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Gov. Whitman Comments on the Legislature and Automobile Insurance Reform

A Statement by Gov. Whitman

I want the Legislature to pass the automobile insurance reform plan I proposed in January that will give motorists a choice to reduce their rates as much as 25 percent. I'll be here any day, anytime they are ready to do that.

My proposal to let drivers choose the type of coverage that is right for them provides flexibility to lower rates and protects the rights of motorists. It has been before the Legislature for several months now and has been stymied by special interests. If the Democrats want to support it, I will be here tomorrow.

For over 20 years, the Legislature has grappled with automobile insurance reform. There have been scores of legislative hearings, task forces, panels, and special committees.

The Legislature took a first step this year when it passed and I signed bills eliminating automatic rate increases, prohibiting surcharges, and toughing laws to fight insurance fraud. I have taken another step by instituting a freeze on rate increases and supporting federal legislation before the Congress that would give motorists choices to lower their rates. Since 1994, I have supported eleven reform bills in the State Legislature.

I urge lawmakers of both parties to get into step and support my proposals and the federal bills that deliver real automobile insurance reform to the people of New Jersey.

At this point, we do not need more talking, we need more action.

I want Democratic and Republican lawmakers to know that I am always prepared to deal honestly and openly with the issue of automobile insurance reform. My position has been clear for three and one-half years: I will consider any proposal that provides true relief to our motorists and reduces automobile insurance rates.

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