



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



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### Commissioner Socolow Testifies on Department of Labor and Workforce Development Budget Before Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee

**TRENTON, April 18, 2007** - Commissioner David J. Socolow of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development testified today before the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee about Governor Corzine's Fiscal Year 2008 budget request for the Department.

While the Department is more than 75 percent federally funded, Commissioner Sololow told the Committee the Department's "services, programs and partnerships touch millions of people in our state, from employers to workers to job seekers and students preparing for success in the workplace.

The Commissioner addressed the programs of the Department within three broad categories: "services to aid workers with the greatest barriers to employment success; workforce development efforts to foster economic growth and build an innovation economy; and programs to protect workers and employers from economic dislocation and unfair labor practices."

Commissioner Socolow reported that the Department served more than 300,000 customers at One-Stop Career Centers across the State and provided training in basic workplace skills at One-Stop Centers and through local partnerships to 63,000 workers last year. The Department also provided training and work activities to help recipients of welfare benefits move into the workforce.

The Commissioner reported that, for the first time, the Department is awarding a number of customized training grants in targeted high-growth industries through a competitive process. Socolow said, "Our goal is to direct most of our limited resources to the best training grant applications that provide higher-level skills to enable workers to prosper in the global innovation economy, including such industries as Life Sciences, Financial Services, Information Technology, Logistics,

and Science and Technology.

Commissioner Socolow testified about the Department's worker and employer protection efforts including those of the Office of Labor Standards and Safety Enforcement which recovered more than \$8 million in back wages and overtime pay owed to more than 10,500 workers in New Jersey.

In addition, the Commissioner announced that the latest estimates showed that New Jersey added nearly 5,000 jobs in March while the State's unemployment rate, at 4.3 percent, remained below the national rate of 4.4 percent.

The full text of the commissioner's formal testimony is available on the Department Website.

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