

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Pete McDonough
609-777-2600

RELEASE: July 17, 1999

Whitman Statement on Kennedy Disappearance

NJ Gov. Christie Whitman issued the following statement regarding the disappearance of John F. Kennedy, Jr., his wife Carolyn Bessette Kennedy and his sister-in-law Lauren Bessette:

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Kennedy and Bessette families during this especially difficult time.

"The disappearance of these three young adults touches us all in very personal ways.

"John Kennedy, Jr. held, and continues to hold, a special and unique place in the American conscience. His life has helped to bridge the promise of the early 1960's in America with the prosperity and potential of the new millennium.

"His life and career have been a constant reminder of how our society and culture have evolved since our earliest memories of him as a very young 'John John' at the White House," Gov. Whitman said.

Gov. Whitman had discussions today with several members of the Kennedy family including Senator Edward Kennedy and his wife, as well as Kerry Kennedy Cuomo. Immediately following the initial contact at about 7:00 this morning, Gov. Whitman directed the full involvement of the State's emergency response agencies in the search and rescue mission for the Kennedy plane and its passengers in or around New Jersey. A survey of aviation facilities and a grid search of the affected area were conducted.

(Governor Whitman was photographed for Mr. Kennedy's GEORGE MAGAZINE yesterday. She was interviewed by Mr. Kennedy for an earlier edition of the magazine in 1997.