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REMARKS OF GOVERNOR THOMAS H. KEAN
STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS
WAR MEMORIAL, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY
TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 1990

JAN 16 1990

THE THOUGHT HIT ME AT EXACTLY 4:36 LAST FRIDAY AFTERNOON.

I WAS GETTING READY AS I HAD SO MANY THOUSANDS OF TIMES
OVER THE PAST EIGHT YEARS...TO CHANGE FOR THE EVENING'S
EVENT...IN THIS CASE A BLACK TIE PERFORMANCE AT THE MCCARTER
THEATER IN PRINCETON.

I WAS TRYING TO FIT MY DRESS SHOE ON MY RIGHT FOOT...WHEN I
STOPPED...LOOKED UP...AND SAT BACK ON MY BED.

I SUDDENLY REALIZED...IN LESS THAN TWO WEEKS...I WON'T BE
GOVERNOR ANY LONGER.

NO MORE 16 HOUR DAYS. NO MORE PHONE CALLS AT ONE IN THE
MORNING. NO MORE STATE TROOPERS BY MY SIDE EVERY MINUTE AND
EVERY HOUR OF EVERY DAY.

AS THIS REALIZATION FINALLY SUNK IN...I COULDN'T GET OFF MY
MIND THE PROFOUND WORDS OF ONE VERY SPECIAL AMERICAN.

NOT LINCOLN. NOT WILSON. NOT WHITMAN OR ROOSEVELT OR
PAINE. NO. I THOUGHT OF THE WORDS OF SALLY FIELD.

YOU REMEMBER SALLY...THE FLYING NUN? REMEMBER WHEN SHE
FINALLY WON AN ACADEMY AWARD? AND SHE STOOD UP ON NATIONAL TV
AND SAID..."I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU LIKE ME...YOU REALLY LIKE ME."

WELL...AS I SAT ON MY BED LAST FRIDAY...AND THOUGHT ABOUT
TODAY'S SPEECH...I REALIZED THE SIMPLE TRUTH THAT MUST PASS
THROUGH THE MIND OF EVERY PUBLIC SERVANT AS THEY LEAVE OFFICE.

FROM THIS DAY ONWARD..."IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU REALLY
LIKE ME!"

I STAND BEFORE YOU TODAY FOR THE EIGHTH TIME AS GOVERNOR.

AND YET THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I COME BEFORE YOU UTTERLY
UNCONCERNED ABOUT THE NEXT POLL...OR TOMORROW'S FRONT PAGE...OR
HOW A LEGISLATOR WILL RESPOND TO A PARTICULAR PROGRAM.

THIS IS A POWERFUL NEW AWAKENING. AS I THOUGHT ABOUT
IT...I SAID TO MYSELF...THIS IS IT.

THIS IS THE DAY TO GET IT ALL OFF YOUR CHEST. THIS IS THE
DAY TO REALLY LET LOOSE. TO SAY WHAT'S REALLY ON YOUR MIND...TO
FORGET ALL THAT GRACIOUS PATRICIAN STUFF AND TAKE NO RHETORICAL
PRISONERS.

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THEN I THOUGHT...I CAN'T DO THAT. DO YOU REALLY WANT TO HEAR ME SPEAK FOR 15 STRAIGHT HOURS?

BUT SERIOUSLY...I COME BEFORE YOU TODAY A MAN WHO HAS REALIZED THAT ANOTHER CHAPTER IN HIS LIFE IS ENDING. BUT I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO REGRETS OR RECRIMINATIONS WHATSOEVER.

I STAND BEFORE YOU WITH A MIND CROWDED WITH WONDERFUL MEMORIES OF EIGHT GREAT YEARS...WITH A CHEST FILLED WITH PRIDE FOR THE TREMENDOUS PROGRESS WE'VE MADE TOGETHER...AND WITH A HEART HEAVY...BUT JUST A LITTLE BIT HEAVY...TO LEAVE THE JOB OF SERVING THE GREATEST PEOPLE IN THE GREATEST STATE IN THE GREATEST NATION ON GOD'S GREAT EARTH.

AS I LOOK BACK ON MY EIGHT YEARS IN OFFICE...I THINK OF THE EVENTS...BOTH SMALL AND LARGE.

I REMEMBER THE POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE SURROUNDING PRESIDENTIAL VISITS. IN 1988...PRESIDENT REAGAN VISITED OUR STATE FOR ONE OF THE LAST TIMES IN OFFICE.

I MET AIR FORCE ONE AT NEWARK AIRPORT...AND CLIMBED IN THE BACK SEAT OF A LIMO WITH THE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OF STAFF KEN DUBERSTEIN. LED BY LONG LINES OF POLICE CARS...WITH LIGHTS FLASHING...WE PROCEEDED UP THE PARKWAY TO PARSIPPANY.

WE WERE PASSING THE CEMETERY ON THE PARKWAY IN EAST ORANGE...WHEN THE PRESIDENT LOOKED AT ME AND ASKED..."TOM...HOW MANY DEAD PEOPLE DO YOU THINK ARE BURIED IN THAT CEMETERY?"

I SAID..."I HAVE NO IDEA." AND PRESIDENT REAGAN SAID..."THEY'RE ALL DEAD PEOPLE...THAT'S THE ONLY KIND THEY PUT IN CEMETERIES."

I REMEMBER MARVELING ONCE AGAIN AT THE EASY WAY THAT MAN SHOULDERED THE HEAVY MANTLE OF WORLD LEADERSHIP. AND I ALSO REMEMBER THINKING THAT JOKE WAS PROBABLY AS OLD AS THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF.

THOSE BIG EVENTS WERE FUN...BUT I ALSO REMEMBER THE LITTLE THINGS.

I REMEMBER A LETTER I RECEIVED FIVE YEARS AGO...FROM THE PALECO FAMILY IN VERONA...COMPLAINING ABOUT THE INFLEXIBLE PEOPLE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

NOW I ADMIT...LETTERS COMPLAINING ABOUT DEP ARE NOT EXACTLY UNUSUAL. BUT THIS ONE WASN'T ABOUT ECRA OR CAFRA OR A PINELANDS BUILDING PERMIT.

THIS ONE WAS ABOUT A RACCOON. "COONEY THE RACCOON" TO BE EXACT. HE HAD BEEN NAMED AFTER GERRY COONEY...THE ALMOST-FAMOUS BOXER.

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ANYWAY...THE EVER-VIGILANT FOLKS AT DEP HAD DISCOVERED GERRY...AND TOLD HIS FAMILY THAT THEY HAD TO GET RID OF HIM... BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T HAVE A PERMIT TO KEEP A RACCOON AS A PET.

THE FOLKS AT DEP WERE JUST DOING THEIR JOB. BUT THEY DIDN'T KNOW ONE THING. THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THAT PET MEANT TO THAT FAMILY...AND THEY DIDN'T KNOW MY FAMILY HAD A PET RACCOON WHEN I WAS YOUNG!

SO I MADE A FEW PHONE CALLS...AND GUESS WHAT...THE PALECO'S GOT THEIR PERMIT.

THEN JUST THIS CHRISTMAS...I RECEIVED A CARD IN THE MAIL.

I CAN TELL YOU WITH COMPLETE AUTHORITY...THAT WHILE GERRY COONEY THE BOXER IS STRUGGLING TO GET IN SHAPE FOR HIS MATCH WITH GEORGE FOREMAN...GERRY COONEY THE RACCOON WILL STILL GO A GOOD TWELVE ROUNDS WITH ANY CAT THAT DARES CROSS HIS DRIVEWAY.

AS I LOOK BACK...I REMEMBER FACES.

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF NEW JERSEY FACES FILLED WITH PRIDE ONE HOT JULY DAY IN 1986...AS WE ALL CELEBRATED THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY IN NEW JERSEY...AT LIBERTY STATE PARK.

AND I RECALL OTHER FACES THREE YEARS BEFORE THAT. FACES FILLED WITH FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY IN THE IRONBOUND SECTION OF NEWARK...AS I WENT DOOR TO DOOR REASSURING PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN FRIGHTENED BY THE DISCOVERY OF THE CHEMICAL DIOXIN IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD. I REMEMBER THEIR QUIET DIGNITY AS THEY SAID, "THANK YOU, GOVERNOR. WE FEEL BETTER NOW."

I REMEMBER ALL THESE SIGHTS...AND I REMEMBER THE SOUNDS AND SMELLS AS WELL.

I HEARD SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY BLARING FROM BOOM BOXES ON THE BOARDWALK AT SEASIDE HEIGHTS...AND I LISTENED TO THE SOARING SOUNDS OF A MOZART SONATA WAFT ACROSS THE WOODS AT WATERLOO VILLAGE IN STANHOPE.

I ENJOYED THE QUIET RUSH OF A RIVER IN THE PINELANDS...AND ENDURED THE CLAMOR OF CARS BACKED UP ON THE STREETS OF JERSEY CITY AT RUSH HOUR.

I ATE PEROGIS AND PIZZA...BAGELS AND BURRITOS...GYROS AND GOULASH...AND HUNDREDS OF OTHER FOODS EVEN MORE DIFFICULT FOR ME TO PRONOUNCE...BUT TOO GOOD FOR ME TO FORGET...AS MY TONGUE TASTED IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE OF THE PATCHWORK QUILT THAT IS NEW JERSEY.

I DID THIS DAY AFTER DAY...WEEK AFTER WEEK...YEAR AFTER YEAR.

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MOST EVENINGS I CAME HOME AFTER TEN O'CLOCK...A LIST OF PROBLEMS IN MY HEAD AND A LIST OF PHONE CALLS TO RETURN IN MY HAND. AND USUALLY I SLUMPED IN BED EXHAUSTED BY ONE OR TWO IN THE MORNING.

BUT YOU KNOW...NO MATTER HOW TIRED...I COULD NEVER WAIT FOR THE MORNING TO COME.

BECAUSE EVERY DAY WAS FILLED WITH SOME INCIDENT THAT REINVIGORATED MY FAITH IN HUMAN NATURE...IN THE FUNDAMENTAL DECENCY, HUMOR AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PEOPLE WE ARE SO PRIVILEGED TO SERVE.

EVERY DAY...I GATHERED ANOTHER PIECE OF EVIDENCE THAT CHURCHILL WAS SO RIGHT WHEN HE SAID THAT "DEMOCRACY IS THE VERY WORST FORM OF GOVERNMENT EVER INVENTED...EXCEPT FOR ALL THE REST."

THANK YOUS? I HAVE A FEW. ABOUT SEVEN AND A HALF MILLION TO BE EXACT. BUT I JUST WANT TO SINGLE OUT A COUPLE PEOPLE.

FIRST TO YOU...THE MEN AND WOMEN OF OUR STATE LEGISLATURE.

AT TIMES WE'VE DISAGREED. I ADMIT THAT. BUT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT WE'VE WORKED TOGETHER. I CAN SAY WE'VE NEVER LET "POLITICS" STAND IN THE WAY OF "PROGRESS."

WE'VE SHARED THE WEARINESS OF LATE NIGHT BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS...THE EUPHORIA OF SEEING A SIMPLE IDEA BECOME LAW ...AND THE FRUSTRATION OF WATCHING NEW PROBLEMS RISE TO TAKE THE PLACE OF OLD ONES.

BUT THROUGH IT ALL...I STILL FEEL THE SAME AS I DID 22 YEARS AGO ON THE DAY I TOOK MY OATH AND WALKED DOWN THE AISLE TO TAKE MY SEAT AMONG YOU AS A PROUD MEMBER OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY.

WHEN IT GETS RIGHT DOWN TO IT...THE MEMBERS OF OUR LEGISLATURE CARE ONLY ABOUT ONE SPECIAL INTEREST. THE WELFARE OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF NEW JERSEY.

I ALSO WANT TO THANK THE MORE THAN 80,000 PEOPLE WHO HAVE MADE BOTH OF US LOOK GOOD THESE EIGHT YEARS. I'M TALKING ABOUT OUR STATE EMPLOYEES.

WE LIVE IN AN AGE WHEN IT'S FASHIONABLE TO BELITTLE SO-CALLED "BUREAUCRATS." TO ME...THIS "FASHION" SHOULD BE PUT IN THE CLOSET ALONGSIDE OUR TATTERED LEISURE SUITS AND NEHRU JACKETS.

I'VE WATCHED STATE TROOPERS RISK THEIR LIVES SO YOUNG PEOPLE CAN GROW UP FREE FROM DRUGS...AND HOSPITAL WORKERS HUG LONELY BABIES BORN WITH THE BURDEN OF AIDS.

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I'VE HEARD OF COLLEGE PROFESSORS WHO WORK PAST MIDNIGHT TRYING TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO UNLOCK THE MYSTERIES OF DRYDEN'S POETRY FOR A SHY AND RELUCTANT STUDENT.

I SAW DOT WORKERS GIVE UP THEIR SUMMER VACATION TO REOPEN I-78 AND END A NIGHTMARE FOR THOUSANDS OF COMMUTERS.

IT'S BEEN SAID THAT SERVING HUMANITY IS THE HIGHEST CREED. BY THAT DEFINITION...NEW JERSEY IS LUCKY TO BE SERVED BY 80,000 MINISTERS, PRIESTS, AND RABBIS...WHO ALL WORK FOR STATE GOVERNMENT.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO THANK OUR OTHER "PUBLIC SERVANTS."

YOU WON'T FIND THEIR NAMES IN ANY STATE PHONEBOOK...THEY DON'T GET A STATE PAYCHECK EVERY WEEK. NO...THEY WORK IN CORPORATIONS...IN LABOR UNIONS...THEY TEACH IN OUR SCHOOLS ...AND MINISTER IN COUNTLESS CHURCHES AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS.

LIKE THE CEO OF A PROUD NEW JERSEY CORPORATION. A VERY BUSY MAN...HE WAS NEVER TOO BUSY FOR HIS HOMETOWN...THE CITY OF NEWARK. HIS NAME WAS BOB VAN FOSSAN.

AND ANOTHER GUY...AN OPERATING ENGINEER BY TRADE...WHO WORKED TIRELESSLY TO REBUILD OUR ROADS...AND IN THE PROCESS GIVE WORKERS WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF DIGNITY...THE CHANCE TO DO AN HONEST DAY'S WORK AT A GOOD WAGE. HIS NAME WAS JACKIE PIERSON.

AND A THIRD FELLA. WHO SPENT EVERY WEEKEND AND EVENING IN STEADFAST PURSUIT OF A DREAM...TO MAKE RUTGERS ONE OF OUR NATION'S PREMIER UNIVERSITIES. HIS NAME WAS ED BLOUSTEIN.

THESE THREE "SERVANTS" ARE WITH US NO LONGER...BUT THEIR SPIRIT IS ALIVE AND WELL.

IT'S BEEN SAID THAT BEING GOVERNOR CAN BE A LONELY JOB... BUT FOR ME, IT NEVER WAS LONELY.

EVERY TIME I REACHED OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT AND ASKED FOR HELP ...THE ANSWER WAS NOT JUST YES...BUT WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

IN JUST A FEW WEEKS MY SUCCESSOR WILL TAKE OFFICE. GOVERNOR FLORIO WILL ASK FOR YOUR HELP AS I DID SO MANY TIMES BEFORE. IN THE BEST TRADITION OF NEW JERSEY...I KNOW YOU WILL PROVIDE IT.

TODAY I WISH GOVERNOR FLORIO, HIS FAMILY AND HIS STAFF GOOD LUCK AND GODS BLESSING...AS THEY FACE THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW DECADE.

THERE'S ONE MORE GROUP OF PEOPLE I WANT TO MENTION. AS YOU KNOW...I'M A PRIVATE MAN...AND I'VE ALWAYS WORKED TO KEEP MY WIFE AND MY CHILDREN OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT.

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BUT THE PRESSURES ARE ALWAYS THERE. THE LONG HOURS. THE LOST WEEKENDS. THE NASTY HEADLINE AT THE TOP OF YOUR MORNING NEWSPAPER...THE NOISY PROTEST AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR DRIVEWAY.

FOR ME AND MOST PUBLIC SERVANTS...IT'S ALL PART OF THE JOB. BUT FOR OUR FAMILIES...IT'S NOT SO EASY TO ACCEPT.

MY FAMILY HAS BORNE THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF PUBLIC LIFE WITH COURAGE AND DIGNITY. THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN MY STAUNCHEST CHEERLEADERS...MY MOST HONEST CRITICS...MY VERY BEST FRIENDS.

SO TODAY I OFFER A SPECIAL THANKS TO MY THREE CHILDREN... AND ESPECIALLY TO MY WIFE DEBBY.

JANUARY 19, 1982. I FIRST STOOD BEFORE YOU AS GOVERNOR. THE DARK CLOUD OF RECESSION HUNG OVER US. THERE WAS MISERY AROUND FAMILY DINNER TABLES...AS LAYOFF NOTICES ARRIVED IN THE MAIL.

IN OUR SCHOOLS...THERE WAS DISTRESS...AS CHILDREN'S PERFORMANCE TUMBLED. IN OUR COMMUNITIES...ANGER...AS AIR AND WATER WAS POLLUTED. AND ALL AROUND A SENSE OF MALAISE...A FEELING THAT MAYBE PROBLEMS WERE JUST TOO BIG FOR US TO SOLVE.

JANUARY 1982. IT NOW SEEMS SO VERY LONG AGO.

BACK THEN...PERESTROIKA WAS JUST A WORD...OLLIE NORTH JUST A COLONEL...A CD JUST A SAVINGS DEVICE...AND ZSA ZSA JUST A LOVER...NOT A FIGHTER.

SO MUCH HAS CHANGED IN THOSE EIGHT YEARS. AROUND THE WORLD ...AND HERE AT HOME.

TODAY THERE ARE NO MORE LAYOFF NOTICES...THEY'VE BEEN REPLACED BY SIGNS BEGGING FOR NEW WORKERS.

WE STAND ON THE CREST OF THE 84TH CONSECUTIVE MONTH OF ECONOMIC GROWTH. IN JUST EIGHT YEARS...WE'VE CREATED ALMOST 800,000 NEW JOBS FOR THE PEOPLE OF NEW JERSEY.

IN OUR SCHOOLS...TEST SCORES ARE CLIMBING AGAIN. WE'RE CLEANING OUR DRINKING WATER...AND PROTECTING OUR PARKLAND...AND EVEN OUR SHORE HAS BEGUN TO REVIVE.

WE DID IT. TOGETHER WE CLIMBED FROM LAGGARD TO NATIONAL LEADER.

LOOKING FOR A STATE THAT RECRUITED OUTSIDE PROFESSIONALS TO THE CLASSROOM?

WE DID IT HERE FIRST!

LOOKING FOR A STATE THAT STRETCHED SCARCE DOLLARS TO INVEST IN ROADS AND CLEAN WATER AND OPEN SPACE?

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WE DID IT HERE FIRST!

LOOKING FOR A STATE THAT HAD THE COURAGE TO SAY THAT NO ONE SHOULD BE TURNED AWAY FROM A HOSPITAL BECAUSE HE CAN'T PAY THE BILL?

WE DID IT HERE FIRST!

AND IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A STATE THAT SAID "NO" TO THE EVIL OF APARTHEID...AND "YES" TO A CHANCE FOR EVERY CHILD ...EVEN IN THE WORST URBAN SCHOOLS.

ONCE AGAIN...WE DID IT HERE FIRST!

THAT'S JUST A PARTIAL LIST OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

OUR TOUGH DRUG LAWS. BEST IN THE NATION! OUR ENTERPRISE ZONES AND WELFARE REFORMS TO GIVE SKILLS AND JOBS TO THE NEEDY. BEST IN THE NATION! CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS...OUR SHORE PROTECTION PLAN...AND HIGHER EDUCATION CHALLENGE.

ALL CONSIDERED...THE VERY BEST IN THE NATION!

YOU KNOW, I SAID TEN MINUTES AGO THAT IT DIDN'T MATTER IF YOU LIKE ME ANYMORE. NOW I'M LISTING ALL THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO IMPRESS YOU. I GUESS FOR US POLITICIANS, OLD HABITS REALLY DO DIE HARD.

BUT I'M PROUD OF WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER. I'M NOT SAYING WE DID EVERYTHING...I ADMIT PARTS OF MY AGENDA REMAIN UNFINISHED. BUT I WILL MATCH OUR RECORD AGAINST ANY OTHER.

WE MADE THE RADICAL REFORM SEEM ALMOST COMMONPLACE; THE UNLIKELY COALITION SEEM LIKELY; THE BOLD AND ORIGINAL IDEA SEEM AN ALMOST EVERY DAY OCCURRENCE.

WE TREATED THE STATUS QUO WITH UTTER DISDAIN...AND PROVED THAT GOVERNMENT CAN ANTICIPATE PROBLEMS...NOT MERELY REACT TO THEM.

THE HEADY PRAISE AND HEADLINES OF TODAY FLATTER US...BUT THE REAL IMPACT OF OUR WORK WILL BE FELT BY GENERATIONS TO COME.

BY TODAY'S TEENAGERS...WHO WILL WORK IN THE HIGH TECH LABS WE BUILT TOGETHER.

BY TODAY'S FIRST GRADERS...WHO WILL LEARN IN SCHOOLS FILLED WITH BETTER TEACHERS, HIGHER STANDARDS, AND STRONGER VALUES THAT WE PROVIDED TOGETHER.

BY TODAY'S INFANTS...WHO WILL LIVE TO EXPERIENCE THE SHEER TERROR OF THAT FIRST DAY OF KINDERGARTEN, THE WARM LAUGHTER OF THEIR WEDDING DAY, AND THE UNBRIDLED JOY AS THEY LOOK IN THEIR GRANDCHILDREN'S EYES...BECAUSE OF A COMPASSIONATE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM THAT WE FORGED TOGETHER.

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PEOPLE ASK ME ABOUT OUR MOST LASTING AND IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENT. I TELL THEM IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT CAN BE COMPILED ON A CHART...PLOTTED ON A GRAPH...OR REALLY EVEN MEASURED BY A POLL.

WE FORGED AN IDENTITY...WE REAFFIRMED A SENSE OF PURPOSE ...AND WE BUILT NEW PRIDE IN THIS PLACE WE CALL NEW JERSEY.

AS A STUDENT AT PRINCETON MANY YEARS AGO...I TOLD OTHER STUDENTS I WAS FROM NEW JERSEY. AND THEY RESPONDED WITH WISECRACKS.

THE VERY FIRST TIME AS A LEGISLATOR I WAS ASKED TO REPRESENT OUR STATE AT AN OUT-OF-STATE CONFERENCE ANOTHER ELECTED OFFICIAL CAME UP TO ME AND SAID..."YOU'RE FROM NEW JERSEY. YOU MUST WANT TO SERVE ON OUR CRIME COMMITTEE."

THOSE MEMORIES HAVE ALWAYS RANKLED ME. BUT NOW I HAVE OTHER MORE RECENT MEMORIES...THEY WARM MY HEART.

I REMEMBER LITERALLY TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE...FROM COUNTRY FAIRS TO URBAN ETHNIC FESTIVALS...WHO HAVE COME UP TO ME THE PAST EIGHT YEARS AND SAID..."YOU KNOW...I'M DARN PROUD TO BE FROM NEW JERSEY."

LAST YEAR I SPENT A FEW DAYS IN HUNGARY...VISITING MY SON ON HIS COLLEGE SEMESTER ABROAD. IT WAS ONE OF THE RARE INSTANCES WHEN I TOTALLY ESCAPED THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE. NO STAFF ALONG...JUST ME AND MY SON. AND HE DID WHAT MOST COLLEGE STUDENTS WOULD DO...HE DRAGGED ME TO A DARK, DAMP UNDERGROUND BAR IN DOWNTOWN BUDAPEST.

I WAS STANDING THERE...SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE SPEAKING A STRANGE LANGUAGE HALF A WORLD AWAY...WHEN THE CROWD PARTED AND A GUY FROM SCOTCH PLAINS WALKED RIGHT UP TO ME AND SAID ..."GOVERNOR KEAN...I'M DARN PROUD TO BE FROM NEW JERSEY."

AND THINK ABOUT THIS. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU PICKED UP THE PAPER THE PAST FEW YEARS...TO READ ABOUT THE PRESIDENT OF OUR NATION TALKING ABOUT EDUCATION OR THE ENVIRONMENT OR THE ECONOMY.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU SEEN HIM SAY TO THE REST OF AMERICA..."WHEN IT COMES TO SOLVING THIS PROBLEM...WE SHOULD FOLLOW NEW JERSEY."

NOW SOME THINK THAT BUILDING PRIDE IS JUST A PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY.

ALL YOU DO IS CHEER LOUDLY FOR A FEW SPORTS TEAMS...OR HAVE YOUR GOVERNOR MAKE SOME COMMERCIALS SAYING A FEW WORDS TOGETHER PERFECTLY.

BUT PRIDE IS SO MUCH MORE THAN THAT.

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PRIDE IMBUES EVERYTHING WE DO...IT INFECTS ALL OUR ACTIONS.

PRIDE IS THE COUSIN OF AMBITION...THE BROTHER OF SUCCESS
...AND THE FATHER OF PROGRESS.

WITHOUT PRIDE...WE CAN DO NOTHING. BUT WITH PRIDE...WE CAN
DO IT ALL.

MOST IMPORTANT...PRIDE IS NOT SOMETHING WE FEEL...PRIDE IS
SOMETHING WE DO.

AND AS I LEAVE THIS OFFICE...I ASK THE PEOPLE OF NEW JERSEY
TO REMEMBER THE TRUE MEANING OF PRIDE.

AS YOU KNOW...I'M BULLISH ON OUR STATE...AND I'M BULLISH ON
AMERICA. BUT AS I LOOK AROUND THE GLOBE ON THIS JANUARY DAY...I
DO HAVE ONE WORRY.

WE HAVE WITNESSED MORE CHANGES IN THE WORLD IN 12 MONTHS
...THAN MOST OF US HAVE SEEN IN A LIFETIME.

AS THE SOVIETS EXPERIMENT WITH VOTING MACHINES...AND THE
POLES WITH FREE ENTERPRISE...OUR CHESTS JUSTIFIABLY SWELL WITH
PRIDE AND WE SAY..."WE WON."

THEN WE WONDER...CAN PEOPLE WHO HAVE SPENT THEIR LIVES IN
THE FALSE SECURITY OF SOCIALISM...HANDLE THE RISKS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES OF FREE ENTERPRISE AND FREEDOM?

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN HUNGARY AND POLAND AND
PANAMA. THEY'RE NEVER TURNING BACK.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT CLOSER TO HOME. WORRIED THAT WE NOW TAKE
FREEDOM FOR GRANTED...AND BELIEVE PROSPERITY TO BE OUR
BIRTHRIGHT...NOT SOMETHING THAT MUST BE EARNED AND SHARED AND
PASSED ONWARDS.

THE GREAT GREEK HISTORIAN EDITH HAMILTON ONCE OBSERVED
THAT, "WHEN THE FREEDOM THEY WISHED FOR MOST WAS FREEDOM FROM
RESPONSIBILITY, THEN ATHENS CEASED TO BE FREE AND WAS NEVER FREE
AGAIN."

I SEE SIGNS...SMALL NOW BUT STILL FOREBODING...THAT WE MAY
HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT ELOQUENT WARNING SPOKEN BY A YOUNG PRESIDENT
NOW MORE THAN A QUARTER CENTURY AGO.

DEMOCRACY CONSISTS OF MORE THAN ASKING WHAT WE CAN GET FROM
OUR COUNTRY...BUT ALSO IN SEEING WHAT WE CAN GIVE.

IN OUR STATE...WE MUST BUILD HOSPITALS TO CARE FOR AIDS
BABIES...PRISONS TO HOLD THE CROOKED AND CORRUPT...AND
FACILITIES TO DESTROY THE UNWANTED BY-PRODUCTS OF OUR INDUSTRIAL
AGE.

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AND YET...WHEN WE START TO BUILD THESE NECESSITIES...WE HEAR THE SAME REFRAIN OVER AND OVER. "NO...NOT HERE. GO SOMEWHERE ELSE!"

AND WHAT OF OUR SCHOOLS? NO CHALLENGE IS MORE IMPORTANT. NO PROBLEM HAS OCCUPIED MORE OF OUR ENERGY AND ATTENTION. I BELIEVE NO STATE HAS MADE AS MUCH PROGRESS.

STILL, I'M BOTHERED BY SOMETHING.

OUR TAXPAYERS NOW SPEND MORE MONEY PER CHILD IN SCHOOL THAN ANY OTHER TAXPAYERS IN THE UNITED STATES. AND YET OUR STATE MONIES ARE DISTRIBUTED BY A FORMULA THAT IS OUT-DATED AND UNJUST. NOW WE ARE WAITING FOR THE COURTS TO TELL US WHAT TO DO. THAT'S WRONG. ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE BETTER SUITED THAN APPOINTED ONES. WHY DON'T WE MAKE THE DECISION AND REVISE THE FORMULA OURSELVES?

AND I'M BOTHERED BY SOMETHING ELSE.

WHEN I HAD THE TEMERITY TO SUGGEST ELIMINATING MANDATORY GYM CLASSES...I WAS DELUGED WITH LETTERS OF COMPLAINT FROM STUDENTS, PARENTS AND TEACHERS.

AND YET...MUCH RARER WERE LETTERS FROM A PARENT SAYING ..."YOU KNOW, I DON'T THINK MY CHILD'S ENGLISH PROGRAM IS GOOD ENOUGH...WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?"

I ASK YOU...WHAT DOES THAT SAY ABOUT OUR PRIORITIES?

AND WHAT OF THE ENVIRONMENT?

HOW MUCH LONGER CAN WE PILE CONDO ON TOP OF CONDO...STRIP MALL ON TOP OF STRIP MALL...IN SOME MAD RACE TO FATTEN THE WALLETS OF A FEW...WHILE DESTROYING THE NATURAL TREASURES THAT CAN BE ENJOYED BY SO MANY.

AND ONE MORE THING.

AS WE SETTLE INTO OUR RECLINING CHAIRS AT NIGHT... SURROUNDED BY OUR VCR'S AND REMOTE CONTROLS AND CD'S AND NINTENDO GAMES...DO WE THINK OF THE CHILDREN IN OUR INNER CITIES...WHO ARE NOT WORRIED ABOUT ESCAPING THE PAC MAN ON THE VIDEO SCREEN...BUT THE DRUG DEALER IN THE TENEMENT ON THE CORNER?

YES...WE HAVE PRACTICED THE POLITICS OF INCLUSION TOGETHER. WHILE I ADMIT NOT ALL OF OUR APPROACHES HAVE WORKED...WE HAVE TRIED AND TRIED AND TRIED. BUT WE MUST CONTINUE TO REACH OUT AND EMBRACE AND INCLUDE.

BECAUSE THE SIMPLE TRUTH IS THIS...AS I'VE SAID A THOUSAND TIMES BEFORE...AMERICA AS A WHOLE DOESN'T MAKE IT IN THE NEXT CENTURY...IF TWENTY PERCENT OF US ARE LEFT BEHIND.

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THESE ARE THE CHALLENGES. THEY ARE NOT UNIQUE TO NEW JERSEY. THEY CONFRONT ALL AMERICA.

THEY REALLY GO BEYOND GOVERNMENT. NO GOVERNMENT CAN MANDATE PARENTAL CONCERN ABOUT SCHOOLS. NO GOVERNMENT CAN DICTATE COMMUNITY SACRIFICE...OR MAKE THE SUBURBS CARE ABOUT THE CITIES.

GOVERNMENT CAN'T DO IT ALONE. BUT PRIDE CAN.

IF WE ARE TRULY PROUD...AS NEW JERSEYANS AND AS AMERICANS ...WE WILL NOT ALLOW THE STURDY FOUNDATION OF DEMOCRACY... PAINFULLY CONSTRUCTED FOR OVER TWO CENTURIES...TO BE NIBBLED TO PIECES BY THE THREE TERMITES OF SELFISHNESS, INDIFFERENCE AND GREED.

OUR FOREBEARS DID NOT SHED THE BLOOD OF WAR AND CRY THE TEARS OF DEPRESSION...TO SEE FREEDOM AND FREE ENTERPRISE RISE IN THE EAST...ONLY TO WITHER IN THE WEST.

WE MUST BE TRUE TO THE PAST...BECAUSE WE OWE IT TO THE FUTURE.

THE VERY BEST PART OF BEING GOVERNOR HAS BEEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH SO MANY CHILDREN.

AS YOU KNOW...I TRIED TO VISIT A CLASSROOM ONCE A MONTH. THE BEST ADVICE I CAN GIVE MY SUCCESSOR IS TO FOLLOW THE SAME HABIT.

BELIEVE ME...THERE'S NO BETTER CURE FOR THE HOT AIR AND HYPERBOLE OF TRENTON...THAN TO SIT DOWN WITH A TEN-YEAR-OLD CHILD.

AS MY TERM IN OFFICE HAS WOUND DOWN...SOME CHILDREN HAVE WRITTEN SOME THANK YOU LETTERS TO ME. I'D LIKE TO SHARE THEM.

ONE GIRL NAMED LEANDRA WROTE TO TELL ME I WAS NOW HER FAVORITE GOVERNOR. BECAUSE I WAS HER FAVORITE GOVERNOR...SHE TOLD ME THE NAME OF THE LITTLE BOY IN HER CLASS WHOM SHE HAD A CRUSH ON.

BUT I CAN'T TELL YOU...BECAUSE LEANDRA ASKED THAT I SWEAR TO KEEP IT A SECRET.

A BOY NAMED SETH WROTE TO EXPRESS HIS SYMPATHY ABOUT MY BUSY SCHEDULE. THEN HE WROTE..."I HEARD YOU GET A LOT OF MONEY...SO I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR WORKING SO HARD."

THEN THERE WAS RENI. GOOD OLD RENI. HE WROTE PROBABLY THE MOST CANDID LINE I'VE HEARD THE PAST EIGHT YEARS.

HE SAID..."I'M VERY SORRY YOU'RE LEAVING OFFICE, BUT THAT'S LIFE, BUD!"

WELL...RENI...THAT IS LIFE, BUD. AND I ACCEPT IT.

BUT FOR YOU...LIFE IS GOING TO BE A LOT OF THINGS.

YOU'RE GOING TO GROW UP IN A WORLD IN WHICH PEOPLE WILL LIVE IN COLONIES ON THE MOON...IN WHICH ELECTRICITY MAY ONLY BE FOUND IN MUSEUMS...AND IN WHICH PEOPLE IN EVERY CORNER OF OUR GLOBE WILL BREATHE THE FRESH AIR OF FREEDOM.

WILL NEW JERSEY BE ON TOP OF THAT WORLD? WELL...THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES. BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS...WE'RE BUILDING THE ANSWER TODAY.

IT'S OUR JOB...HERE AND NOW...TO TAKE THE FOUNDATION LAID DOWN BY GENERATIONS BEFORE US...AND ERECT ON IT A NEW MANSION OF PROSPERITY AND RESPONSIBILITY...SO THAT RENI AND SETH AND LEANDRA CAN CLIMB INSIDE AND WHEN THEY'RE READY...BUILD THEIR OWN ADDITION.

THAT'S REALLY WHAT I'VE TRIED TO DO AS GOVERNOR. ALTHOUGH I'M NOW TURNING IN MY CHIEF FOREMAN'S HARD HAT...I THINK I CAN STILL WIELD A PRETTY GOOD HAMMER.

I WON'T BE FAR AWAY FROM THE CONSTRUCTION SITE...CHEERING YOU ON...PRODDING AND CAJOLING. WHO KNOWS...SOMEDAY I MIGHT EVEN ROLL UP MY SLEEVES AGAIN AND DO A LITTLE MORE WORK MYSELF.

FOR NOW...ALL I CAN SAY IS THIS.

TO RENI, SETH AND LEANDRA...AND SEVEN AND ONE HALF MILLION NEW JERSEYANS...THANKS FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING YOU.

TO EVERYONE CONNECTED WITH STATE GOVERNMENT...THANKS FOR MAKING THIS THE BEST JOB I'VE EVER HAD.

TO EVERYONE IN THE WAR MEMORIAL AND THOSE WATCHING ON TELEVISION...THANKS FOR LISTENING TO ME ONE LAST TIME.

GOD BLESS YOU. AND GOD BLESS NEW JERSEY.