

GOVERNOR CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN'S
STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2000

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Madam Chief Justice,
distinguished members of the Legislature, honored guests, fellow
New Jerseyans:

Let me begin with a word of thanks to some special citizens:
those who gave time and effort to help us weather the drought,
recover from the flood, and triumph over the Y2K bug. They all
deserve a round of applause.

With the Y2K scare behind us, it's time to put into
perspective what the Year 2000 really means for the people of New
Jersey.

The world has just completed - or if you are a purist, will
soon complete - an amazing millennium. A period that encompassed
Joan of Arc and Martin Luther King, the Magna Carta and the Bill
of Rights, the Gutenberg Bible and the microchip.

Only God knows what will take place in the next one thousand
years. But it begins now.

Let me introduce you to four children of the new millennium.
There are 8 million stories in the Garden State, but I just want
to talk today about these four, who exemplify the potential within
all the children we bring into the world.

They are John Kueny of Mount Laurel, Steven Decker of
Frelinghuysen, Patti Ann Van Meter of Neptune, and Yordy Hernandez
of Paterson. John, Steven, Patti Ann, and Yordy were all born ten
days ago, on January 1 of a new year, a new century, a new
millennium.

As these newest faces join New Jersey's one family, I am
proud to say that the state of the state is bright, bold, and
brimming with promise.

Their families can walk streets that are their safest in more
than a quarter-century.

Their mothers and fathers go to work in an economy with some
of the highest salaries in the nation and over 378,000 more jobs
than the day I took office.

Their families have seen us cut taxes 36 times since 1994 and
provide the largest package of property tax relief in our history.

They and their grandchildren will be able to run and play and
enjoy the Garden State's beauty because we're saving a million
more acres of land for all time.

I'm proud of our record. We have made great strides together
in so many areas, from health care to transportation, welfare
reform to historic preservation. Now it's time to lock in our
accomplishments and build on our record.

As I enter the second half of my second term as governor, I
want to continue strengthening New Jersey in four key areas:
expanding the economy, improving education, protecting the
environment, and serving the elderly - the four E's, if you will.

Making progress on these four E's will make a better life for the four children you just met and for all the New Jersey children who will call the 21st century their own.

Let me start with the economy - a very good place to start.

Together, we've cut taxes and slashed red tape. Together, with leadership from Senators Pete Inverso and Ed O'Connor and Assemblymen Paul DiGaetano and Rich Bagger, we have lowered energy costs. Together, with help from leaders like Senator Joe Kyrillos, we've made it easier for businesses to create jobs in New Jersey.

Look at the results. Today, New Jersey leads the region in job creation.

While bringing unemployment back under 5 percent seemed hopeless when I first ran for governor, we have now held below that level for twenty-seven months in a row.

Now we must add to that record. Now we must lay out a forward-looking agenda that gives our families greater opportunities for the best jobs. Now we must establish our place in a new economy by making high technology the undisputed engine of our growth.

What does the new economy look like?

It's a world whose raw materials are the microchip and information technology. It's an economy that places a premium on skills and education. It's a world where more and more jobs will come not from corporate giants but from small, fast-growing firms.

New Jersey - the home of Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein - is well-suited to enter this new economy.

Already, high-tech industries employ one-out-of-10 of our workers, paying a salary nearly double the state average. Northern New Jersey alone boasts 3,000 more high-tech firms than in all of Silicon Valley. We're Number One in private sector spending on electronic research - the kind of research that produced this device.

Lucent Technologies calls it a lambda router chip. The technology on this chip replaces equipment that today takes up the space of 20 refrigerators. This single device can route 10 times as much information as the whole Internet now sends across the entire world. This New Jersey invention will turn the "World Wide Wait" into the instant Internet.

New Jersey has already begun to invest in the new economy. We're wiring every school for the Internet, for example, and training teachers to make the most of it. What's more, we're pumping \$50 million a year into high-tech industries through the research and development tax credits that Senator Bob Singer sponsored.

Someday little John Kueny will reap the benefits of these investments, whether it's learning in a wired classroom, owning or working at a technology company, or using a product home-grown in the Garden State.

But every state is making technology a priority. If we run in place we fall behind. That's why two years ago I created The Edison Partnership, a high-technology think tank that combines the best ideas of business, academia, and government.

I am pleased to welcome its co-chairs here today: Lucent Technologies President Thomas Uhlman, Princeton University President Harold Shapiro, and New Jersey Economic Development Authority director Caren Franzini. Tom, Harold, and Caren: thank you for your leadership.

The Edison Partners believe - and I agree - that we must do more to keep on top in high tech. We need to move more innovative ideas from laboratory to marketplace - filling the gaps, as it were, from research to retail. At the same time, we must enable all our families to join the new economy.

That's why I am pleased today to propose a \$165 million economic package called New Jersey Jobs for a New Economy.

This bold, new package sends our state straight to the head of the pack in high technology. More important, it creates jobs. Promoting high technology is only a means to an end, and that end is jobs - more jobs, better jobs, higher-paying jobs for all our families.

The process starts with education - the linchpin of economic expansion.

I propose that we dedicate \$15 million this year to challenge our colleges and universities to produce the high-tech workforce of tomorrow. I'm not just talking about engineers and biochemists, as valuable as they are. Business leaders tell me they also need skilled workers to do a host of lab and other technical jobs that don't require an advanced degree.

Through these excellence grants, we will make good math and science programs in our colleges and universities even better. That may mean hiring more professors, or buying advanced equipment. We will do all we can to make our campuses the very best training grounds for the workers of the future.

I want every single person in New Jersey to share in our success. We can't leave any part of the workforce behind in the new economy. So with \$3 million from the WorkFirst New Jersey initiative, we will help more women leaving welfare to gain computer skills for the workplace.

Universities will play a leading role in the new economy - not only in generating high-tech workers but also in launching high-tech ventures.

The research that goes on in campus labs is critical.

Yet today, New Jersey universities rank 44th in securing federal research and development dollars, at a time when Washington is funding R&D as never before. By 2004, the budget of the National Institutes of Health alone will be twice as big as it was just a year ago. We deserve a bigger share of federal dollars - but it won't happen unless we make it happen.

That's why the New Jersey Jobs for a New Economy package includes a matching fund for technology research. We will put up \$10 million in grants, and we'll challenge institutions to match at least that amount with funding from the federal government.

Let it be said that when it comes to R&D, whether the mission is to find a cure for cancer, improve the treatment of heart disease, or design a better computer, New Jersey universities will lead the charge.

Creating new technologies also means stimulating business outside the university halls. For example, for several years our Commission on Science and Technology has funded incubation programs. Incubators "quick-start" businesses by supplying lab and office space and giving them hands-on help from business and technical experts.

Let me tell you about a company called New Jersey Precision Technologies. They use innovative software to custom-make everything from submarine parts to hip replacement implants. This company entered the incubator at NJIT with \$50,000 in sales. They now sell \$2 million a year, with 20 people on the payroll. Bob Tarantino, president of the company, is with us today, and I want to say congratulations, Bob.

New Jersey Precision Technologies is proof that incubators work. What's more, they create jobs - nearly 500 apiece. But we've only begun to tap their potential. There are many more New Jersey firms waiting to hatch, one of whom could someday give baby John his first paycheck.

That's why this package commits \$5 million to open 10 new incubators around the state, which will give us more than twice as many as we have right now.

But there's still more we can do. Too many high-tech companies in the second stage of development leave New Jersey. Why? Because they can't find office and lab space they can afford. We need to help incubator graduates find the space they need to grow right here in the Garden State.

So let's expand on the success of the Technology Centre of New Jersey in North Brunswick, which has fostered the growth of so many new firms since it opened in 1997.

I propose that we combine \$10 million in State funds with private dollars to expand the capacity of the North Brunswick facility. Let's also use that money to build a brand new Technology Center in what Jack Collins, Bill Gormley, and Jim Cafiero would agree is the future powerhouse of our economy - South Jersey.

Finally, we need to ensure that these smaller companies - the Microsofts and Amazon.coms of the future - find venture capital.

Large high-tech companies have little trouble attracting big private investors. But smaller businesses aren't so lucky. They struggle because many venture capitalists don't want to bother with investments of \$2 million or less.

That's why I am recommending that we allocate \$10 million in state funds - which will leverage \$30 million in private funds - to help our smaller high-tech firms get the dollars they need.

Of course, if we carry out all these plans and never share the good news about what we've accomplished, we've only done half the job. We have to be the town crier in the global village and encourage more high-tech businesses to bring their jobs here.

So I have asked Prosperity New Jersey, our public-private partnership for economic development, to combine \$2 million in state funds with private dollars to launch a major new advertising campaign. People across the country and around the world will hear a lot more about New Jersey - the Innovation Garden State.

The New Jersey high-tech story is also about cities. They must share in our success.

Look at how New Brunswick created a cultural district which has transformed that city. Look at how Atlantic City used casinos and entertainment to become a huge part of our economy. Cities can also transform themselves with high technology.

So let's help New Jersey's cities entice startup technology firms to set up shop there. Let's create cyberdistricts - technology hubs that help small companies tap into the high-speed connections and other advantages that only cities can offer.

I propose that the State provide planning grants to cities that want to set up their own cyberdistricts. As the "Trenton Makes, The World Takes" sign reminds us, New Jersey cities were centers of economic progress in the Industrial Age; let's make them bridges to opportunity in the Information Age.

State government should be a full partner in our high-tech growth. So I propose we invest \$37 million in a computer network that keeps New Jersey truly A-1 when it comes to e-government.

Members of the Legislature, I invite you to work with me on New Jersey Jobs for a New Economy. With this package we will keep our economy booming and make the home of Edison and Einstein a welcome, dynamic place for John Kueny and every child of the new millennium.

Yordy Hernandez is also counting on us. He's counting on us to improve the second E - education - because as he graduates, the new economy will place an even greater premium on knowledge and brainpower.

Through the hard work of leaders like Bob Martin and Joe Palaia in the Senate and David Wolfe in the Assembly, we have already done a lot. Thousands of families can now opt to send their kids to one of over 60 charter schools we helped establish. Others can take advantage of our new school choice program.

They all will learn from teachers who must now take at least 100 hours of continuing education every five years. Members of the Legislature, I'm proud to say that because we demanded excellence, those teachers will be preparing our kids to reach the highest academic standards in New Jersey's history.

Now it's time to build on those achievements and keep outstanding teachers at the heart of education. Today I propose three educational quality initiatives to meet that goal.

First, we will continue to ensure high-quality early childhood education in Paterson, where Yordy lives, and in every Abbott district.

This year, we will increase funding so that districts and community child care centers can hire more teachers who are qualified to teach in early childhood classrooms. What's more, we will provide scholarship aid to help preschool teachers improve their skills.

Second, we will help public school teachers change the way they teach students to reflect our new standards.

Last year we opened a very successful "virtual university." It's an online connection to higher education that has expanded opportunities for distance learning. I want to use the Web once again for education - this time, however, to teach the teachers.

We will create a virtual academy to offer our public school

teachers everything from interactive workshops to online training. In doing so, we will work with a New Jersey higher education institution to develop the best and newest methods of training teachers.

Our third educational quality initiative ensures that New Jersey's children will learn from top-notch, talented, and committed teachers.

I am proud to announce today that we've formed a partnership with the New Jersey Education Association. Together, we will develop a mentoring program required for all first- and second-year teachers.

This program draws on the wealth of experience and wisdom already in our classrooms. Teachers and administrators will select "mentor teachers" from among their colleagues based on strict criteria the NJEA and the State will establish. We'll use State funds to compensate mentor teachers for their work.

I want to recognize Michael Johnson, head of the NJEA, for his leadership on this initiative. Thank you, Michael.

I also want you to meet Laretta Cole. Laretta teaches third grade at P.S. 6 in Paterson, little Yordy's school district. Laretta has been inspiring young minds for 30 years, earning a Principal's Award for outstanding character and leadership. Laretta, you're exactly the kind of person we will ask to mentor our newest teachers. Thank you for your commitment to children.

While we're helping teachers, let's also make it easier for Yordy's parents and other concerned citizens to help out in their schools, whether by tutoring, mentoring, coaching, or serving on the PTA. We know how crucial parental involvement is to a child's success. Yet right now, because the school day and workday overlap, many of us find it nearly impossible to take part in school activities on a regular basis.

I want to change that. Last year I volunteered my time teaching a fourth grade class twice a month. I've enjoyed it so much that I decided to re-up for another year. Now I want to get others involved in our schools. So starting this year, we will grant state government employees up to 2 hours a month - 20 hours per school year - in paid leave to volunteer their services in New Jersey schools.

I know some enlightened business leaders do the same for their employees. I challenge every employer to get on board. Let's do all we can to help our schools become their very best.

Our schools need to give our children 21st century skills. But they also should instill values that are timeless. With so many horrible stories about youth violence in the news, we have to renew our efforts to teach our kids values like respect and responsibility, decency and civility.

Students in Newark are taking part in a federal pilot program of character education. As they learn English and social studies, they are also learning about respect and responsibility. A number of other districts in New Jersey are also building these lessons into their courses.

Let's help every district give its kids the same opportunity. I am proud today to propose the formation of a New Jersey Character Education Partnership. With help from colleges, corporations, and community groups, let's choose the best character education programs in the country and then make them

available to every New Jersey school district.

Let's be clear: We can help Yordy succeed in learning right angles, but we've failed him if he doesn't learn right from wrong.

While we are on the topic of helping our children, it's time to come together on school construction. We got together on auto insurance, thanks to Jack Collins, Don DiFrancesco, and Joe Doria, and premiums dropped by more than 15 percent. We found common ground on welfare reform, thanks to Lou Bassano and Wayne Bryant, and we cut caseloads in half. We worked together on land preservation, with the help of leaders like Leonard Lance, and now the rest of the nation looks to New Jersey.

We can do this. I'm sure you agree that the last thing any of us wants is a court solution. But there's no time to waste. The clock is ticking and too many schools are crumbling. So let's do it. Let's enact a funding plan that gives our children the safe and sturdy schools they deserve.

Let me turn to E Number Three - the elderly.

Think about this for a moment: when baby Patti Ann is ready to retire, the year may be 2070. You and I probably won't be around. But our work on senior issues will give Patti Ann's older relatives more security in the near future.

As Patti Ann grows, she will find that her grandmother, Pat, is a very special person. While Pat has not yet reached her senior years, she has the proud distinction of becoming a grandmother for the third time. She is with us today, along with her daughter-in-law and new mom, Elaine. Congratulations, Pat and Elaine Van Meter.

I'm proud of our efforts on the third E. Working together with legislators like Assemblywomen Carol Murphy and Rose Heck, and the late Senator Wynona Lipman, we've helped New Jersey's senior citizens lead independent, productive lives. We expanded senior services and protected PAAD. We froze property taxes for qualified seniors and improved on the homestead rebate program.

Just as important, we have given families more options for long-term care, whether it's assisted living or alternate family care. Our seniors are no longer being automatically shuttled from hospitals into nursing homes.

The \$60 million initiative we started last year is helping more seniors stay in their homes and communities. Today, we're supporting caregivers and screening seniors to ensure that a nursing home plan is right for them.

We must do even more. The New Jersey Advisory Council on Elder Care, which I created in 1998, looked closely at the needs of the elderly and their caregivers. Its report echoed many of the concerns I hear when I talk with people around the state.

The message is clear: seniors want to maintain their independence as long as possible. As Patti Ann's grandmother and fellow baby boomers age, this desire will only increase.

So this year, to further help older citizens remain independent, we will dedicate another \$5 million to six important initiatives.

First, we will expand home-delivered meals to the elderly. Meals on Wheels helps countless New Jersey seniors get the daily nutrition they need. This year, we will expand Meals on Wheels to

entirely eliminate the waiting list for this vital program.

But we can't stop there. We need more community assistance for frail elderly on low incomes. Congregate housing services can help. They include housekeeping, personal assistance, case management, and meals in a group setting. This year, we will expand these services to 15 new senior housing sites across the state.

Of course, some seniors who stay at home can suffer from neglect or abuse. This is particularly true for those who can't care for themselves. Let's keep our seniors safe, and give their caregivers the help they need. This year, we will enable local adult protective agencies to serve hundreds more at-risk seniors.

We will also address a concern that I know is on your minds: ensuring that all home health aides are the kind of people we want caring for our most vulnerable citizens. Assemblywomen Charlotte Vandervalk and Loretta Weinberg have led the way on this issue. With thanks for their efforts, I will propose in my budget that we combine state and federal funds to pay the cost of all background checks - not just for new aides but for every single person in the system.

Helping seniors remain independent also means providing a hassle-free way to get information and services. Our toll-free New Jersey EASE hotline connects them to all the services our state offers.

To strengthen the program, I propose we award grants to help all New Jersey EASE counties improve the quality of the care management they provide.

There's another step we can take: ensuring that younger citizens like Patti Ann's mom and grandmother can buy some peace of mind by planning now for their senior years. Buying long-term care insurance today will enable them to choose from among the widest range of options tomorrow - from home care to assisted living to a nursing home.

That's why we will begin a program this year that will offer this insurance to State employees and their families on a voluntary basis. I hope private employers will follow our example by offering it to their employees as well.

The fourth and final E that I want to discuss with you today is the environment. As we serve the elderly, upgrade our economy, and improve education, we must also give children like Steven Decker an environment that sustains them and their families.

The Garden State is already better for what we've done. Steven and his family have more open space for picnics and backpacking. They can pick Jersey Fresh blueberries on a farm that we preserved forever. They can play on beaches that are cleaner today than ever before.

Steven will also grow up in a state that knows its limitations.

We know that open land is at a premium, and we must preserve it. We know that clean air is invaluable, and we must safeguard it. We know that clean water is priceless, and we must do all we can to protect our watersheds.

Let me talk for a moment about watersheds and what they mean to our future.

Every one of us lives in a watershed. New Jersey has 20 watershed management areas. Watersheds are "nature's boundaries" - areas of land with common water sources that feed into each other, such as streams, lakes, and aquifers.

Today we are fortunate to have with us John Brunner, who runs the Musconetcong Watershed Association in baby Steven's area of the state. For years, John has been teaching local residents about watersheds and about the connection between what we do in our own homes and the impact it has on our communities. As he puts it, "we all live downstream." Thank you, John.

As John can tell you, sharing a water supply means sharing responsibility. The shampoo that runs down your drain in one part of that watershed, the motor oil that washes into a storm sewer a few miles away, and a factory's daily discharge on the far side of that same watershed may all affect a common water source.

The quality of water is a vital concern. So is the quantity of water, as last summer's drought reminded us all.

Unfortunately, as New Jersey has poured more concrete, cut down more woodlands, and built more buildings, we have put watersheds at risk, whether through saltwater intrusion along the coast or groundwater contamination farther inland.

Saving land will help. But it's just as important to recognize that where we put sewers, roads, and new buildings can affect an entire watershed.

I know that the Legislature takes this issue seriously, with Senator John Bennett and Assemblyman Steve Corodemus leading the charge.

With the Legislature's approval, the State has set up a funding process to help establish watershed management plans across the state. So far, 11 of the 20 plans are under way. But some aren't scheduled to start until the year 2004.

We can't wait that long. The sooner we get to work on these long-term plans, the quicker we can give baby Steven a future of abundant clean water. So, as I announced last week, I want to increase the State's contribution by \$3 million so that every watershed plan in New Jersey can get started by September of this year.

That's not the only thing we need to do for water quality.

Later this year, the DEP will adopt rules for managing each watershed. These rules will encourage development where sewers and roads exist or can be built without harming the environment. Most important, these rules will enable the State to require a comprehensive environmental assessment before a wastewater system is built or extended.

What does this mean to our families? It means that the next time a drought hits we may be able to keep our lawns green and community pools open. It means we no longer have salt water creeping into our fresh water supply, as we are seeing more and more. At Steven's house, it means protecting the water they use to mix his formula or give him a bath.

We all know what haphazard growth has done to our morning commute; we must also recognize what it may soon do to our morning coffee.

Indeed, this is such an urgent concern that I want to act

now.

Therefore, earlier today I used the powers of my office to sign a water-quality executive order. This order directs the DEP to use its full authority to require a comprehensive environmental assessment before it approves any major new or expanded wastewater system.

We will hold DEP to a 120-day turnaround on these documents, so we don't get in the way of sensible development.

But let me be clear: this action declares that the State cannot and will not fail to act when the drinking water of our families is at stake.

Just as we want Steven to drink safe water, we want him to breathe clean air. I'm proud of New Jersey's progress on clean air, but the growing number of people with asthma in our state is proof enough that we must do better.

To get there we must first improve the way we measure air quality.

Right now there is only one site in the state where we monitor the full range of toxic materials in our air, from benzene to mercury to diesel fumes.

For true accountability, one site is clearly not enough. So I recommend that we establish three more comprehensive monitoring sites around the state this year. Better monitoring will enable us to enforce our clean-air laws quickly should we spot a violation.

Protecting New Jersey's air and water builds on our success in creating a clean, healthy environment. We've raised standards, we've saved open space, we've cleaned our beaches, and we've improved the State Plan. But we must do more to encourage intelligent, responsible growth for New Jersey's future, especially in our cities.

We've made a good start toward revitalizing our cities. With Senator Ron Rice's leadership, we made it easier to tear down boarded-up and unsafe buildings. Our rehab code is a national model. We've financed new homes in neighborhoods that had not seen development in a generation. Our faith-based grants are tapping the energy and leadership already in our cities.

I want to add one more incentive for growing the way New Jersey ought to grow. If you've been to a ballgame at Waterfront Park here in Trenton - or if you hold one of the thousands of new jobs generated by the Jersey Gardens outlet mall in Elizabeth - you know what can happen when we clean up and reuse abandoned industrial sites.

With help from this administration and this Legislature, we have seen New Jersey turn some of these so-called brownfields into veritable gold mines. They've helped city residents gain jobs and enjoy a higher quality of life.

But some brownfields are still untouched. They haven't been able to attract private developers, and a big reason is the expense of cleanup. From Vineland to Paterson, Atlantic City to Elizabeth, we need to help cities and towns get these sites back onto the market.

As we save farms, let's also salvage the urban acres that could be fertile ground for new homes or businesses. So today I am proud to announce a new \$15 million program that will, for the

first time, offer grants to help municipalities clean up brownfield sites and return them to productive use.

By encouraging smart growth, protecting air quality, and ensuring a reliable supply of drinking water, we can give Steven what we all want for ourselves: a state that is clean, green, and pristine.

Members of the Legislature, it has been said that "there is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in."

It is our obligation to make sure that for John, Steven, Yordy, and Patti Ann that door opens on a future where the only limits are their own ability and determination - a future of safe streets, good schools, plentiful jobs, vibrant culture, caring communities, open spaces, and healthy families.

When I decided not to run for the U.S. Senate, I thought long and hard about how to make sure prosperity continues here in New Jersey long after this administration has completed its work. We've come too far to see these accomplishments slip away because we rested on our laurels. The people of our state deserve a governor who approaches the last two years of her tenure as if they were her first.

Senate President DiFrancesco, Speaker Collins, Minority Leaders Codey and Doria, and members of the Legislature: I have laid out an ambitious agenda for us to accomplish before I leave office.

It is one that builds on our record and locks in our achievements. It is an agenda that gives John the hope of a prosperous high-tech career in a new economy. It enriches the quality of the schools that Yordy will enter in a few short years. It gives Patti Ann's grandmother the promise of a more secure and independent life as she ages. It protects the environment where Steven will live, play, and go to school.

Let us be guided by these four E's. Let us be inspired by these four precious faces. Let us rededicate ourselves to making this state - our home - the very best place in which to live, work, and raise a family.

Thank you.