and that takes time.
12 They have to get to know the family and that
13 takes time. And that's what our outreach
14 workers do, and then they turn around and
15 they try to overcome any obstacles a person
16 might have to utilizing services like
17 problems with transportation, like problems
18 with getting medications, so they're
19 concerned with the concrete but they're also
20 concerned with identifying what people may
21 be able to utilize psychiatric services and
22 fortunately at our service we have five
23 geriatric psychiatrists, so our outreach

24 services have the luxury of being able to go
25 with the patient to the psychiatrist, talk

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1 to the family with the psychiatrist, and
2 have everybody work together, and because
3 we're a teaching hospital of course we --
4 teaching university, we also have
5 psychologists, and basically people who are
6 concerned with research --

7 (Time bell rings.)
8 -- and are cutting edge.

9 What I would implore this Commission
10 to do is consider the mental health concerns
11 of older adults because it does have such a
12 big impact on the quality of life and on
13 life itself, and I would suggest that you
14 really consider different kinds of programs
15 to educate people about mental illness in
16 older adults and also perhaps develop model
17 programs like ours, like our outreach
18 program, and I can provide -- I don't have
19 it with me today, but I can certainly
20 forward to you information about these
21 programs.

22 Any questions?

23 MS. RAMOS: Well, I'd like to commend
24 you for having this program in place.

25 MS. ROSS: Thank you.

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1 MS. RAMOS: A friend of mine did
2 suffer a heart attack -- she was my
3 next-door neighbor -- and ever since she
4 suffered that heart attack she became more
5 and more reclusive and even though she was
6 refusing to eat in the hospital and the
7 family was demanding mental health services
8 they never gave it to her and she died, so I
9 totally agree that more of these services
10 are essential and necessary for our older
11 adults and their families, and certainly
12 none of her specialists or her primary care
13 doctor even recognized it as a mental health
14 problem.

15 MS. ROSS: That happens very often.

16 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Thank you.

17 Michael Vieira, not here. Rose Pizzo.

18 MS. PIZZO: Good morning. Good

19 morning to all of you. My name is Rose
20 Pizzo. My husband is here with me this
21 morning -- his name is Vincent. I was born
22 deaf. My husband is also deaf. I am here
23 to represent a group known as the Deaf
24 Senior Citizens of Midland Park, the
25 Northwest Center, and what I'm doing right

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1 now is I'm utilizing American Sign Language,
2 and the sign language interpreters are here
3 telling you what I'm saying, and I thank
4 these interpreters very, very much, as
5 should all of you, so that you can
6 understand what I'm saying, and I thank you
7 for providing the interpreters.

8 Back in 2000, we began meeting at the
9 Midland Park Center. We were invited -- the
10 deaf senior citizens were invited, and we
11 were so pleased by that because for many

12 deaf senior citizens, they were isolated in
13 their own towns and communities that were
14 quite far. They live in Dover, they live
15 quite far from the particular center. And
16 the senior centers that were available in
17 their own towns were all for hearing people,
18 predominantly, and there was no one there
19 for the deaf individuals to be able to
20 socialize with. They weren't able to
21 communicate, to understand, to be able to
22 socialize and play games.

23 So when we set up this Northwest
24 Center, it was the first time that this was
25 done, and the deaf individual seniors

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1 flocked to the center from all over the
2 area. We had things to do, we were able to
3 socialize with each other. We set it up on
4 Thursday for just for one day a week. The
5 center is open every day, but our deaf
6 individuals meet there. They were willing
7 to give us Thursdays and we said fine, okay,
8 that's fine, we'll take it.

9 We have such a good time. We get
10 together, we chat, we play games, we support
11 each other. We find out what's happening in
12 each other's lives. We've met new friends,
13 we've been able to cement relationships with
14 old friends, and it's wonderful, and
15 everyone comes, and it's so valuable and
16 such an important part of our lives.

17 We range in numbers from 15 to 80
18 individuals showing up on any particular
19 Thursday. We socialize, we have parties, we
20 go on trips together, and we discuss many,
21 many issues that concern us, mostly related
22 with health problems and things that we can
23 discuss, and some individuals when they go
24 to the doctors, they do get interpreting
25 services; others do not get interpreters, so

0058

1 they're forced to write notes back and forth
2 with their health care providers, and so, I
3 mean, and that's a problem within the deaf
4 community and in other aspects in our life
5 is an ability to get sign language
6 interpreters.

7 Guess what occurred in maybe 2002, or
8 maybe it was 2003. At that particular
9 center, there is a social worker -- let me
10 just back up a little bit -- who has an
11 office right there in that center, and we
12 noticed that many of the hearing seniors
13 that were there would go into her office and
14 discuss various problems throughout the day,
15 so we became rather curious about that and
16 the -- they explained that the social worker
17 was helping the various senior citizens with
18 various problems and things that they needed
19 assistance with. Because -- so we decided
20 as a group we also would like to go in and
21 get some assistance. And then we realized
22 that it would be a wonderful opportunity.
23 So many times there's things we get in the
24 mail related to our health care, related to
25 insurance that we didn't understand --

0059

1 (Time bell rings.)
2 -- and the social worker realized that
3 oh, my goodness, these deaf senior citizens
4 have needs also, and in order to communicate
5 with -- oh, my time. The timer has run --
6 okay. Well, we would write notes back and
7 forth with the social worker at the center.
8 Sometimes we would understand, sometimes we
9 couldn't, but then, we contacted -- our
10 social worker contacted Noreen Best, and
11 Noreen Best was willing to help us.

12 She realized the need to have sign
13 language interpreters and she was able to
14 get funding for that, and this is around the
15 time that Medicare Part D came out and
16 overwhelming for so many seniors to try and
17 understand, so Noreen was able to secure
18 funding for four days so that we would have
19 sign language interpreters and be able to
20 meet with the social worker one on one to be
21 able to fill out the necessary paperwork.

22 It's wonderful to be able to have the
23 interpreters to be able to provide
24 counseling and help with various things.
25 Family Counseling provided the funding for

0060

1 us to continue to have sign language
2 interpreters once a month for a period of
3 20 months. However, that funding has run
4 out, and we would like to have the same
5 opportunity of hearing senior citizens that
6 go to centers, and we would be very
7 satisfied if we only have interpreters
8 provided for us maybe once, only twice a
9 month. We'd be happy with that. We simply
10 want access to the same information that
11 senior citizens who can hear have access to.

12 We've had speakers come in and we've
13 been able to utilize the funding for the
14 interpreters so that we can access this
15 information. We've had individuals come in
16 from the banking industry, Internet fraud,
17 information on stroke and medication,
18 information about purchasing
19 over-the-counter drugs, and the various
20 dangers associated with that. We've had
21 lawyers come in that have helped us in
22 explaining various paperwork that we need,
23 we've had help with our taxes, and again,
24 our funding for interpreters has now run
25 out.

0061

1 We are deaf, and as deaf senior
2 citizens, we are very, very frightened
3 because moving forward, we do not have
4 access to this information because we cannot
5 afford the sign language interpreters. Lip
6 reading is very, very difficult, and it is a
7 source of much misinformation. We're hoping
8 that you would help us to provide some
9 funding so that we have access to sign
10 language interpreters in the future. It is
11 very, very important for our community.
12 Thank you very much.

13 MS. ARSLANIAN: If I could just add on

14 to what Rose was saying, I have a letter
15 from the social worker who serves the deaf
16 seniors in our senior center that she gave
17 when she was hoping to identify the need of
18 the deaf for interpreters once a month. If
19 I could just give you the letter. Thank
20 you.

21 MS. PIZZO: Also, this is the
22 information for the deaf and hard of
23 hearing. This is the list of interpreters,
24 if I could provide it to you as well.

25 VICE-CHAIRPERSON THEBERY: I just

0062

1 wanted to make a brief comment on a possible
2 source of additional funding -- and I know
3 some from the Midland Park group, and they
4 are a great group. It would be the Henry H.
5 Kessler Foundation in West Orange, and
6 they're willing to speak to their -- and get
7 the application -- would be Elaine Katz,
8 K-A-T-Z, and their primary focus is in
9 education, but they also have ancillary
10 grants of 10, 20, 30,000 and so forth as
11 well as the educational grants of 500,000
12 plus. Certainly with what you've just
13 shared, the education aspect alone I think
14 would warrant consideration, so you might
15 not want to let that go by, and get into the
16 next funding stream for the new year.

17 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Next is Louis
18 Schwartz, and I think we have Mr. Cosmo
19 Palmisano.

20 MR. PALMISANO: Good morning to this
21 Commission, and especially to -- I have four
22 very close friends right in front of me, so
23 it's very, very rewarding to be here.

24 Mr. Schwartz could not be here because
25 of personal illness. Lou Schwartz is a

0063

1 very, very well-known activist throughout
2 New Jersey, a leader of the AARP, and a
3 member of -- and was past chairman of the
4 Advisory Board for the Division of Senior
5 Services, and is an active member of our
6 legislative committee, and he asked me to
7 read this statement to you.

8 "Good morning. My name is Lou
9 Schwartz. I live in Teaneck. I lived in
10 Bergen County for more than 50 years. I
11 want to explain why I'm here today. The
12 tremendous cost of prescription drugs has
13 been very cruel to seniors like me. It is
14 a -- if a person is not covered by a former
15 employer or union, he or she must pay
16 enormous amounts of money for prescriptions,
17 even with Medicare Part D. People who are
18 older, more frail, sick, and on a very fixed
19 income like Social Security with little
20 savings or investment are very bad -- are in
21 a very bad position. The only way we can
22 survive is through PAAD. It means our
23 survival.

24 "My friend, Marie, who lives in
25 Fairview, is on dialysis for more than a

0064

1 year, three times per week at Holy Name

2 Hospital. Her total income per month is a
3 little bit over \$350 -- \$850. Her husband
4 was disabled at age 47 with a terrible heart
5 condition that then lead to his death
6 15 years ago. She's 80 years old. PAAD is
7 keeping her alive. Without it, she would
8 either not be able to eat, or she would be
9 forced to spend down the little savings that
10 she has and go on Medicaid, so her life
11 would be diminished, and the standard of her
12 care would be diminished. PAAD is
13 permitting her to stay slightly above water.
14 She must pay \$189 a month for transportation
15 to and from Holy Name Hospital because the
16 county transportation is not available early
17 in the morning when she's required to go for
18 her dialysis.

19 "PAAD is funded by the State of New
20 Jersey partially through the Casino Revenue
21 Fund. We desperately need to keep this
22 program funded by the Casino Revenue Fund.
23 Thousands of seniors in Bergen County are
24 covered under PAAD. If this program
25 changes, or, God forbid, ends, these people

0065
1 will not be able to pay the monthly premium
2 for Medicare D, which could be \$30 a month,
3 the co-pays, and then the dreaded doughnut
4 hole will make their lives impossible. It's
5 especially important for people on dialysis,
6 and those who qualify for PAAD.

7 "I can't get it out of my mind this
8 morning that my friend Marie who is
9 struggling to stay alive, weak and frail,
10 has so much trouble even getting on the van
11 to go to the hospital and lives in Fairview,
12 is surviving only because of PAAD. She's in
13 pain, she's weak --

14 (Time bell rings.)
15 -- she's frightened, and she needs our
16 help. Please keep her alive. Marie needs
17 you."

18 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: To my knowledge,
19 there has been no threat or indication of a
20 reduction in PAAD, so those comments are
21 accepted and agreed with, and we thank you.

22 All right, Joan Larkin on behalf of
23 Shukla, Suryakant.

24 MS. LARKIN: Good morning Senator,
25 Madam Chairman, members of the Committee.

0066
1 My name is Joan Larkin, and I am a member of
2 the Senior Citizens Advisory Council here in
3 Hackensack. I'm reading this letter for
4 Dr. Shukla, also a member of the Advisory
5 Council and chairperson of the legislative
6 committee. Dr. Shukla is away on business.

7 "I am writing this letter on behalf of
8 our organization, the Indo-American Senior
9 Citizens Association of Bergen County, which
10 is a non-profit organization, the Federation
11 of Indo-American Seniors Association of
12 North America, and the Indo-American Seniors
13 of New Jersey.

14 "We strive to improve the lives of our
15 seniors by providing vital information on

16 public and private programs so that they can
17 become productive and vital citizens of our
18 society. We also create a stimulating
19 social atmosphere under healthy conditions.
20 "Economically, our seniors strive to
21 survive by the efforts of relatives in
22 social, state, and national organizations.
23 It has been very hard in these bad economic
24 times when most of our seniors live on fixed
25 incomes and are trying to make ends meet by

0067

1 cutting corners. Normally, seniors live at
2 a consistent level, and there are few ways
3 to economize. Most of the seniors have a
4 few basic needs; namely, food, shelter,
5 medicine, and transportation, and they need
6 them just for survival.

7 "Recently, an elderly patient visited
8 her doctor. She told the doctor that the
9 medicine insurance co-payment was no longer
10 sufficient to cover the cost of medicine
11 prescribed. She had a choice -- either to
12 buy food or medicine.

13 "We have noted recently that to get
14 Meals on Wheels, you have to be on a waiting
15 list in Bergen County, and many other
16 counties.

17 "Transportation needs to get to food
18 stores and to medical facilities are not
19 being met. Transportation has been getting
20 more and more difficult, especially in the
21 rural communities.

22 "Recently one of our 80 years old
23 members whose wife is wheelchair-bound moved
24 from Bergen County to Hunterdon County and
25 faced severe problems getting these

0068

1 necessary services. Some of our members in
2 Edison and other communities are also having
3 problems getting necessary food from Meals
4 on Wheels.

5 "The allocation of the funds in the
6 State of New Jersey have not been increased
7 for Meals on Wheels or transportation in
8 recent years. Our senior population is
9 increasing rapidly, and as soon as the baby
10 boomers enter the senior population, the
11 demands for the above services are going to
12 multiply drastically.

13 "The Casino Revenue Fund was
14 established for these very reasons, but the
15 benefits are not keeping up with the demand.
16 I am not sure if the funds are not being
17 distributed fairly to these causes or if
18 there is some other problem, but on behalf
19 of our organization and our seniors, I
20 strongly urge the members of this
21 Commission, our elected officials, and the
22 governor of New Jersey, Mr. Jon Corzine, to
23 look very closely and favorably into this
24 matter.

25 "Thank you for your kind

0069

1 consideration. Sincerely, Suryakant Shukla,
2 public relations."

3 SENATOR WEINBERG: I don't know if

4 there's anybody from the county here or
5 anybody from the state that might be able to
6 answer the question I have.

7 How long is the waiting list in Bergen
8 County for Meals on Wheels, and how long is
9 the waiting list in the state for Meals on
10 Wheels?

11 MS. JOEWONO: In Bergen County, we
12 have about 117 --

13 VICE-CHAIRPERSON THEBERY: Lorraine
14 Joewono is the director for senior services
15 in Bergen County.

16 MS. JOEWONO: Right now, the waiting
17 list in Bergen County is 117 people and that
18 fluctuates daily because some people come
19 off the list. Either they don't need the
20 services or they pass away.

21 SENATOR WEINBERG: Do you have any
22 idea how long somebody stays on the waiting
23 list, what the average is?

24 MS. JOEWONO: Average may be one
25 month, two months sometimes, but I know most

0070

1 of the time when they do call us, they
2 already are in need of the services.
3 They're coming out of -- it's not like
4 they're coming out of the rehab or the
5 hospital; they're already home and they're
6 calling us and they're on these waiting
7 lists because we don't have the funding.

8 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I'd like to
9 introduce Lorraine Joewono who is the
10 executive director of the Bergen County
11 Division of Senior Services, and her
12 colleagues and my colleagues in the
13 audience, I'd just like to take this
14 opportunity. Ed Benoit from Hudson County
15 is the director of the Hudson County Office
16 on Aging; Mary Kuzinski from Passaic County,
17 the executive director of senior services,
18 and Sue Lennon from Warren County. Did I
19 miss somebody? Because I didn't do a good
20 job of that at the last hearing.

21 VICE-CHAIRPERSON THEBERY: I think it
22 might be remiss if I didn't say we had a
23 co-contingent here, many of them who pulled
24 up on that bus. I do want the Commission to
25 hear this as well as the good senator.

0071

1 Bertha-Nora Acosta is our direct manager for
2 the Meals on Wheels program for those with
3 disabilities. We have one of the only DYFS
4 grants in the State of New Jersey which
5 services the under 60 population with
6 permanent disabilities who are homebound.
7 We don't like the word, but until we coin
8 another.

9 Bertha, how many do you currently have
10 on the program and how many are on the wait
11 list?

12 MS. ACOSTA: We have 90 people on the
13 program and we have 15 people on the waiting
14 list.

15 SENATOR WEINBERG: 15?

16 MS. ACOSTA: 15, mmm-hmm. Disabled
17 people under 60.

18 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I'd like to
19 comment that the counties have different
20 waiting lists. Every county has a different
21 waiting list. It really depends on the
22 local resources that have been pulled into
23 whatever else that the state and the federal
24 government has given, and if, you know, the
25 municipalities and the county have been

0072

1 putting a lot of money in Meals on Wheels,
2 the waiting list would be smaller, but I
3 think that all the county -- you'll hear
4 more from the directors about just the
5 general need for there to be recognition of
6 the Meals on Wheels program, and its being
7 deserving of consideration for more funding
8 from the casino revenues.

9 I'm going to call next Eileen Goff.
10 MS. GOFF: Thank you very much for the
11 opportunity to speak today. Everybody here
12 has important causes, and, you know, I'm
13 reconsidering some of the things that I
14 planned to say and just touch on them
15 because the needs are universal.

16 My name is Eileen Goff. I'm the
17 executive director of Heightened
18 Independence and Progress -- HIP -- with two
19 centers for independent living for people
20 with disabilities in Bergen and Hudson
21 Counties. There are 12 such agencies
22 throughout the state.

23 HIP has been providing services for
24 disabled community for the past 30 years,
25 and the needs of senior citizens and people

0073

1 with disabilities are frequently the same.
2 According to a recent survey before our
3 economy has recently had all these bad
4 things show that 79 percent of people of
5 working age who are able bodied are
6 employed; however, only 37 percent of people
7 of working age with disabilities are
8 employed. There are many reasons, some of
9 which will include lack of opportunity, lack
10 of education and training, occasionally
11 health issues, and discrimination. But what
12 it all means is people are of very low
13 income all too frequently and have not too
14 many opportunities to change that situation.
15 And we've been hearing this morning about
16 these critical needs, and I would just like
17 to touch on two of them which have already
18 been addressed. One is the need for
19 affordable accessible housing.

20 The small amount of housing that is
21 affordable for people of low income has a
22 miniscule proportion which is accessible to
23 people who have mobility issues, and I think
24 it's a subject that is frequently not
25 realized.

0074

1 And the other, I will echo, is food.
2 I was not aware until now that Bergen was
3 the only county that had a Meals on Wheels
4 program for people under 60. I knew we had
5 it. But it is in need of so much more

6 money, not just in Bergen, but across the
7 state, because people are hungry.

8 At our agency, we're privileged to
9 receive gifts to share with the community
10 from volunteer agencies and individual
11 well-meaning people. And every year we
12 provide approximately a hundred holiday
13 gifts and we ask the consumers of our agency
14 what do you need, what would you like. The
15 overwhelming request is certificates to
16 supermarkets. It simply is unacceptable
17 that residents in New Jersey perceive food
18 to be a holiday gift.

19 I have another issue that has not been
20 touched on today, and I would like to bring
21 it to your attention. According to New
22 Jersey Department of Education, 230,000
23 people with disabilities are between the
24 ages of 6 and 21, and for that reason, in
25 2004, the Department of Education received

0075

1 federal funds for a three-year period which
2 were shared with the 12 existing centers for
3 independent living who cover the 21 counties
4 in our state. And the purpose of the funds
5 were to work with high school students
6 throughout the state who have disabilities
7 to assist them to prepare for their life by
8 developing skills to --

9 (Time bell rings.)

10 -- access the services that are there.
11 Once the school bus stops, the majority of
12 services for students stop because the
13 schools are prepared to train students in
14 education, but not the special needs that
15 they'll have to continue their life, so
16 there are areas such as access to
17 transportation options, developing resumes,
18 preparing to go to work training programs
19 and a myriad of other areas that these young
20 people require because what happens very
21 often is the school bus stops coming, the
22 services stop, the young person with the
23 disability begins receiving Social Security
24 and Medicaid and stays home with TV.
25 Families are overwhelmed as to what their

0076

1 parental needs are in this case.

2 After the three-year initial period
3 through the Department of Labor, the
4 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
5 Services continued the funding for one year.
6 Future funding for this program is very much
7 in jeopardy at this point. I am asking this
8 body to consider the expenditure of
9 \$700,000, which annually will support this
10 initiative.

11 During the last four years, 8,000
12 young people in high school have received
13 services through the statewide program, and
14 the high schools welcome our staff to work
15 with the young people. Investing in our
16 youth today can prepare them to be employed,
17 self-sufficient taxpayers as they reach
18 adult life. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I think you might

20 also consider attending a budget legislative
21 hearing of the senate and the assembly,
22 Mrs. Goff, and bringing that request to them
23 directly.

24 MS. GOFF: I'll do that. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you very

0077

1 much.

2 Marianne Valls, New Jersey Transit
3 Citizens Advisory Committee member. This is
4 a very hardworking group working with NJ
5 Transit.

6 By the way, we are interested if you
7 want to drop off a copy of your testimony.
8 We will make that part of the record.

9 MS. VALLS: My name is Marianne Valls,
10 and I reside in Jersey City. I am a member
11 of the Senior and Disabled Transportation
12 Program Citizens Advisory Board.

13 All opportunities, be they work,
14 education, or social, begin with
15 transportation. The Americans with
16 Disabilities Act calls for people with
17 disabilities to be included in all aspects
18 of society. Inclusion begins with
19 accessible transportation. I'm sorry. Lack
20 of transportation forces segregation for a
21 class of people that for too long have
22 remained unseen and been unheard. In my
23 view, lack of transportation is a major
24 cause of this segregation.

25 For too long, people with disabilities

0078

1 have been considered society's forever
2 children. Even today, myths and stereotypes
3 still exist, causing most people to view
4 people with disabilities as poor, pathetic
5 creatures needing constant care. Travel
6 goes a long way to dispel these
7 misconceptions.

8 All transportation -- all society
9 loses when one segment of the community
10 cannot contribute simply because getting
11 from here to -- from one place to another
12 has become impossible. Special
13 transportation is not a luxury for people
14 with disabilities, but, like the rest of the
15 public, a necessity. I would urge the
16 officials here to imagine the outcry -- what
17 the outcry would be if you drastically cut
18 mass transit as you seem to be cutting
19 special transportation.

20 Special transportation creates
21 taxpayers, shoppers, movie goers, and
22 diners. In this troubled economy, taxes are
23 taxes and spending is spending, regardless
24 whether a person is using a mobility device,
25 visually limited, or has other limitations.

0079

1 People just need a way to support the very
2 troubled economy. That support begins with
3 special transportation.

4 If I may make one last comment, this
5 nation is about to celebrate a historic
6 inauguration of the first black president.
7 One of the hallmarks of the civil rights

8 movement was Rosa Parks' refusal to sit in
9 the back of the bus. I would respectfully
10 remind you that there are many times when
11 people with disabilities can't even get on
12 the bus. Lack of continued funding ensures
13 that now there won't even be a bus. Thank
14 you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: That comment
16 about special transportation creates
17 taxpayers, shoppers, movie goers, and
18 diners, and people need to pay to support
19 the troubled economy, I think we need to
20 realize that transportation and expanded
21 transportation to the legislation we've
22 discussed could be part -- could be viewed
23 as part of the economic incentive programs
24 that are being considered now by the
25 legislator and the governor, so thank you

0080
1 very much.

2 MS. VALLS: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I think we will
4 use that paragraph.

5 Okay, Eleanor Kohn from Federation
6 Apartments. Okay. Rosemarie Kasper? Okay.
7 Mary Kuzinski from Passaic County. And as
8 just mentioned, Mary is the executive
9 director of the Passaic County Department of
10 Senior Services, Disabilities, and Veteran
11 Affairs.

12 MS. KUZINSKI: Good morning. My name
13 is Mary Kuzinski. I'm the director of
14 Passaic County Senior Services. Passaic
15 County has an elderly population of 78,993,
16 placing us in 9th position among the other
17 counties in New Jersey. However, we have
18 the lowest retirement rate in the entire
19 state. Elderly over the age of 60, per se,
20 is not the issue. The 85-plus age group is
21 the fastest growing. To compound the issue,
22 54 percent of our elderly reside in three
23 major cities of Paterson, Passaic, and
24 Clifton. The cities of Paterson, Passaic
25 have a 25 percent poverty rate. This is

0081
1 really a time of crisis for us to zero in on
2 the most needy.

3 40 percent of our elderly age 85 plus
4 require at least three ADLs. An ADL is the
5 inability to perform following activities:
6 Eating, dressing, bathing, walking, and
7 transferring in and out of bed.

8 92 of our 85 plus require three IADLs.
9 That's the inability to prepare meals, shop
10 for personal items, medication management,
11 doing light housework, and transportation.

12 We readily need these services for
13 transportation and Meals on Wheels. You can
14 see how the two services -- home delivery
15 meals and transportation -- are intertwined
16 with each other. We currently serve a
17 thousand people per day on our Meals on
18 Wheels, and unfortunately, we have 300 on
19 our waiting list.

20 While we are looking at addressing the
21 immediate need of the eldest elderly, the

22 baby boomers are knocking at our doors.
23 They will need services soon at a time when
24 we are financially stressed. We need
25 services in Passaic County, and we survive

0082

1 by saying one step at a time, one day at a
2 time, one person at a time, so we can remain
3 sane and address the needs that need to be
4 addressed.

5 We respectfully request passing
6 legislation to secure increased funding and
7 assist us in our quest to serve those
8 elderly individuals that have been the
9 backbone of this country -- the veterans,
10 the disabled, and the elderly.

11 Thank you all for your help and your
12 advocacy in the efforts you have done on our
13 behalf. I thank you, and it is a pleasure
14 to be here today.

15 SENATOR WEINBERG: How much does it
16 cost for Meals on Wheels for one person for
17 one day?

18 MS. KUZINSKI: Approximately \$8 a
19 meal.

20 SENATOR WEINBERG: So for 2,400 -- you
21 have 300 people on your waiting list?

22 MS. KUZINSKI: Yes, we have.

23 SENATOR WEINBERG: And is that three
24 meals a day?

25 MS. KUZINSKI: One meal a day.

0083

1 SENATOR WEINBERG: So for \$2,400 a
2 month you could clear up your waiting list?

3 MS. KUZINSKI: Yes. Well, I can't do
4 the math at this very, very moment, but
5 yeah. What happens is that our county
6 appropriates dollars to supplement us for
7 the remaining thousand meals that we do
8 daily, and we provide 252 meals on the
9 weekends, so some of our clients are seven
10 days a week.

11 SENATOR WEINBERG: They're not
12 supposed to take the weekend off from
13 eating?

14 MS. KUZINSKI: Excuse me?

15 SENATOR WEINBERG: It was a cynical
16 comment. I'm sorry.

17 Is Lorraine Joewono still here?
18 Because I would like to find out how much it
19 costs the County of Bergen per day per
20 recipient so maybe Lorraine can give us that
21 information.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. KUZINSKI: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: The State has
25 done a study called Mission Nutrition, and

0084

1 about two years ago, the average -- the cost
2 -- statewide average cost was 8.97, and that
3 would include the meal costs and the cost of
4 delivering that meal and all staff cost, and
5 that is probably the most efficient service
6 you can get that is so essential to helping
7 them keeping their health.

8 Okay. Let's see. Jim Osgood. Okay,
9 Jim Osgood is from Passaic County. Very

10 good. You're on next.
11 MR. MCGILL: I'm John McGill.
12 MS. MILLER: Oh, John McGill. Okay,
13 John McGill. Also from Passaic?
14 MR. MCGILL: From Passaic County.
15 Good morning. I'm John McGill, director of
16 State County Power Transit. As my director,
17 Mary Kuzinski, has stated, our senior
18 population is growing and will continue to
19 grow in the coming years as well as our
20 disabled population.

21 We provide vital services in the area
22 of medical appointments, dialysis
23 appointments, nutrition, food shopping, and
24 our services are stressed at the moment.
25 Without this additional funding in the

0085

1 future, there will be an impact and our
2 service will be impacted and I urge you all
3 to support the passage of this legislation.
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Is Eleanor
6 Pell there? Okay, Eleanor is --

7 MS. LARKIN: My name is not Eleanor
8 Pell; my name is Joan Larkin, but I've been
9 asked to read a statement from Evelyn Comer.

10 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Eleanor?

11 MS. LARKIN: Evelyn.

12 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: No, she's down
13 further on our list, but go ahead.

14 MS. LARKIN: Okay.

15 "I am here to plead with you to do
16 whatever you can to influence the State of
17 New Jersey to increase the Meals on Wheels
18 program. There are 117 people on the
19 waiting list in Bergen County who really
20 need the meals in order to have one
21 nutritious meal a day. These people are
22 frail, homebound seniors who are unable to
23 go shopping or cook for themselves. There
24 are some who for years cooked meals for
25 their families who are wonderful cooks; now

0086

1 they are not physically or mentally able to
2 cook themselves. Many would just eat bread,
3 cereal, or cookies if they do not get the
4 meals.

5 "We need \$3 million more in the Meals
6 on Wheels program to serve the needs of most
7 of the people who need it. My friend Jenny
8 received the meals for two years after a
9 major heart attack. After she received a
10 pacemaker, she gradually felt better and
11 realized she was able to cook again. She
12 withdrew from the program in order to give
13 her meal to someone who needed it more than
14 she did.

15 "How can we allow people whose
16 children or friends cannot or will not cook
17 for them to die of malnutrition? Many of
18 the most frail, low-income seniors are too
19 proud to seek and to ask for Meals on
20 Wheels. They silently go without food for
21 days, especially during the last week of
22 every month just before their Social
23 Security checks arrive.

24 "Seniors are victimized by
25 unscrupulous taxi drivers, local grocery

0087

1 stores with high prices, so-called friends
2 who want to be tipped for shopping for them.

3 "If you ask people who receive these
4 meals and are eating them for their very
5 survival, they will tell you how grateful
6 they are to have them. They tell the driver
7 who delivers the meals, but sometimes the
8 legislator never gets that message.

9 "Meals on Wheels -- keeping thousands
10 of seniors alive. We need it properly
11 funded so everyone who needs a meal will get
12 one. Thank you."

13 SENATOR WEINBERG: I think I saw
14 Lorraine come back in the room. Did I?

15 I don't know if you know the answer to
16 this question, if you know what the average
17 cost to deliver a Meals on Wheels.

18 MS. JOEWONO: To deliver a meal?

19 SENATOR WEINBERG: The cost of the
20 meal and the delivery.

21 MS. JOEWONO: We pay about \$3.36 for
22 the meal itself, and if you're adding in
23 transportation and administrative cost, I
24 don't know. Approximately maybe that would
25 come to a little over \$7, but I could find

0088

1 out, I mean, the meal itself is --

2 SENATOR WEINBERG: You know, I am
3 truly amazed -- perhaps it's through my own
4 ignorance, you know, every time I think I've
5 heard everything or know everything,
6 something like this happens. That we have
7 this kind of a waiting list for basic food
8 for senior citizens in our state and
9 certainly in this county, it is amazing, and
10 it is rather outrageous.

11 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Is Eleanor Kohn
12 here?

13 MS. JOEWONO: Joan spoke on behalf of
14 Evelyn because Evelyn said she was going to
15 be late.

16 MS. RAMOS: Eleanor.

17 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Eleanor Kohn,
18 K-O-H-N.

19 MS. JOEWONO: She spoke on behalf of
20 Evelyn Comer.

21 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay, we're all
22 -- okay. We are now up to number 21, Susan
23 Lennon, the director -- the director of the
24 Warren County Division of Aging and
25 Disability Services.

0089

1 MS. LENNON: I know I'm signed up to
2 speak four times, but Wilson is going to
3 speak right now.

4 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Wilson
5 Wolf, and Wilson is the chairperson of
6 the -- the chairman of the Warren County
7 Office on Aging and Advisory Council?

8 MR. WOLF: Yes. Senator, Madam
9 Chairman, and members of the Commission,
10 it's my pleasure to -- and my privilege to
11 have an opportunity to speak to you today,

12 and I would like to say that as an overview,
13 what I'd like to do is take you back to some
14 basics, and I'm going to read this testimony
15 in its whole, and then I'd be happy to
16 answer any questions you might have.

17 I'd like to begin my comments by
18 reading a paragraph from the New Jersey
19 Constitution, which specifies the intended
20 use of casino revenue funds.

21 "Any law authorizing the establishment
22 and operation of such gaming establishments
23 shall provide for state revenues derived
24 therefrom to be applied solely for the
25 purpose of providing funding for reductions

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1 in property taxes, rental, telephone, gas,
2 electric, municipal utilities, and charges
3 of eligible senior citizens and disabled
4 residents of the state, and for additional
5 or expanded health services for the benefits
6 for transportation services or benefits to
7 eligible senior citizens and disabled
8 residents in accordance with such formula as
9 the legislator by law shall provide."

10 I wish to refer you to your own 2008
11 annual report dated March 28, 2008. This
12 report thoroughly substantiates and outlines
13 recommendations for casino -- for increases
14 to the Casino Revenue Fund to subsidize
15 specifically identified programs benefiting
16 New Jersey senior citizens and residents
17 with disabilities.

18 As a chairman of the Warren County
19 Aging Service Advisory Council, I've been
20 aware of numerous advocacy efforts to
21 encourage the allocation of additional funds
22 to support essential services to our senior
23 and disabled population, our most
24 vulnerable.

25 It was the newly-organized New Jersey

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1 consortium of area agency on aging advisory
2 council which spearheaded the paper plate
3 campaign to advocate for increased
4 home-delivered meals funds for homebound
5 seniors and disabled New Jersey residents.
6 Through our efforts, thousands of signed
7 paper plates were presented to the New
8 Jersey legislators to demonstrate the
9 importance of this increase in funds. From
10 this, New Jersey costs initiated the Save My
11 Ride campaign to increase funding for
12 transportation to our most vulnerable and
13 isolated residents.

14 Both home-delivered meals and
15 transportation are service priorities listed
16 in your own report. In fact, the
17 recommendations contained in your 2008
18 report have been formally supported by the
19 following statewide organizations: The New
20 Jersey Areas Agency on Aging, the Welfare
21 Directors Association of New Jersey, the New
22 Jersey Association of Counties, the New
23 Jersey Council on Specialized
24 Transportation.

25 Despite overwhelming support by New

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1 Jersey residents, consumers, professional
2 service groups, and your very own and our
3 very own casino revenue advisory
4 commissions, critically-needed funding for
5 services continues to be in need of help.

6 Moreover, since 2006, the federal
7 Medicare Part D program has saved New Jersey
8 Casino Revenue Fund a minimum of
9 \$180 million per year in PAAD expenses.
10 Funding to support our most vulnerable,
11 isolated, abused, and frail residents is
12 stalled. Many questions remain.

13 Medicare Part D has reportedly saved
14 the Casino Revenue Fund PAAD program an
15 estimated \$180 million per year since 2006.
16 (Time bell rings.)

17 Where are these funds? Have those
18 and/or other funds been manipulated to
19 support the New Jersey general fund deficit?
20 With the aforementioned savings to the
21 Casino Revenue Fund, please justify how
22 these vital life-sustaining programs such as
23 home-delivered meals, adult protective
24 services, safe housing, RESPA care services
25 have not even received so much as a

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1 cost-of-living adjustment to a fund in over
2 a decade, nor as the New Jersey Constitution
3 outlined, have there been any new programs
4 developed.

5 What is the function of the Casino
6 Revenue Advisory Council if their
7 recommendations are discarded? How, then,
8 can the rights and privileges outlined in
9 the New Jersey Constitution be equitably
10 afforded to all residents who are by nature
11 free and independent and have certain
12 natural and unalienable rights which are
13 those of enjoying and defending life and
14 liberty and of acquiring, possessing, and
15 protecting property and pursuing and
16 obtaining safety and happiness when all
17 persons are not given the opportunity to
18 obtain safety and happiness?

19 The Casino Revenue Fund has fallen
20 short in meeting the mandates of the New
21 Jersey Constitution. Existing programs have
22 not received funding, nor have new programs
23 been developed to meet the needs of New
24 Jersey senior citizens and residents with
25 disabilities.

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1 On behalf of the Area Agency Service
2 Advisory Council of Warren County, New
3 Jersey, we encourage the New Jersey Casino
4 Revenue Advisory Council to continue their
5 efforts -- and we know you're making
6 efforts -- in making recommendations for the
7 use of casino revenue funds to support
8 services for seniors and residents with
9 disabilities.

10 But I think we need to get back to
11 basics, and we need to implore the New
12 Jersey legislator to immediately convene
13 public hearings to examine the utilization

14 of casino revenue funds and to develop a
15 long-term strategy to ensure that the Casino
16 Revenue Fund will, for years to come,
17 continue to meet the needs of our growing
18 older and disabled populous of this great
19 state, and what I would like to say is -- in
20 simplistic words -- I think we need to get
21 back and look at what the constitution says
22 and reconcile it with a reality of the
23 funding, and make sure that the funding that
24 we should be getting for our seniors is
25 there, okay, because that's what the law

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1 says, and I really would like you -- to have
2 your full support in that.

3 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Well, it seems
4 that we have your full support.

5 MR. WOLF: Yes, you do.

6 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: And we do
7 understand what you're saying and we
8 appreciate your enthusiasm and your
9 expressed support of what this Casino
10 Commission has recommended.

11 MR. TYRRELL: Again, I'm Joe Tyrrell
12 with the Casino Revenue Association of New
13 Jersey and as a representative, and after
14 hearing your testimony, as an association,
15 we've had similar conversations about the
16 revenue fund where it's driven, when it gets
17 to the state how it's allocated, what
18 happened with Medicare Part D, how it
19 impacted the PAAD program.

20 As casino revenue, we're trying to
21 keep it afloat and keep it at least steady,
22 and we know what's happening with the
23 economy. We've noticed a few other things
24 in the past what happened in 2006 --

25 MR. WOLF: I think everyone here in

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1 the room has questions in their own way --
2 and we're all different -- what's happened.

3 MR. TYRRELL: We've noticed in the
4 past -- what raised the question was in 2006
5 when we had a budget shutdown in New Jersey
6 and the casinos were closed for a few days
7 and that Casino Revenue Fund had a zero
8 funding for a couple of days. We want to
9 know what happened, how did we adjust for
10 the PAAD program, how did we just examine,
11 work with treasury to figure out if we were
12 shut down for four or five days what
13 happened to those funds, how did you make up
14 those funds, provide the service, and the
15 administration wasn't really forthcoming
16 about the information, so from an industry,
17 we want to be helpful because as we collect
18 the tax and put it to the fund we want to
19 make sure it's being properly used and
20 spent, but also monitor properly the way it
21 is pointed out in the constitution.

22 MR. WOLF: I think together we can get
23 somewhere with this.

24 SENATOR WEINBERG: I just marked up
25 your testimony here, and I am -- I will tell

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1 you that by the end of the week a letter

2 will go forth to the treasurer and I will
3 ask for an accounting with a copy to the
4 budget committees of both the assembly and
5 the senate to see if we could get some good,
6 clear answers on what's coming in and how
7 the money is being used.

8 MR. WOLF: And actually, I would like
9 to see that from the first -- they should
10 have an accounting from day one of what
11 happened to these monies and I think we
12 should ask for it.

13 MS. RAMOS: One of the things that you
14 didn't mention which is in the report is
15 that in the 30 years that the Casino Revenue
16 Fund has been in existence, the Casino
17 Control Commission collects all the money
18 and then the State puts it in this other
19 fund, and for example they're supposed to
20 accrue all of the interest for this fund,
21 which is over \$400 million a year right now,
22 and there's -- in all the financial
23 paperwork that we've been given, there's no
24 accounting for the interest. We don't know
25 what's happening to the interest, and in the

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1 30 years that the fund has been in existence
2 there has never been an audit. Our report
3 does ask for an audit of the fund so we can
4 answer those questions.

5 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I think that
6 the -- I think somebody from the Office of
7 Management and Budget should be here to
8 perhaps shed some light on the auditing of
9 the Casino Revenue Fund.

10 This would not surprise me if the
11 audit was considered to be part of the whole
12 state budget audit. That would be the audit
13 of the fund, a separate audit in and of
14 itself, that is, you know, that is probably
15 what is lacking, but I have also been
16 assured by the Office of Management and
17 Budget that any questions that are eligible
18 for their response should be given to them
19 as they could not attend this hearing or the
20 Trenton hearing because of the budget time
21 in Trenton.

22 As far as the interest goes, that has
23 been a question off and on with the
24 Commission. I believe that we used to get a
25 better picture of the casino revenue funds

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1 on an annual basis when the Casino Control
2 Commission gave a financial statement and
3 included that in their annual brochure to
4 the public, and about three years ago, this
5 was no longer to be. You had to go on the
6 Internet and it was very difficult --
7 difficult for me to find, anyway, on the
8 Internet, so we will revisit that particular
9 information being published again and then
10 we can maybe get a foothold on the question
11 of the interest and we will bring that up
12 also as part of our agenda for the next
13 meeting.

14 MR. WOLF: Don't forget having a
15 public hearing in addition to that because I

16 think we need to get some answers and we're
17 not looking to shoot anybody; we just want
18 this thing to happen fairly and be
19 distributed the way it was intended under
20 the law.

21 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Thank you.
22 Our next is Anne Miller.

23 MS. MILLER: I would like to thank
24 Senator Weinberg and members of the
25 Commission for allowing the opportunity to

0100

1 submit this testimony on behalf of Warren
2 County Disability Advisory Council. I'm
3 also a member of the Transportation Advisory
4 Council, and there is a special
5 transportation committee associated with the
6 disability committee.

7 Warren County Disability Advisory
8 Council is made of individuals with
9 disabilities -- I am a disabled person,
10 compliments of psoriasis, which is very
11 debilitating -- family members or caretakers
12 of persons with disabilities and community
13 providers for programs for persons with
14 disabilities.

15 The purpose of the Council is to
16 improve the quality of life for county
17 residents with disabilities by advocating
18 for their rights, equality, and
19 accessibility needs -- the last is very
20 wanting all over the country; I've been out
21 there and I test it constantly -- to provide
22 a mechanism for identifying and making known
23 the unmet needs and gaps in services
24 regarding the allocation of resources to
25 meet these needs, to ensure the use of

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1 resources in the most effective and
2 equitable manner, and consistent with needs
3 to disseminate information concerning
4 various disabilities, to encourage public
5 awareness and to provide education regarding
6 programs and services available and to
7 promote public relations and public
8 information activities, improve and enhance
9 the image of people with disabilities and
10 encourage independence in mainstreaming of
11 such purposes. We do have an outreach
12 program in Warren County where we go into
13 the schools and frequently demonstrate
14 different appliances used with people with
15 disabilities and kids have been in
16 wheelchairs of all kinds, including power
17 chairs.

18 Someone earlier mentioned that Social
19 Security comes in the beginning of the
20 month. I am one whose Social Security check
21 comes the second Wednesday. My husband's
22 comes on the fourth Wednesday, so it
23 provides another level of trying to plan
24 your finances, knowing that money is coming
25 during the month rather than on the first

0102

1 day.

2 Warren County Disability Council is
3 here today to support the recommendations of

4 the Casino Revenue Fund Advisory Commission
5 in their 2008 annual report. In particular,
6 the funds earmarked for transportation and
7 health services are primary in ensuring that
8 persons with disabilities can live as
9 independently as possible with a community
10 of their choice.

11 Public policy with a passage of the
12 Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with
13 Disabilities Act, and most recently
14 President Bush's New Freedom Initiative has
15 encouraged the creation of community-based
16 services designed to assist people with
17 disabilities in their efforts to remain as
18 independent as possible and to not reside in
19 institutions, and I have seen this in my
20 days of 35 years as an occupational
21 therapist going into homes and trying to
22 assist those people to regain their
23 independence and stay in their homes as long
24 as humanly possible. However, the funds
25 needed to support and enable these

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1 individuals to live independently have not
2 followed them into the community and have
3 failed to keep up with the growing need and
4 demands.

5 According to a study done by NOD --
6 National Organization on Disability --
7 people with disabilities is one of the
8 largest and most underserved of all minority
9 groups within the county based on the 2006
10 American Community Survey. Approximately
11 15 percent of the population, 41.3 million
12 Americans, are persons with disability.
13 Within New Jersey, approximately 1.0 million
14 residents are persons with disabilities.
15 That number counts for 12.3 percent (U.S.
16 Census Bureau American Community Survey
17 2006) of the total population.

18 More specifically in Warren County,
19 12.3 percent of Warren County residents have
20 disabilities, for the majority of those
21 individuals -- 71 percent -- with
22 disabilities falling within the age range of
23 20 to 64. I, for one, am 66; my husband is
24 68.

25 We are seeing a rise in numbers of

0104
1 persons with disabilities who choose to
2 remain in the community and live in as
3 independent an environment as their
4 abilities will allow. It is critical when
5 we plan to meet the growing demand for
6 services as the numbers of individuals
7 needing those services -- transportation in
8 particular -- continues to rise at alarming
9 rates, due to the rural nature of Warren
10 County which is in the Skylands area of New
11 Jersey. I live with my husband in
12 Stewartsville, which is four miles from the
13 Delaware River.

14 The growing demand for services is
15 critical, and additional funds need to be
16 earmarked to meet the need. I do not see a
17 need to be looking along Warren County where

18 our shuttle runs anymore, or people were
19 looking down the road; I know what they're
20 looking for -- our Warren County shuttle.
21 There is another need, and that is for
22 an increase in the pay for the home care
23 workers, and PSP says that pay has not been
24 increased in a number of years.

25 Accessible public transportation
0105
1 within the county to other New Jersey
2 counties is very, very limited. We are
3 constantly being asked on the street, by
4 friends, by neighbors, people coming to the
5 Council why they can't leave the county or
6 even go out in the evening, and very, very
7 special arrangements have to be made just to
8 get them to the Warren County Fair, which
9 actually has the major part of the fair is
10 after 5 o'clock. Prior to that, very, very
11 limited attendance.

12 The 2000 Warren County Department of
13 Human Services strategically plan notes that
14 ridership -- and that translates to
15 individual trips -- on Route 57 shuttle,
16 which I have mentioned before, has increased
17 by 270 percent, and that's since 2003. A
18 lot more people on Warren County's Route 57
19 looking up and down the road wondering where
20 that bus is.

21 Countywide focus groups listed
22 transportation options as one of the top
23 needs, and I know being on attack that we
24 are looking into more routes because we have
25 people wanting to go there and they do not

0106
1 have transportation, and with the economy
2 going as south as it is, I may be joining
3 them on that shuttle just to get to
4 Washington and get our mail.

5 Human Services projects 200,000 trips
6 by the year 2010. In Warren County, the
7 implementation of the ADRC has become
8 apparent that needs of persons with
9 disabilities in many instances are similar
10 in nature to the needs of seniors, and the
11 resources we earmark for this population
12 should be reflective of that need, and
13 sharing the utilization of the casino
14 revenue funds targets the most vulnerable
15 and isolated citizens of our state and is
16 critical to meeting the needs of New Jersey.

17 All I can say to you is that many
18 years ago I was looking at the casino
19 revenue funds with a total quad living in
20 Morris County where I used to live and we
21 both wondered who had their hand in our
22 cookie jar, so please, I am with you. I
23 don't want to see the legislator reaching
24 their hand into the cookie jar to balance
25 the budget again.

0107
1 I thank you for your time, and I do
2 have one question of you. You had mentioned
3 that there was a senate bill to increase the
4 casino revenue for transportation. I
5 believe it was 18230. What is Wisniewski's?

6 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: It's 1830. The
7 senate bill is S1830, and Wisniewski's bill
8 is A2046, and Wisniewski's bill, I'll give
9 you an update on that. Did leave this
10 Committee and it was approved and out and it
11 is now in the Committee of Gaming and
12 Tourism and it has been there for quite a
13 while in the assembly and the chair of that
14 is John Burzichelli.

15 MS. MILLER: Do you think it would be
16 heard, or is that --

17 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: You can ask his
18 office, because our people are calling his
19 office.

20 MS. MILLER: Is it appropriate to be
21 in that committee, or are they bolting the
22 bills?

23 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: You can ask him
24 that.

25 MS. MILLER: Okay. I will. Thank
0108 you.

1 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Susan Lennon.
2 Susan is the executive director of the
3 Warren County Division of Aging and
4 Disability Services.

5 You were one of the first ADRC
6 counties. I know that.

7 MS. LENNON: That's right.

8 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: And resource.

9 MS. LENNON: Connection. Resource
10 connection.

11 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

12 MS. LENNON: First, I want to thank
13 this Commission for holding these public
14 hearings that I believe, and I know I can
15 speak for my council members and even the
16 consortium of advisory councils, it's long
17 overdue and we have lots of questions. So
18 thank you for having us here today.

19 I had comments of my own and as I sat,
20 I rewrote the whole thing so you're not
21 going to get them today, but there are
22 several points I would like to make.

23 First, I would like to offer comments
24 from Marcia Karrow, Assemblywoman Marcia
25

0109 1 Karrow who said she would love to be here
2 today. She had a conflicting appointment,
3 but she is in support and stands behind your
4 report and is here for us to help move
5 forward any recommendations in the Casino
6 Revenue Commission and she wanted to make
7 sure I relayed that to you.

8 I'd like to just offer a few things
9 relative to some of the topics I heard and
10 then I'll go through some other things that
11 I did prepare.

12 The Meals on Wheels programs that are
13 funded by the Casino Revenue Fund -- and
14 correct me if I'm wrong because you know
15 more about this than anybody I know -- is
16 for weekend home delivery meals, and that is
17 a vital program. It was a gap in the system
18 because people who were homebound and
19 vulnerable got meals during the week, but on

20 the weekend, they didn't see anybody, and
21 they didn't get fed, or didn't have food to
22 eat, so through the Casino Revenue Fund, we
23 started the weekend home delivery meal
24 program, so I want to make sure that the
25 Meals on Wheels that are listed in here is

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1 for the weekend program. Is that correct?
2 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: No. You mean in
3 our Commission report?
4 MS. LENNON: Okay, okay, not
5 necessarily, which is a good thing, because
6 weekend home-delivered meals certainly is a
7 vital important service, but it's the
8 weekday meals that are suffering and when we
9 started the paper plate campaign through our
10 consortium of advisory councils throughout
11 the state, our moniker was we need to let
12 our legislators know we're not letting
13 anybody go hungry and we don't let anybody
14 go hungry in Warren County. We have -- we
15 subsidize the total cost of meals for a
16 hundred people who do not contribute
17 anything to the cost of their meals. Those
18 people would be on a waiting list if we did
19 not have earned revenue to support that, but
20 we support those people on the program and I
21 want to make sure that we know that and that
22 you know that.

23 We are in total support of every
24 single recommendation with emphasis on adult
25 protective services that no one really

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1 has -- today has mentioned. And the Adult
2 Protective Services Fund has not been
3 increased since 2000 when it was increased
4 minimally.
5 Safe housing and escorted
6 transportation has not been increased ever.
7 It's been decreased. In fact, Warren County
8 -- and I'm going to talk about this -- gets
9 a whopping \$10,000 a year to provide home
10 repairs, safe housing home repairs and
11 escorted transportation to our residents.
12 \$10,000.

13 We do not have a congregate program in
14 Warren County, a congregate housing program.
15 We would love to, so if that ever opened up,
16 we'll be the first in line.

17 But let me quickly -- and I know time
18 is of the essence and I think what I want to
19 impart on you is critically important for
20 many counties in this state.

21 In March of 2004, Governor McGreevey
22 executed executive order number 100 which
23 authorized the development of the Global
24 long-term care budgeting process. The next
25 year on April 25th, Governor Cody signed

0112

1 executive order 31, which named Warren
2 County and Atlantic County as the ADRC pilot
3 counties for the --

4 (Time bell rings.)
5 -- State of New Jersey and that is
6 aging and disability resource connection.
7 Can I keep going?

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CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Go.

MS. LENNON: On June 21st in 2006, Governor Corzine signed -- and I know that Senator Weinberg was there and I was there in spirit, although I think I was crying throughout the whole thing.

SENATOR WEINBERG: I was the prime sponsor of that.

MS. LENNON: Yes, I know you were, that's correct, that's right. I was upset that day from watching a movie. It just broke me up.

The independence, dignity, and Long-Term Care Act -- Choice and Long-Term Care Act which reallocates state institutional long-term care dollars for use in home and in the community. With all of these additional blended funding sources for community-based programs in New Jersey, older and disabled adults through the ADRC, Warren County leads New Jersey in obtaining additional funds for the provision of in-home services and community-based care. And I bring this up because in a report I just received from the State Division of Aging and Community Services, Warren County with a population that ranks 19th in the State of New Jersey, our -- out of the 21 counties in New Jersey, we rank 19th with 102,000 people. We are 9th in land mass, we have 365 square miles. We have 256 people per square mile as opposed to the state average of 1,044. We're a rural county. Our little county has drawn down and captured the third largest amount of funds for Medicaid waiver and home- and community-based services than any county in New Jersey, and I want to point this out because the floodgate has not opened yet.

Not every county is an ADRC county. We have been very aggressive in capturing dollars and assessing people and making people eligible and trying to bring services to the population with disabilities up to a level that would equal those services available and dedicated for senior citizens. If little Warren County can enroll and serve this many people, where is the money going to come from when the other 19 counties in the State of New Jersey learn how to tap into this fund? That means this money from the Casino Revenue Commission is going to be more important than ever in filling the gaps in services.

One of the major services that we find -- and indeed people 85 and older as it was stated before are growing faster than anyone, albeit the population 60 and older is growing very quickly, the oldest old is growing the fastest and need the most services. We also have people who are disabled between 18 and 64 who need in-home services and who are entitled and eligible for it. In a rural county such as ours,

22 even though in the State of New Jersey, no
23 county is regarded as rural -- and I would
24 invite anyone to come to Warren County so I
25 could show you how not rural we are -- in

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1 fact, I know Lou Ortiz is probably still
2 driving around out there. Transportation,
3 home health care, respite care, home health
4 aids, homemaker services -- our aids can't
5 hop on a bus or go to a congregate housing
6 building and work all day. They go from one
7 house and drive 20 miles to the next house.
8 And with the price of gas and a
9 reimbursement rate -- I'm speeding up --
10 it's nearly possible.

11 We need to take a look at inadequate
12 Medicaid and Medicaid waiver reimbursement
13 rates to the home care provider agencies.
14 We need to increase those rates, we need to
15 look at -- we need to hold hearings, we need
16 to take a look at differentials for rural
17 communities so that we can provide services.
18 We cannot get aids -- we have a hundred and
19 six people waiting to be enrolled in the
20 Global Options program that we can't enroll
21 not because we don't have the money. We do.
22 We don't have the people to serve them. And
23 that's the problem. And that's going to be
24 our crisis. We're building this system on
25 toothpicks, the backs of these home health

0116

1 aids and systems that we can't meet the need
2 of the people. We're bringing them home,
3 but we can't serve them. Thank you very
4 much.

5 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: All right. Thank
6 you. You brought up many serious needs.

7 I will mention one more thing. We do
8 have one, two, three, four, five, six --
9 seven more people after our registered
10 people so we're going to have to. . .

11 SENATOR WEINBERG: I appreciate your
12 bringing that issue forth in terms of home
13 health aids and the global budgeting bill,
14 something I'm very familiar with, and
15 although you're pointing out the problems in
16 rural Warren County getting home health
17 aids, we have the same problems in urban
18 Bergen County because there is no mass
19 transit system to get people from point A to
20 point B. It is the very problem that I have
21 been concerned with since the day I got
22 involved with this bill that once it was
23 passed and signed how are we going to have
24 the employment force to fill the needs. I
25 have a meeting coming up later in this week

0117

1 with the Department of Health and Senior
2 Services to discuss these very same issues,
3 and I'm glad that you reminded me of these
4 problems. It's not something that I
5 haven't -- that I didn't foresee, because
6 I've heard this from so many of the provider
7 agencies, and -- and I just want to take
8 another moment.

9 It is much more economical, much more

10 appropriate to keep these people who can to
11 stay in their homes rather than
12 institutionalize them. The home health aid
13 field is a very low-paid field, generally.
14 We do not remunerate these people the way
15 they should be. One of the biggest problems
16 we've heard from the home health aid
17 agencies is that if the home health aid has
18 a car, they're usually some kind of an old
19 clunker that is constantly breaking down and
20 the main reason for home health aids not
21 showing up at a given appointment is not
22 because somebody is lazy or anything, but
23 because they just can't get there. And this
24 is a basic problem that all the others are
25 built on, so although this hearing is

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1 overwhelming I'm sure for all of us, as we
2 again are reminded of the size of the
3 problem -- I'm sorry the press isn't here --
4 at least I don't think they are -- to cover
5 some of this rather than some of the other
6 things they choose to cover, and, again, I'm
7 glad that you came here today since I do
8 have this meeting coming up this week for
9 this very discussion.

10 MS. LENNON: I'll provide you with any
11 information you'd like.

12 SENATOR WEINBERG: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I'm going to ask
14 Ed Benoit from Hudson County director of
15 Office on Aging.

16 MR. BENOIT: Senator, Madam
17 Chairwoman, members, I thank you so much for
18 having this hearing. Misono is a tireless
19 representative of the senior and disabled
20 population and I'm thankful to be working
21 with her on the field of aging and the
22 association of various agencies.

23 I'm happy to say I have six members of
24 my advisory council here today. These are
25 members in our community that are here today

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1 because they're members of the advisory
2 council and they're out there in the field
3 talking to people every day and they were
4 excited to be able to come here today to see
5 what's going on in the aging field with the
6 money they receive in the revenue. They
7 understand that so much of our funding comes
8 from the casinos and we have members here
9 from the Hudson Filipino community and I'm
10 very happy that they're here. Same thing.
11 They're my eyes and ears in the community
12 and I'm very happy that they're here to
13 participate in this hearing, and Susan,
14 we're right behind you. We'll be at ADRC
15 soon and we'll be looking for a big chunk of
16 those funds also.

17 Dr. Cicco wasn't able to be here
18 today. He's the director of the North
19 Hudson Regional Council of Mayors. He
20 serves about six or seven municipalities in
21 Northern Hudson County and he regrets that
22 he couldn't be here today, but he wasn't
23 feeling well.

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What I'd like to say about Meals on
Wheels is his example is really the best --

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hit home the best. It does for me. A year ago, the price of his meals delivered was about \$3 from the vendor, about \$3 per meal, at which point he would distribute them, and about \$8 per meal was the total cost for home delivery. In the middle of the year 2008 because they're a pseudo government agency they went through a public bid and the public bid came in around 3, 4 per meal. Other bidding problems had to rebid. The bid came in finally that had to work was about 3.80 per meal, so in one year exclusive of the transportation cost, the meal itself has gone up about \$0.80 per meal. Simply to serve the same number of people costs an additional \$140,000. That's only for North Hudson. That doesn't include Jersey City or Bayonne or West Hudson. That's the magnitude of the problems that we're seeing in Hudson County.

Up until now, the mayors have been able to fill in the gaps to avoid waiting lists. It's something that they've been dedicated to doing for a long time, and they've been successful. I don't know how

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much longer they'll be successful in avoiding waiting lists.

Frank Gioia is our adult protective services contractor in Hudson County, and unfortunately he wasn't able to make it here either today. He was very excited about this hearing because he certainly understands the funding issues for protecting services, and, you know, his funding has not increased. I've had supplements for his funding. The cost of clinical social workers and experts in the field, the volume of caseload, it just cannot be continued to be sustained at the existing levels of funding, so he sends his regrets that he cannot be here today.

Hudson County under the direction of Kevin Crimmins has come a long way in the last couple of years in the county transportation plan transcend. We've gone from 75,000 rides per year to about a hundred thousand rides per year, and unfortunately with the funding that's been projected through the Casino Revenue Commission --

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(Time bell rings.)

-- that also will be declining and we don't know how we'll be able to fit in the projected increase of need over the short term.

I have -- one of my council members here, he would like to speak later on having to do with the veterans, so I'm looking forward to that.

I would like to say also I think it would be very helpful -- we would like -- I

12 would like to see the Commission on Aging
13 reestablished. It's sort of been not
14 exactly done away with, but it has been
15 repopulated and I think that all the issues
16 relating to aging I think that the
17 reestablishment of the New Jersey Commission
18 on Aging would be very helpful, and the
19 incentive program recently proposed by the
20 governor -- I'm not familiar with all the
21 details going on into that -- it's fairly
22 new -- but if the senior and disabled
23 population would be considered as part of
24 that also, I think that would be a very
25 worthwhile use of funding in an incentive

0123

1 program.

2 Kathy Wood is the Heightened and
3 Independence Progress director for Hudson
4 branch. She wasn't able to be here, but she
5 had some testimony that I have for you I'd
6 like to read into the record, if I may.

7 She says, "I realize that some
8 extremely difficult decisions must be made
9 regarding the use of the casino revenue
10 funds. However, I am compelled to comment
11 on the critical need for continuing funding
12 for Paratransit services for people with
13 disabilities.

14 "First, as a director of the Center
15 for Independent Living, I work to assist
16 people who have disabilities to participate
17 as fully as possible in community-based
18 activities. Accessible transportation is a
19 vital component of full inclusion. The
20 reality for the majority of Paratransit
21 passengers is that they are dependent on the
22 service not only to access community-based
23 services, but for life-sustaining medical
24 treatments.

25 "Secondly, as a person with multiple

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1 disabilities, I depend on Paratransit
2 services in order to remain employed. The
3 progression of my disabilities has made it
4 impossible for me to continue using the
5 overcrowded mass transit system in my urban
6 environment. Paratransit is what makes a
7 difference between my remaining a taxpayer
8 and my becoming a tax dependent. There are
9 many other individuals who are productive
10 citizens because in part of the availability
11 of Paratransit services.

12 "People with disabilities are in large
13 measure silent constituents. As a group, we
14 generally do not make our voices heard on
15 issues that are crucial to our lives.
16 Instead, most people with disabilities rely
17 upon organizations and advocates to speak
18 for them. I am submitting this testimony to
19 strongly support continuing funding for
20 Paratransit services.

21 "As a passenger, advocate, and service
22 provider, I can state with assurance that
23 these services are the link to a meaningful
24 life to many, and indeed a link to life
25 itself to many more."

0125

1 I have a copy of this for you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you.

3 MR. BENOIT: So I thank you for the
4 hearing today, and we totally support the
5 activities of this project and support the
6 recommendations made by it.

7 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you.

8 Wilson Reimes.

9 MR. REIMES: Good afternoon,
10 everybody. Joan Campanelli asked me to
11 speak on behalf of Meals on Wheels from a
12 human point of view. I have been
13 volunteering with them for five and a half
14 years in Hackensack, and over a year now in
15 Closter. I'll tell you what it's like.
16 Number one, I'm an alarm clock. When
17 I come to someone's house and ring the bell,
18 I'm the reason they get up every single
19 morning is to see a human being. I'm the
20 person that gets shown a picture of their
21 grandchild, I'm the person who hears about
22 their health problems. If it wasn't for the
23 drivers, there would be no human contact,
24 and so besides the food that you're
25 generously supporting, it's the human

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1 contact that I think is so very important,
2 which is why I've been doing it for five and
3 a half years.

4 The other thing I found fascinating is
5 the people I deliver to. I go to Prospect
6 Avenue to the beautiful door-manned
7 apartments, I go to poor, poor areas of the
8 town to speak to people. I deliver to a
9 marine who because of his arthritis and
10 because of the horrible stench in his house
11 that he can't clean he sits in his car.
12 Even though he can't drive anymore, there he
13 is in his car. Unless it's ten degrees
14 below zero he's sitting in that car just to
15 talk to us and he gets a meal.

16 They are so thankful. So that's the
17 reason I do it and why I think this program
18 is so incredibly important and why I hope
19 that you will increase its funding, and I'll
20 end you with one little story. I delivered
21 to a man for two and a half years on Polifly
22 Road. I rang the bell and there was no
23 answer, and I know he was always home, and
24 so I kept ringing and ringing. He finally
25 answered, buzzed me into the building. I

0127

1 got up to his floor, I knocked on the door,
2 and no answer. I knocked and banged and
3 banged and banged and he finally opened the
4 door and he said to me, number one, I really
5 have to relieve myself, I can't get to the
6 bathroom, could you please get a bottle for
7 me, which I did, and then he said would you
8 please call 911 for me, which I did, and
9 then he turned to me and he said please do
10 not leave me until they come, and I thought
11 to my -- which of course I didn't -- and I
12 thought to myself, man, am I a lucky person
13 to be able to stay with somebody who if it

14 wasn't for me or another driver the man
15 would have been dead in his apartment I'm
16 convinced, and so I beg you, thank you, and
17 please increase our support. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Excuse me. I
19 just want to clarify that we make
20 recommendations to the legislator much like
21 you are appealing to us. We will continue
22 to ask for more funding for Meals on Wheels,
23 and it would be up to the legislators or the
24 governor to make that decision, so we will.
25 We're trying, and you've given us some good

0128

1 support.

2 MR. REIMES: Okay. Thank you.

3 SENATOR WEINBERG: And thank you for
4 the work you're doing.

5 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Elizabeth Jane
6 Heap.

7 MS. HEAP: My name is Elizabeth Jane
8 Heap. Most of my friends call me Bow Jane
9 or Bow, and I am totally blind from birth.
10 I work for the Bergen County Division of
11 Senior Services, and the reason I wanted to
12 talk to you today was just to tell you that
13 if it weren't for community transportation I
14 wouldn't even be here. For one thing, I'd
15 be a menace on the road if I ever drove, and
16 so don't think I'd better do that.

17 Ramsey is where I live and Ramsey is
18 in the northern part of the county. There
19 is no public transportation per se, except
20 for the train that goes into New York City,
21 and therefore, I don't have the availability
22 to be able to get down here without
23 community transportation, so I consider them
24 a life line.

25 I'm with Kathy Wood and I'm with the

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1 other young lady who spoke earlier for the
2 disabled community in that these services
3 are absolutely essential, and if we didn't
4 have them I don't know where we would be in
5 terms of independence and in terms of being
6 a taxpaying citizen, so I just wanted to let
7 you know that this is vitally important, and
8 I thank you for the opportunity to speak
9 before the Commission.

10 SENATOR WEINBERG: Bow Jane, it's
11 Loretta Weinberg.

12 MS. HEAP: Hello, my friend.

13 SENATOR WEINBERG: I must say you made
14 my morning worthwhile. I haven't seen you
15 in a long time.

16 MS. HEAP: I know it.

17 SENATOR WEINBERG: It's good to see
18 you.

19 MS. HEAP: It's good to see you too.

20 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Laura Berkin.

21 MS. BERKIN: First of all, I just
22 wanted to thank everyone for giving me the
23 opportunity today to speak at today's
24 hearing. My name is Laura Berkin, and I am
25 one of three congregate services

0130

1 coordinators for the Jewish Community

2 Housing Corporation located in Essex County,
3 New Jersey. We serve over 250 seniors
4 annually at three buildings and have served
5 seniors for over 25 years with the
6 congregate services grant. Our mission is
7 to provide support services to low-income
8 elderly and/or disabled residents as they
9 age in place in subsidized housing.

10 Services include assistance with
11 activities of daily living, such as
12 housekeeping, supervision of personal care,
13 shopping, laundry and linen change, meal
14 preparation, companionship, and weekend
15 meals. The program allows flexibility of
16 services for short- or long-term assistance
17 depending on the needs of the resident.

18 This program is a vital alternative
19 for residents in order to avoid premature
20 extended or inappropriate
21 institutionalization to a nursing facility.
22 Due to the high cost of assisted living
23 facilities, which they cannot afford, and a
24 limited number of Medicaid-dedicated beds,
25 many would have no choice but to be

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1 relocated without the congregate program.

2 Coordinators like myself also act as
3 liaisons between the building staff and
4 residents' families, many times alerting
5 family members to a decline in physical
6 health or mental status before their loved
7 ones are in crisis. We act as referral
8 outreach sources to community services for
9 the residents and their families, many who
10 are not aware of care options available to
11 them.

12 Please help us to continue this
13 crucial program as these residents age and
14 their needs change. Just because their
15 ability and health is declining doesn't mean
16 they don't deserve to continue living
17 independently in a social environment on
18 their own terms.

19 Thank you all for your time,
20 attention, and consideration. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I believe
22 Mr. Carl Therkildsen is not here. He would
23 be our last speaker that is registered, and
24 then now we have several speakers in the
25 audience. I have their name, and we have

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1 Ed -- I'll go -- Ed Hoeszbig.

2 While you're coming up, sir, I'm going
3 to read these names.

4 Is Lauren Kafaa here? Okay. Mildred
5 Bollerdi ck? Okay.

6 MR. HOEZBIG: Good morning. My name
7 is Ed Hoeszbig, I'm from Hoboken, New Jersey,
8 which of course you know is in Hudson
9 County. I'm here as a private citizen. I
10 don't represent anybody but myself.

11 I am here to ask the Commission to see
12 if they can't further, of course, the
13 monies. The shock I got before just reading
14 is to see the allocations from '8 to '9 on
15 the average is over like 120 -- 130,000 less

16 than what they were getting in '8. Now,
17 that creates a problem in itself I'm sure,
18 and as these economic times go, you know
19 you're going to have more problems, you're
20 going to have more citizens that we're going
21 to have to help, so to be cutting money and
22 giving it a hard time to get an increase, I
23 don't know, doesn't sound too good to me,
24 and I'm hoping something can be done about
25 it.

0133

1 As you know, most of these people that
2 we're talking about are the members of the
3 greatest generation, and without the
4 greatest generation, none of you people
5 would be here, none of us would be standing
6 here. So I can't see why these people have
7 to be -- actually, beg for assistance, which
8 is -- in this country, I mean, after all, I
9 know we got problems but we didn't always
10 have these problems and these people been
11 begging for a long time.

12 The only thing I would like to ask you
13 to do is to try to at least see if you can
14 put the monies back that you are taking out.
15 If you can give more than that, it would be
16 great.

17 My other thing which is my main
18 concern is getting better transportation for
19 veterans, door-to-door transportation. Some
20 guys have a problem and in a lot of cases
21 they have to meet the van at a specific
22 spot, which they have a problem getting to,
23 so that's my little bit for today. Thank
24 you so much.

25 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Lauren Kafaa.

0134

1 MS. ARSLANIAN: I'm not Lauren.
2 Lauren is a sign language interpreter who
3 comes to the Northwest Senior Center
4 sometimes. She's a longtime friend for deaf
5 seniors. She has a letter that she would
6 like to leave with you, but she had to leave
7 to go to work.

8 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Neil Ross,
9 consumer resident of Passaic.

10 MR. ROSS: Thank you very much, Ladies
11 and gentlemen. First of all, I want to say
12 that I support the legislation to increase
13 the funding. I've heard a lot of very good
14 speakers talking about a number of issues
15 and topics. They're all important. All of
16 those issues and programs are vital.

17 I just want to speak on the
18 transportation issue. That is what I'm
19 concerned with is an important issue for our
20 seniors who may live in a residence that is
21 off the beaten path not near a bus route,
22 but as well as persons with disabilities
23 young and old alike who use Paratransit for
24 employment, shopping, education,
25 recreational activities, and I'd even like

0135

1 to see the services expand.

2 I know in this day and age just to
3 break even we're lucky because the basic

4 things in life, the equal things in life
5 with our able-bodied counterparts, for
6 example the idea of going to a council
7 meeting and meeting your elected officials
8 in public to address an issue, if there's no
9 transportation, you can't do that, and of
10 course Paratransit doesn't always operate in
11 the evening, so just as an equal citizen you
12 don't get that, but whatever we can do to
13 improve the service, increase that funding I
14 think is vital.

15 And if I can just address the
16 Committee for a moment, and just if and when
17 there's ever a future hearing, we have a
18 large crowd and a lot of good speakers, but
19 if we could enforce that time limit just so
20 that everyone gets an equal opportunity
21 because I'm just thinking in the back of my
22 mind some of them have arranged for
23 transportation to get here and is waiting
24 patiently calculating the time needed and
25 then the speakers are going over that, they

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1 may have to leave prior. I've been to
2 public hearings where that happens and
3 they're at the back of the -- I don't mind
4 being late and waiting. I've got all day.
5 I prefer being after the other speakers, but
6 there may be some who are waiting patiently
7 and when we don't adhere to that time frame
8 and a minute or two -- I've been to council
9 meetings in Passaic years ago. Bell would
10 ring and they'd tell you you have a minute
11 or two to sum up to give people an
12 opportunity, but when the time frame is just
13 ignored, important issues are being
14 addressed, but it's not fair to others as
15 well, so if you could just consider that.
16 Thank you very much.

17 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: All right, thank
18 you. I'd just like to say that we don't
19 have too many more speakers and actually we
20 thought these hearings would go on until
21 1 o'clock, so -- and thank you for your
22 advice.

23 Our next -- we have four more
24 speakers, and I have down here a Carl
25 Therriidsen from Hackensack.

0137

1 Okay, all right. We have three more
2 speakers. Gloria Chambers. Okay. And
3 Dianne Robinson. Well, there go your five
4 minutes. So it's good that we -- we didn't
5 cut anybody off. And Barbara Ramirez,
6 Midland Park Senior Center.

7 MS. RAMIREZ: Good morning, everyone.
8 Thank you for the opportunity to hear
9 everyone. That's wonderful. I'll be very,
10 very brief.

11 I attend the Midland Park Senior
12 Activity Center, and I just urge you to do
13 whatever you can to keep the transportation
14 to that place going. There are many people
15 who go there, some of them every day, some
16 of them several times a week, and it's
17 tremendous because as I've heard other

18 people saying, when you stay home day after
19 day in your apartment or in your private
20 home, it just gets very, very depressing, so
21 I do want to urge you all anything you could
22 do to keep the transportation going would be
23 tremendous, and I thank you very, very much.

24 VICE-CHAIRPERSON THEBERY: Are there
25 any other speakers? One more. Okay. Two

0138
1 more. Okay.

2 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Your name? Alice
3 Soll.

4 MS. SOLL: Thank you. Thank you for
5 the opportunity at the end. My name is on
6 the list, so I don't know why it wasn't
7 called.

8 My name is Alice Soll. I've been
9 profoundly deaf since the age of two from
10 spinal meningitis, and I now reside in
11 Hackensack for ten years. I lived in River
12 Edge for 44 years. And before I continue, I
13 want to point out that the deaf role model
14 representing the deaf -- that as a deaf role
15 model representing the deaf community, I
16 hope you will endure a little patience in
17 viewing my sign language that I present
18 today, which can take two or three times
19 longer than it takes for a similar verbal
20 presentation.

21 And now to the main point of my
22 presentation. As a representative of the
23 deaf senior citizens, I want to let you know
24 we've gathered once weekly on Thursdays at
25 the Northwest Bergen Senior Activity Center

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1 at 4650 Centre Street in Midland Park since
2 September 2000. I'm standing here with the
3 utmost support of several deaf seniors
4 sitting in the audience to plead our appeal
5 to the Atlantic City Casino Commission for
6 their consideration in providing the
7 urgently necessary funds from Atlantic City
8 Gambling Fund for our once-a-month ASL
9 interpreter services.

10 This funding will be a huge assistance
11 to Sheila Brogen, a very dedicated social
12 worker. She has a list of consecutive
13 appointments for visits from deaf seniors in
14 her office for consultations with ASL
15 interpreters aiding in the communication
16 with their translation skills. The
17 financial funding has been looked into and
18 not made available for Sheila's needs for
19 ASL interpreting services, these valuable
20 services.

21 Our variety of programs consists of
22 vital information on complicated health
23 care, medical prescriptions, and medical
24 policies that are difficult to follow and
25 understand, also, the auto or home insurance

0140
1 policies, legal, family and social services,
2 and not forgetting to learn about our
3 ever-changing Social Security and federal
4 benefits. Since all of the above regularly
5 accessible -- are regularly accessible to

6 the hearing seniors, why don't we have the
7 same delivery of educational knowledge to
8 the deaf seniors? That's fair enough. Or
9 are we being left behind?

10 And then I have an additional list of
11 educational programs for deaf audiences.
12 And that consists of invitations extended to
13 professional presenters and guest speakers
14 to give presentations of advice on different
15 things like banking and identification
16 theft, family trust fund and wills,
17 investments, life insurance, daily home
18 security protection, pharmacists, medical
19 doctors, and internists, and health
20 professionals, and with respect to all of
21 the above projects, our deaf community has
22 been very appreciative with all of the
23 credits given to our wonderful and helpful
24 staff members at the center. All of the
25 credit goes to them for letting us share the

0141

1 use of the center for our continued weekly
2 social gatherings, and if accepted for
3 funding, we look forward to the Casino
4 Commission to develop their design for
5 legislative language to ensure that the
6 financial provision will be sustainable on a
7 permanent, yearly basis.

8 In closing, in fairness to deaf
9 seniors, as lifelong New Jersey residents,
10 especially as legal taxpayers, we are
11 anxiously looking forward to your
12 affirmative consideration with soft spots in
13 your hearts in placing our needs on the top
14 of your priority list for your financial
15 distribution. The approximate amount I
16 would guess would be in the range of 1,500
17 to 1,800 for the sponsorship. However, this
18 amount can be worked out with Sheila Brogen
19 for the estimated disbursement. Factually,
20 one can guess that the Atlantic City
21 Gambling Fund is the result of the casinos'
22 gains in their favor from the clients'
23 losses with holes in our pockets, but its
24 usefulness now would be our payback.

25 Thank you very much with much

0142

1 appreciation for your listening ears and
2 also for your immediate attention to the
3 above appeal. Appreciatively yours, Alice
4 Soll.

5 VICE-CHAIRPERSON THEBERY: Again, I
6 would urge you to reach out to the Kessler
7 Foundation because one of their initiatives
8 -- and their big initiative, of course is
9 employment, but their other big initiative
10 is education, and certainly when you bring
11 in these professionals to speak to the
12 group, you need a sign language interpreter,
13 and this might be an ideal way to secure
14 that funding and hopefully on a continual
15 basis. Again, it's the ancillary grants,
16 and reach out to Elaine Katz at Kessler.

17 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I see that we
18 have one more speaker who wants to come
19 forward, and we will make this the last

20 remarker.

21 MS. BOLLERDICK: I'm Mildred, the
22 activist who writes you the letters about
23 accessibility for wheelchair users, I'm the
24 lady.

25 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: What's your name?

0143

1 MS. BOLLERDICK: Mildred Bollerdi ck.

2 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

3 MS. BOLLERDICK: I'm a consumer and I
4 use personal assisting. It helped me a lot
5 throughout my life so I can do what I do in
6 the community. There are consequences to be
7 paid for being independent.

8 When I was younger I worked for
9 23 years at K-Mart. I used to get up at
10 4 o'clock in the morning -- excuse me; I'm a
11 little nervous. I worked for K-Mart for
12 23 years and used to get up at 4 o'clock in
13 the morning and I was really kind of, you
14 know, bummed out working. I used to work
15 seven days a week and I feel like I was
16 really independent. I had a lot of energy
17 then.

18 I developed postpolio because of
19 stress of working getting up at 4 o'clock in
20 the morning working six and seven days a
21 week just being independent and them days
22 they didn't have any personal attendant and
23 they didn't have any transportation, so it
24 was really difficult. I hired -- I used to
25 hire people so I feel like I was a pioneer

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1 in them days. And the consequence of this
2 from working is that I lived in a senior
3 citizen building. I wasn't sick, so I
4 wasn't on medicine, and I didn't go to the
5 doctor; I was healthy, but my independence
6 was -- they didn't have no transportation so
7 I had to take -- I had to pay somebody
8 either to take me or the taxi told me they
9 didn't want to take me so I sent myself to
10 driving school and in them days they used to
11 have it on Bergenline Avenue -- now they
12 send you to Kessler -- so I learned how to
13 drive there. I would send myself to school
14 to learn how to drive the hand controls, and
15 I got my own apartment. In them days they
16 would say to you who's going to take care of
17 you, who's going to do this. My sister was
18 with me so I go she's going to cook for me,
19 she's going to clean for me, so in them days
20 I hired somebody.

21 My first -- I worked from 1971 to 1994
22 and when I first went into K-Mart I worked
23 there and they told me that they were never
24 in that situation and they don't know if
25 they can hire me and on the wall in them

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1 days they said I'm equal opportunity so I
2 said doesn't that say equal opportunity, and
3 in them days, like I said, I was an
4 activist. I said to my mother if they don't
5 hire me I'm going to go to the media because
6 I wanted to work and I just got out of
7 business school and I lived on my own and

8 everything and the consequences that I had
9 to pay that -- I had to buy two used cars
10 and they really went dead and the State told
11 me they weren't going to help me with the
12 hand controls and so I didn't buy any car so
13 I ordered a new car, plus I had to pay the
14 insurance for the car and my personal
15 assistant. I just hired somebody and
16 interviewed them and, you know, they helped
17 me like they were helping themselves the way
18 they took care of themselves and the
19 consequences was they raised my rent so high
20 that I couldn't pay my car or the woman to
21 help me or my car insurance so they took me
22 to court and they were ready to throw me out
23 and I had fell postpolio.

24 I went to court and I explained to
25 them there's no transportation in the State

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1 of New Jersey and I said that and there's
2 nobody like a person to help you so you
3 don't have too much, you know, to get ready
4 to work and everything and he -- I said I
5 can't open the doors in the morning to get
6 to work. I had to get up early to wait
7 there for somebody to open up the door so I
8 can get to work so he said he didn't see any
9 discrimination or nothing like and I had to
10 pay \$3,000 in back rent and I had to leave
11 work and I lost all my pension -- not my
12 pension; my benefits because K-Mart was
13 moving at that time. So I lost my package
14 deal and everything because I had to leave
15 and I couldn't get to work. I got weak, and
16 that's when I developed the postpolio in
17 1994 so I felt lost and everything.

18 Finally the program came out Personal
19 Attendant and they gave me somebody and I
20 started selling Avon so I was qualified,
21 then everybody never paid the bills so I had
22 to quit that, so then I told myself --

23 (Time bell rings.)

24 -- which today I'm a personal -- I'm
25 sorry -- I'm an activist so I educate the

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1 politicians and the public and I write in
2 the newspaper and I keep on writing letters
3 and letters to, you know, help people like
4 me. I had polio when I was three years old,
5 so my mother always, you know, used to
6 baby-sit or iron people's clothes so I'm
7 very independent and I still feel like that,
8 that if I didn't have the personal assistant
9 that I wouldn't be as independent as I can
10 because I only got one good arm to work with
11 and I got very weak.

12 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: The bell rang.
13 Are you almost finished?

14 MS. BOLLERDICK: All right, thank you.
15 And also I want to know about -- I'm able to
16 still drive and everything, but I'm thinking
17 if I get -- when I become a senior citizen,
18 I hope that the transportation will be there
19 for me, and there's another problem.

20 When you're -- when you're handicapped
21 with a wheelchair, the buses don't even go

22 to Atlantic City. You're behind with a lot
23 of things being that you're handicapped in a
24 wheelchair, and like I said, I wrote to
25 different politicians and it seems like in

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1 the year 2008 we're still behind with
2 everything, and wheelchair people are really
3 left behind. There's a lot of issues that
4 have to be corrected and I hope that, you
5 know, before I become a senior citizen
6 they'll correct them. Okay. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Thank you
8 very much.

9 Lorraine Joewono, who is the director
10 of the Bergen County Office on Aging.

11 MS. JOEWONO: I will make it brief. I
12 want to echo the sentiments of my colleagues
13 in thanking you in putting these hearings in
14 the north, the south, and the central so
15 that agencies and seniors had the
16 opportunity to tell their stories which we
17 think is very important, and I also echo the
18 sentiments of my colleagues that we believe
19 that the Commission on Aging should be
20 reestablished or, you know, active, made
21 active, so that these concerns and issues
22 can be discussed and brought to the
23 attention of the proper people.

24 I just wanted to really quick because
25 I know through this whole day I heard a lot

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1 of people talk about our paper plate
2 campaign that was done by our advisory
3 councils of the 21 area agencies on aging,
4 and I have some more here that were
5 delivered to me and I know Senator Weinberg
6 is familiar with these because they went to
7 her office too, but I have to say that your
8 office was the only one that called me and
9 thanked me for bringing the awareness --

10 SENATOR WEINBERG: We're probably
11 reusing the paper plates.

12 MS. JOEWONO: So we just wanted to --
13 and these were signed not only by homebound
14 seniors that received Meals on Wheels, but
15 also by some of their caregivers or, you
16 know, people that have -- know what people
17 -- that this means to them, the Meals on
18 Wheels, and I'm going to leave them up there
19 so you can see them and take them with you,
20 but each paper plate says, Each day around
21 noon, thousands of -- ours say Bergen
22 County, but there's 21 different counties --
23 homebound seniors and people living with
24 disabilities have a date with a paper plate.
25 It is Meals on Wheels delivering what might

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1 be their only meal of the day. Please
2 increase the funding for this program. The
3 money can be found in the casino revenue
4 funds, and I think that says it all and I
5 thank you again. Thank you.

6 SENATOR WEINBERG: We thank you,
7 Lorraine, for all that you do.

8 VICE-CHAIRPERSON THEBERY: I think it
9 would be a miss if we didn't at this point in

10 time thank very much not only for the
11 senator's involvement now with the Advisory
12 Commission, but Senator Weinberg was the one
13 at her first meeting with us said, you know
14 what you need to do, you need to have
15 hearings bottom of the state, middle of the
16 state, top of the state. You have to have
17 hearings, and it's because of your
18 suggestion and your efforts, always your
19 efforts, that we're here, so I think a nice
20 round of applause for Senator Weinberg.

21 (Audience applause.)

22 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I want to
23 thank -- I've seen some of you here sit down
24 from the beginning and listen to all the
25 testimony and I want to thank you for that

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1 and I want to thank you for your interest.
2 I want to thank you all out there now for
3 staying as long as you have stayed and for
4 speaking on behalf of seniors and disabled,
5 and we know they cannot speak. We're
6 speaking for a lot of seniors and disabled
7 who are homebound. They can't get out of
8 their house. So on their behalf and on
9 behalf of the disabled that we represent, I
10 want to thank you for being here.

11 I want to thank all the Commission
12 members, and we really needed to hear this,
13 we really need to go forward with the next
14 Commission recommendations and we need to go
15 forward with enthusiasm and with resolve and
16 you've helped us today with that.

17 This has been a great hearing, and
18 again, I guess the hearings are now closed
19 and I thank you for being here.

20 (Proceedings adjourned at 12:44 p.m.)

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1 I, JOANNE BRYAN, RPR, a Certified Court
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3 and accurate transcript of the proceedings which
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