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NEWS RELEASE

Governor's Weekly Radio Message Supports the New Jersey State Police

Gov. Christie Whitman provides a weekly radio message to radio stations throughout the state. Each week, the message focuses on a different concern or event of interest to New Jerseyans.

This week the Governor discusses her support and pride in the New Jersey State Police and addresses reports of "racial profiling". The Governor restates that the State Police does not have a policy of racial profiling and has not had such a policy in the past. The Attorney General Peter Verniero has initiated a thorough, wide-ranging investigation of these reports. The Governor also states that the reputations and professionalism of the entire force should not be called into question by the actions of just a few. Any racial profiling that is found will be rooted out.

Attached is the text of the message.

The radio message can be accessed by calling the Governor's actuality line at 609-292-3249. It will be available today, beginning at noon, and will run through the weekend.

GOVERNOR'S WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS MARCH 12, 1999 SUPPORTING THE NEW JERSEY STATE POLICE

As Governor, I believe that there is no higher priority for government than protecting the lives and safety of the people of New Jersey. That is why, over the past five years, I have worked hard to give law enforcement officers the tools they need to wage a successful fight against crime.

As a result of our efforts, crime in New Jersey has dropped to the lowest levels in more than 25 years. Leading the way to this remarkable success are the men and women of the New Jersey State Police - one of the finest, most professional, and most effective law enforcement agencies in the country.

I am proud of our State Police. Their dedication to keeping all of us safe deserves our thanks and praise. They are on the front lines of our fight against crime and have earned our full support.

That is why I take very seriously anything that threatens to undermine people's confidence in our State Police. Our men and women in blue can not do their jobs if the public is questioning the respect they have for them.

Reports of a practice known as "racial profiling" have brought that confidence into question. These reports have merited a quick and certain response from my administration.

Let me be clear: the New Jersey State Police does not have - and has not had - a policy of racial profiling. But I am concerned when some New Jerseyans charge that there may be cases where racial profiling is used.

No law-abiding New Jersey resident or visitor should have to fear the very people who are sworn to protect them. The many faces of our one family deserve to feel secure in their homes, on the streets, and in their cars. Unfortunately, as Attorney General Janet Reno said recently, even the allegation of racial profiling undermines the ability of the State Police and the community to work together.

So, to determine the truth of these allegations, Attorney General Peter Verniero initiated a wide-ranging investigation into these reports. That inquiry that will determine whether racial profiling is used by any trooper in any way. It will be the most thorough investigation of this issue in New Jersey history.

I do not want the reputations and professionalism of the entire force called into question by the actions of just a few. Any racial profiling we find will be rooted out. I will not allow one of the finest law enforcement agencies in America to be dragged down by anyone who does not share this state's commitment to justice for all.

That same determination to maintain the confidence of the public in the State Police was behind my decision to ask the Superintendent of the State Police to resign his position after he made public remarks that could undermine the men and women under his command.

Unfortunately, there are also those who are seeking to use the current situation for purely partisan purposes. Let no one doubt my determination to safeguard the integrity of the State Police from attack by those who can't police their own knee-jerk partisanship.

As a matter of principle, I will always move swiftly and decisively to protect our State Police against anything that would make their already-difficult jobs even tougher. I have too much respect and admiration for our troopers to allow that.