

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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New Jersey: Leading the Way

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 several ways that the quality of living has improved in New Jersey in the last several years. The state's educational standards are among some of the most rigorous in the nation. New Jersey's beaches and ocean waters are cleaner than they have been in years. Last year, crime reached a 24 year low in the state, and in the first 6 months of 1998 the overall crime rate dropped another 10 percent. New Jersey also claims the most rigorous HMO regulations and consumer protections in the nation. The Governor urges, "Let's keep building a more perfect New Jersey."

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 Message January 8, 1999 New Jersey: Leading the Way

Last spring, the New Jersey State Supreme Court declared that under the State's curriculum-based, results-oriented school funding plan, New Jersey was meeting the Constitutional mandate of a "thorough and efficient" education for every student in every public school.

In the fall, the voters approved our proposal to fund the preservation of 1 million acres of open space and farmland over the next 10 years.

Just a few days ago, the Department of Law and Public Safety released statistics showing that our crime fighting efforts are continuing to pay off.

And recently, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services' second annual HMO report card took a comparative look at HMO care and customer service.

Meeting the need for stronger schools and more permanently preserved open space. Fighting against criminals and for consumers. These are just a few of the ways in which New Jersey leads the way in building a prosperous and secure society as America heads toward a new century.

Our educational standards were once a source of embarrassment for the state. Now they're among the most rigorous in the nation.

At one point, it seemed New Jersey was known more for polluted sites and ocean dumping than for pristine waters and sandy beaches. But now our beaches and

ocean waters are cleaner than they've been in years. And the Natural Resources Defense Council rates our water quality monitoring program as Number 1 in the country.

Crime was once a sore spot for New Jersey. But we have made tremendous strides in fighting crime. In 1997, crime in New Jersey reached a 24-year low. In the first six months of 1998 the overall crime rate dropped another 10 percent. That's a trend I believe will only continue.

In the field of health care, New Jersey claims the most rigorous HMO regulations and consumer protections in the nation. As in so many areas, other states are looking at New Jersey as a model of consumer-friendly health care policy.

Speaking of health, New Jersey's vital signs are good and getting better. We've gained almost 315,000 jobs since I took office in January 1994. Statewide test scores are slowly but steadily improving. Welfare caseloads are down by more than one-third. The number of children living in poverty in our state is down 26 percent.

When I started my second term as your governor, I stated my intention was to make New Jersey the best place to live in America. Thanks to you and to the millions of New Jerseyans who are committed to that goal, we're getting there.

There's still plenty of room for improvement. For instance, although we've made a good start in property tax relief, we still have more to do. I urge you to pay special attention to my State of the State Address on Tuesday, January 12th at 2:00 PM to learn more about how we propose to address this issue.

We must keep working together. Let's keep creating jobs. Let's keep improving our schools. Let's keep giving our children hope for a bright future. Let's keep building a more perfect New Jersey.



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