

# Office of the Governor

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## NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE: September 3, 1999

### **Governor's Weekly Radio Message Addresses Decline in Crime Rate**

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 addresses the declining crime rate in the state. Earlier this week the Governor released the Uniform Crime Report for 1998. The crime rate index fell nine percent. New Jersey now has its lowest crime rate in a quarter century.

Attached is a 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.

#### **Radio Message (Uniform Crime Report)**

Our crime-fighting efforts are paying off. The proof is in the numbers.

Hello, this is Governor Christie Whitman, and this week I was pleased to announce the release of the Uniform Crime Report for 1998. And the news is very good indeed.

In these days when reports of violence in the workplace, in schools, and in communities across the country fill the airways, there are positive signs that violence in New Jersey is dropping dramatically.

Being safe from crime is one of the fundamental rights we have as people living in a civilized society. And the crime report that shows that New Jersey is becoming an even safer place for all of us.

Let me give you a few of the numbers.

In 1998, the total crime index fell nine percent. We now have the lowest crime level in a quarter century.

Last year, violent crime dropped 10 percent, including a 6 percent decline in reported rapes, an 11 percent drop in robberies, and a 12 percent decrease in carjackings. Aggravated assaults are down 10 percent, and arson has dropped by 12 percent.

We also continue to see results from our work with young people and communities. Juvenile arrests for violent and non-violent crimes dropped 14 percent. And we saw dramatic reductions in violent juvenile crime arrests: murder was down 41 percent, rape dropped 28 percent, and robbery declined 22 percent.

There's good news for our cities too. The urban violent crime index was down 12 percent, and non-violent crime in our cities fell by 11 percent.

In the past ten years, our six major cities - Camden, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Newark, Paterson, and Trenton - have had a combined drop in total crimes of 41 percent.

But perhaps the most important statistic I can give you is one that you won't find in the Uniform Crime Report. When you calculate just what a nine percent decline in total crimes means, you find that 31,000 fewer New Jerseyans were victims of major crimes in 1998.

That's 31,000 fewer people for whom crime wasn't a factor in their lives in 1998. Over 31,000 men, women, and children in our state whose lives weren't shattered by crime. More than 31,000 fewer people who were able to pursue their dreams for themselves and their families without having to worry about their personal safety.

That's something that my administration has made a high priority. We've worked hard to put more criminals behind bars, and keep them there longer. We're enforcing the tougher laws we've put on the books over the past five and a half years, and eliminating the cracks through which criminals can fall.

We have also helped in another way: by cutting taxes 34 times we've helped to add more than 360,000 jobs to our economy, and enabled more New Jerseyans to achieve a better life.

I'm very pleased that we're winning the war against crime, but we can't afford to be complacent. We still have a lot of work to do to make our state safer. We must continue to be vigilant and never let down our guard.

I'm confident we will continue to see the crime numbers drop. But I would be remiss if I didn't take just a moment more to thank the law enforcement community in New Jersey for all they do to keep us safe, day in and day out, every day of the year.

I think our law enforcement officers are the best in the nation. But don't take my word for it. The numbers in the Uniform Crime Report speak for themselves. We're winning the war on crime, we're making criminals pay the price, and we owe a great debt to our men and women in blue.

We will continue to build on the success we've achieved. Because every time we prevent a crime, we promote a better, safer, more secure New Jersey for all our people.

Thank you.

