

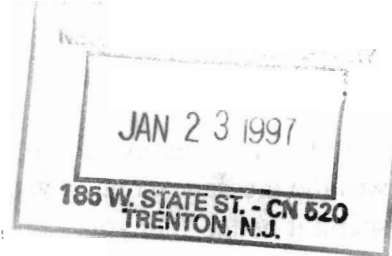
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**Address of Governor Christine Todd Whitman
to a Joint Session of the
New Jersey State Legislature
concerning the
State of the State**

January 14, 1997



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

Our state is blessed. We have a long and lively history. And we enjoy the riches of abundant natural resources and beauty. But none of this would count for much without the people we have the honor to serve -- the extraordinary men and women who call New Jersey home.

Like America, New Jersey's strength comes from its people. From individuals of every walk of life whose creativity, energy, and ingenuity are allowed to flourish.

For the past three years, we in state government have been unleashing those qualities by turning government back to the supporting role that it was meant to play.

We are controlling government's appetite for spending so people keep more of their own money to spend on their own needs.

We are ensuring that government functions only where it needs to function and then as efficiently as possible.

In short, we are giving citizens more choices and returning to them more control over their own lives.

So we meet today after three years of activity and accomplishment. The record we have built together has helped unleash the boundless potential of the people of our state. The impressive evidence of their success is truly proof of our own success.

Today, I am pleased to report that the state of our state is hearty and robust. We are on the right road to a brighter future.

This afternoon, I will talk about where we have been and where we are going. About the shared values that unite our one family of New Jersey. About the work we are doing together to bring prosperity, security, and a better future to our state.

Three years ago, New Jersey faced more than its share of problems. Our citizens and our economy were still reeling under the effects of the largest tax increase in state history.

Billions of dollars had been taken out of the hands of the people of our state -- and from the businesses that are the backbone of our economy. But even more devastating was the message Trenton was sending: send us more of your money, because we can spend it better than you.

The result of these policies was as distressing as it was predictable: almost 200,000 jobs vanished, leaving men and women all over New Jersey out of work. The unchecked appetite of government was devouring the spirit of our people.

Slammed on top of a recession and coupled with state government spending growing at twice the rate of inflation, it was a recipe for economic disaster.

Things had to change.

So in my Inaugural Address, I began to map out a new direction for New Jersey.

I said we would cut the state income tax on most New Jerseyans by 30 percent -- and that we would do it in three years.

Of course, the critics said it couldn't be done -- and declared that we wouldn't even try. Well, they were wrong.

Together with the Legislature, we started by cutting taxes retroactively, while taking 380,000 low-income taxpayers off the tax rolls.

By the time we were done, we had cut income taxes by 30 percent -- and we did it a year earlier than we promised.

Since 1994, we've cut taxes ten times. And we're not done yet.

Soon, we will enact our eleventh tax cut -- a cut that will directly benefit thousands of our small business owners. They are the foundation of New Jersey's economy.

I look forward to signing legislation sponsored by Senator Inverso and Assembly members DeSopo and Crecco that will establish a lower fixed tax rate for "S" corporations.

When fully implemented, this change will save these businesses \$13 million a year.

These aren't big corporations -- they are our neighbors, families, and friends -- from your local travel agent to your corner gas station owner to the sole entrepreneur. This change will help them create more jobs.

Each of our tax cuts has put money back into the hands of those who earned it -- which is where it belongs.

Since we've lifted the burden of high taxes, New Jersey has achieved a net gain of nearly 150,000 jobs.

Government didn't create these jobs -- you, the people of this state did that. You are the ones starting a new business or expanding an existing one. You take the risks and put in the long hours pursuing your dreams.

We have moved government out of your way.

One of the people who has benefited from our efforts is Mark Terranova of East Brunswick -- an accountant with Ohm Laboratories.

A graduate of Rutgers, Mark had been working on a temporary basis at Ohm -- temporary, that is, until Ohm decided to expand its North Brunswick facility. Now Mark is working full-time as a permanent employee.

When asked why they chose to expand in our state, Ohm's president, Arun Heble, said, "New Jersey has been very good to us. They are the world capital for generic drugs -- and the atmosphere is very business friendly."

Mark Terranova and Arun Heble are with us today in the gallery, representing the tens of thousands of New Jerseyans who are using their energy and talent to build New Jersey's future. I'm glad they could be here.

And, Arun, I'm proud to say, you're not the only one who thinks New Jersey is a good place to pursue the American dream.

In a Dun and Bradstreet study released just last week, New Jersey ranked in the top ten of the 50 states in attracting jobs from other states.

Not only have we halted the flow of jobs from New Jersey, we are now attracting more jobs -- more jobs for you, the people of our state.

But despite these successes, we are still looking for ways to unleash the energy of New Jersey business. Eighty percent of the new jobs created in New Jersey come from the growth of existing businesses. We need to do more to foster and encourage that growth.

That is why we are establishing a new system in the Department of Commerce and Economic Development. Our professional account managers will reach out to New Jersey's business community to offer help and advice. We won't wait for frustrated business people to come to us -- we will go to them, before they become fed-up, and take jobs somewhere else.

We must never forget that everything we do has at its heart the people of our state. And because of what we have done, more people are dreaming of a better tomorrow because they are living a better today. And we're moving toward the day when, in New Jersey, everybody works.

Taxpayers in this state are bringing home larger paychecks because the state is taking a smaller chunk of their wages. Since we began cutting the state income tax three years ago, the typical New Jersey family has saved more than \$750.

And now, combining our full 30 percent cut with the property tax deduction sponsored by Senate President DiFrancesco, that same family should save another \$1,700 over the next three years. That's real money that you can spend your way, not government's way.

At the same time, the dire predictions about skyrocketing property taxes have fizzled out. Over the past three years, the average increase in property taxes has been the lowest of any administration since 1982.

Of course, property taxes won't ever be as low as we would like. But we should never give up trying. Government -- at every level -- must do what we have been doing in Trenton -- control spending. That's how to keep property taxes down.

We've been trying to instill our "taxpayers first" mentality all across New Jersey, through local budget review teams, our commitment to State-Mandate/State-Pay, and by setting a good example.

The Legislature started applying the brakes to government spending in 1992. And by continuing to hold spending down, we've saved taxpayers nearly \$5 billion over the past three years.

That's a huge sum of money -- and it would have come out of your pockets.

This restraint has clearly been echoed by responsible local and county officials -- such as mayors like Leo Vartan in Kearny and Barbara Cannon in Old Bridge -- who are using their own creativity and ingenuity to save their taxpayers money.

In addition, incomes are growing. New Jersey families have the second-highest median household income in America. That income went up in 1994 and again in 1995, making us one of just three states in the entire Northeast to enjoy such growth.

This expansion in both total income and take-home-pay is doing more for New Jersey than just making us better off individually -- it's making us better off as a state.

That's because our efforts to extend the benefits of prosperity have reached into every part of New Jersey -- including our cities. Through our Urban Coordinating Council -- or UCC -- we have pursued a new strategy to help the people of our urban centers unleash their own dynamic energy.

Gone for good are the days of "Trenton knows best." Here to stay is a new era -- an era that recognizes the talent and ability of those who live in our cities. An era that makes them the primary partners in a truly cooperative relationship.

Let me tell you how that partnership has made a difference in the life of one particular young woman -- and her neighborhood.

In Camden, Monica Jones, a former welfare recipient, is now a member of New Jersey Carpenters Local 1578. She learned her carpentry skills through our Women in Trades program. Now she's an apprentice with the Camden City Housing Authority, literally helping to reconstruct her own neighborhood.

Monica is here with us today. Monica, we salute you.

Just as Monica's life has been transformed, so is she transforming the life of her community. Men and women like Monica are the true hope of the future. They -- not government -- will be hailed as the heroes when the renewal of our cities is complete. And that's the way it should be.

Because of the success of our urban strategy, I am happy to announce today that I am adding six new UCC neighborhoods to the five we designated during the past two years.

Ocean Place Village in Long Branch, Vineland's Old Borough section, Elizabethport in Elizabeth, the Greenville section of Jersey City, North Camden, and part of the enterprise community in Newark -- all will be our new partners in the Urban Coordinating Council.

And today, I am also happy to announce that we are adding \$100 million in new money for urban housing initiatives.

With this additional commitment of funds, we will have helped create more than 2,000 new, decent, and affordable homes for the people of our cities. That's 2,000 more families who can sit around their own kitchen table to share a meal or help their kids with their homework.

By expanding our commitment to our cities, we are expanding people's opportunity to claim a part of the American dream.

As we continue to travel to a better future, we will not leave anyone behind along the road. And a large part of our economic renewal does, literally, ride on the roads. A successful state is one in which goods, services, and people can move freely and easily from one place to another.

That's why we reauthorized the Transportation Trust Fund to finance our highways, bridges, mass transit, and local transportation projects -- without raising taxes or fees to pay for it. Our commitment of more than \$3.5 billion through the year 2000 has enabled us to move forward on 465 highway and public transit projects and to support more than 250,000 jobs over the five-year re-authorization period.

If you don't think renewing the Trust Fund has made a difference to New Jersey's prosperity, just ask John Hibbs, president of the heavy construction local that reached 100 percent employment during the past season. Down at the union hall, he was able to say everybody works.

And this year, we will award more than \$600 million in construction contracts, almost double the usual total. So John, we'll have to work extra hard in Trenton this winter so your members can work extra hard at the job site this spring. But if you don't mind the extra work, neither do we.

While we are anxious to put our construction workers on the job, that doesn't mean we are paving over the Garden State. The majority of our Trust Fund dollars will be spent to enhance our mass transit system and to preserve our existing roads and bridges. That way, we keep our competitive economic edge without jeopardizing our open spaces and commitment to clean air.

Like our roads and infrastructure, our priceless environment is something that must endure for future generations. As we have proved many times, my administration is committed to preserving and protecting our precious environment.

Just last week, I signed a landmark agreement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency that puts New Jersey in the forefront nationally in our efforts to keep our state clean and green.

As Shelley Metzenbaum of the EPA put it, and I quote: "New Jersey and the EPA have worked together...to really pioneer a new way of doing business.... [W]e're both committed, the State and the EPA, to stronger public health and environmental protection....We would not sign this agreement if we were not satisfied with [New Jersey's] accomplishments."

I couldn't have said it better myself.

As we maintain a healthy environment, providing open space and recreational opportunities is one of the best ways to maintain our high quality of life. New Jerseyans and visitors alike enjoy our state parks and scenic paths and trails.

That's why this administration has been so aggressive in acquiring open space. Through our Green Acres program, we acquired more than 21,000 new acres of open space in the last year -- that's more than in any year since the program started.

For example, we preserved about 2000 acres of the beautiful Delaware Greenway in Cumberland County, acquiring more open space for recreational activities while protecting river water quality and wildlife habitat as well.

And I'm pleased to announce that we are funding the completion of the Sussex Branch Trail, and we will match federal funding for other trails up and down the state.

I'm particularly excited about finishing the Sussex Branch in the beautiful Skylands. Its longest stretch now is about 6 miles, but when completed it will run almost 20 miles and will be a great place to walk, bike, and fish. And we will ensure that every New Jerseyan can share in its beauty by making it handicapped accessible.

Another way we can bolster our quality of life and improve our long-range economic outlook is through the State Master Plan. We have seen what happens when we don't plan in New Jersey, and it hasn't always been pretty.

By law, it's time for the Plan's next cross-acceptance process, the largest statewide set of town meetings in this country. Since every one of our 21 counties plays an integral role, we will give each of them \$40,000 to carry out this process.

This funding honors State-Mandate/State-Pay. What's more, it allows the counties to participate fully as we forge a New Jersey that preserves its open space, focuses its development, and plans for its future.

Part of our brighter future will come from a new initiative to create a vital economic sector for environmentally progressive companies, often called sustainable businesses. These firms use technology and innovation to protect the environment -- our air, water, and soil.

Our proposal will establish a fund to help existing environmentally friendly businesses expand or locate in New Jersey.

Businesses like these are good for the environment and good for the economy. We want to help them -- and the jobs they provide -- become a larger part of our economic base. But to those who would harm our environment, we will continue to say "polluters pay."

Furthermore, we will thoroughly examine state practices -- from the regulations and policies we write to the paper and light bulbs we use -- to make sure we are environmentally friendly in everything we do. We have an obligation to move into the coming century with our own environmental house in order.

We've also put things in order regarding the broad array of services available to older New Jerseyans. In this past year, we have brought more than 20 different senior programs in four different departments under the umbrella of our newly combined Department of Health and Senior Services.

In addition, our Easy Access, Single Entry program -- also known as New Jersey-EASE -- is already helping seniors in four counties get answers. Now, when you need help finding a nursing home for a loved one or information about PAAD eligibility for yourself, you can find it with just one phone call.

In the coming months, we will see ten additional counties up and running. We are working to ensure a better way of life for our senior citizens.

I've also directed our Department of Health and Senior Services to provide consumer protection to the more than 2 million New Jersey residents enrolled in HMOs.

We are about to publish new regulations that will be the most progressive and consumer-oriented in the country. Once approved, no patient will be denied information about any medical service, whether it's covered or not. And any decisions about treatment will have to be made by a doctor, not a bookkeeper.

We believe these provisions, two among many, will make a real difference for many New Jerseyans. In fact, a national health care consumer rights group called our regulations "a model for other states."

Everything we do keeps an eye on the future, and that is especially true of our efforts to put New Jersey's schools back on the road to success.

Last year, when I devoted my State of the State Address to education, the pundits were quick to predict failure.

Well, they underestimated this Legislature. Last month, you passed the test of real leadership by passing our landmark school funding bill.

At last, the students of New Jersey will get what their parents and neighbors have been paying for -- a first-class system that will help every student succeed.

Our teachers -- those dedicated men and women who give so much of themselves in the classroom -- will get the support and resources they need from us. Teachers are the key to making education work.

I am truly excited about what the future holds for the children of this state.

Our new core curriculum standards mean that every New Jersey student in every classroom in every school in every district in this state is going to learn what he or she needs to succeed in the next century -- every student.

The development of a rigorous core curriculum is the bedrock of our efforts to improve education in New Jersey. Some have said these standards will lead to a "dumbing down" of education across our state. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let me show you something. This is the new curriculum framework for the mathematics part of our standards. Not for all seven standards -- just for math.

Here's the type of problem every seventh grader should be able to solve. The Giants and the Eagles are in a playoff game. If the probability of the **Giants** defeating the Eagles in an individual game is 40 percent, what is the probability that they will win a three-game playoff? If you're wondering, it's 35.2 percent.

And high school juniors will have to understand things like the difference between linear and quadratic models so they can move ahead to calculus.

There will be a guide like this for each of our seven core curriculum subjects. I invite anyone who doubts our commitment to excellence to study this book and then tell me we are "dumbing down" our schools.

And not only have we established rigorous standards in science, math, English, and social studies, we have also included other subject areas that reinforce these disciplines.

Let me use the arts as an example. This subject is, by itself, an important part of a well-rounded education. But it also bolsters the rest of the curriculum.

Innovations in science, for instance, require the kind of creative thinking that is fostered by the arts. Counting the measures and beats in music, learning to work within the parameters of six-eight time, or drafting the lines to create a vanishing point in a painting all employ skills taught but not necessarily applied in math classes.

After all, isn't that the point of a good education -- learning how to apply everything one learns to a variety of situations?

Our education plan also recognizes that everything one learns in school doesn't have to come from within the walls of the building.

Our strong commitment to distance learning means that children studying the women's suffrage movement will be able to view original documents at the Library of Congress. Children who want to speak German could study with a class in Frankfurt. And children could even supplement their science labs by conducting experiments at the Liberty Science Center.

I'd like to take a moment to show you how this really works.

I've asked three students from the Trenton schools, Devina Clayton, Ashley Johnson, and Ezequiel Rosado, to join us on a field trip today to learn about the Jersey shore.

Let's go to Liberty Science Center, and meet Dr. Emlyn Koster.

[Distance learning demonstration with Liberty Science Center]

As you have just seen, distance learning holds exciting possibilities for our students -- and their teachers. That's why we are proposing \$50 million for this effort in the coming year.

The same kind of ingenuity we just saw is building creative, innovative programs to help our at-risk students.

To enable children in low-income communities achieve high standards, we are creating a team at the Department of Education. This group will help develop and disseminate some of the best ideas being used and tested in schools around the nation. It's called the Demonstrably Effective Program Resource Team. Through this effort, we will make certain that every good, effective idea is available to help every at-risk student.

Not only do our education reforms benefit students, they also empower parents. They give them the information they need to make sure their schools are doing right by their kids.

And our reforms have given them the option of starting schools in their communities to meet a particular need.

So, today I am happy to announce that we are awarding 17 charters to authorize the creation of innovative schools, established under the law I signed last year at this podium.

Charter schools reflect the energy and creativity of the people of this state. I wish each of you could read the proposals we have received from all over New Jersey. They're exciting!

In Camden, parents, school district employees, and board members have worked with other community leaders and Rutgers University to develop a charter school that will focus on math, science, and technology while teaching the rest of the curriculum. The Project LEAP Academy Charter School for kindergarten through eighth graders will strive to make students active, involved, self-motivated learners.

And in Newark, the North Star Academy Charter School will rely on innovative teaching and strong parental involvement to create a ground-breaking educational experience for students in grades 5 through 8. Focusing on the State's rigorous, new academic standards, the Academy will lengthen the school day and year to give students more time for learning.

I'm happy to say that two of the creative forces behind these innovative schools, Gloria Bonilla Santiago from Project LEAP and James Verrilli from the North Star Academy, are here with us today. I applaud you both.

These are just two examples. There are 15 more creative, energetic ideas that will be transformed into reality because of our charter school initiative.

I have no doubt that the innovation, creativity, and energy we have unleashed in every area of education will truly enable us to see the day when terms like "special needs district" become obsolete.

And that day will come, not just because government willed it, but because you, the people of New Jersey, helped make it happen.

People like Reverend Reginald Jackson and Reverend Calvin McKinney and the members of the Black Ministers Council. They saw a need and moved to fill it on their own, without waiting for government -- or anyone else -- to act. Through their new Adopt-a-School program, African-American churches are uplifting children in their neighborhoods.

Students at participating schools are provided a safe, secure place to get help with their homework. And the congregations are shepherding their progress, reviewing report cards, and making sure their students are working hard and getting the most out of school. Reverend McKinney is here today. He and his colleagues are exactly who I mean when I talk about the energy of our people.

Of course, our concern for New Jersey's students doesn't stop when they graduate from high school. That is why today I am proposing the creation of the New Jersey College Savings program -- a new way to help parents save as much as they can for their children's education.

The interest earned on investments made through our College Savings program will be federally tax deferred, and we'll change New Jersey law so you won't pay one penny in state taxes on it. Now, the day your child -- or grandchild -- is born, you can start saving for his or her education.

During the course of my remarks, I have talked about unleashing the energy of our people. There is one group, however, whose energy does nothing to contribute to the success of New Jersey. They are the criminals who prey on the law-abiding people of our state.

In partnership with the Legislature, we have done much to enhance and promote the public safety. We have enacted new statutes, including Megan's Law, the Cops' Bill of Rights, and Three Strikes and You're In.

Under Megan's Law, more than 3,500 convicted sexual predators have been registered with the appropriate authorities. Knowledge is power, and giving parents the knowledge they need gives them the power to protect their children. So we will continue to defend Megan's Law every time it is challenged -- all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court if necessary.

Now that the Cops' Bill of Rights is the law in this state, cop killers will either be put to death or kept behind bars for life with no parole. We owe at least that much to our men and women in blue.

And we have recently locked up for life the first person sentenced under our "Three Strikes" legislation. His incarceration should serve as a warning -- New Jersey will not coddle criminals.

But just as there are some in our prisons who should never see the light of day, there are others whose punishment should include giving something back to the community. To do that, we will put more non-violent offenders to work than ever before. We call our new program "Paying Communities Back."

Before the year is out, I expect that every law-abiding New Jersey citizen will see a welcome sight -- well-supervised groups of non-violent offenders cleaning our highways, parks, and other public areas. It's only right that criminals help pay their debt to society by working for the public good.

Of course, to win the fight against crime we must conquer substance abuse.

A person whose mind is clouded by drug or alcohol abuse is someone whose potential talents and contributions are being lost to our one family. What is more tragic than the sight of a teenager, stoned on drugs, staring blankly into space when they should be looking into a future filled with possibilities?

Last fall, I announced our comprehensive strategy for fighting drug and alcohol abuse. Every corner of our state -- from the suburbs to the farms to the inner cities -- will know that we are deploying law enforcement, the tools of public awareness and education, and the energy of community action in this battle.

Among other things, our plan calls for severe punishment for adults who conspire with a juvenile to deal drugs, increases penalties for drug dealers who put police officers at risk through boobytraps, and forbids dealers arrested in open air drug markets from returning to the scene of the crime. This is one fight we cannot afford to lose -- and with tough measures like these, we won't.

Members of the Legislature: we have not been reluctant to take on -- together -- the difficult challenges. We had to act boldly. And we have.

By almost any measure, the people of New Jersey are better off than they were just three years ago.

But, we still have challenges ahead of us.

My administration will continue to attack one of the toughest problems state government has ever faced -- auto insurance. We have made a good start, including solving the billion dollar MTF debt crisis and increasing the number of carriers writing policies in New Jersey to create more competition. But this hasn't immediately translated into lower rates.

For more than twenty years, the State felt that only government knew what kind of insurance was best for New Jersey drivers. As a result of years of control from Trenton, New Jersey has the highest auto insurance rates in the nation.

Of course, as the most densely populated state in the union and the most litigious, we will never have the lowest rates. But that doesn't mean we have to have the highest.

Getting insured to drive on New Jersey roads shouldn't drive you around the bend.

That's why today I'm announcing our comprehensive proposal to lower the costs of auto insurance to the motorists of this state. We call our plan Consumers' Choice.

We will empower drivers to decide for themselves what insurance coverage they need.

Our reform will give them true choice. They will be able to select from four policy options.

The first option -- and the least expensive -- is called the Economical Choice Policy. By choosing this option, the typical New Jersey driver could expect to save up to 25 percent on the cost of a full automobile policy.

The second option is called the Scheduled Benefit Policy. Consumers choosing this option should also see their premiums drop.

Our third option is named the Serious Injury Threshold policy. Much like what motorists have today, this policy would also carry lower premiums by tightening the criteria by which motorists can sue.

And the fourth option is called the Lawsuit Recovery Policy. Just as the name suggests, this would be the most comprehensive policy available.

Our options cover the **full range** of choices -- from eliminating a driver's ability to sue for pain and suffering to allowing unlimited access to the courts. It will be up to you to decide what you need. Now, at last, you will have a real choice.

In addition, we propose new measures that will aggressively attack fraud. Cheaters and frauds cost all of us. By some estimates, auto insurance fraud adds more than \$150 a year to the average family's premium. So we **will** help attack this crime through a new "800" number to report suspected fraud.

And big insurance companies will have to do their part too. We will make certain they comply with the fraud act. If they don't, we'll hit them with a \$25,000 penalty for each and every violation.

We also plan to eliminate rate flex increases and to reform the 2 for 1 non-renewal rule to provide relief for good drivers from being dropped by their insurers without reason.

Of course, auto insurance reforms should embody the principle of fairness. That's why I am calling for any comprehensive auto reform package we enact to include the elimination of the surcharges.

Motorists should only have to pay a hundred dollar speeding ticket once -- not fifteen more times in surcharges to an insurance company. It's simply not fair.

We look forward to working with the legislators who have made auto insurance reform a top priority -- Assembly Speaker Collins, Senators Cardinale and Scott, and Assemblymen Garrett and Bagger.

Make no mistake -- enacting true auto insurance reform will not be easy. Powerful special interests are already mobilizing to preserve the status quo. But if they want a fight, we'll give it to them.

My proposal is about choice. Giving consumers choices so they can decide what's best for them. Not trial lawyers. Not insurance executives. And not any of the others who have found the current system so lucrative.

Let's put motorists back in the driver's seat.

For three years, America has watched New Jersey lower taxes, reduce government's appetite for spending, and let the people of our state make their own decisions and control their own lives.

Our state is stronger. Our economy is growing. Our taxes are lower. Our schools finally are on the road to true excellence.

And soon, we will conclude our year-long, bipartisan effort to replace our failed welfare system with a plan, WorkFirst New Jersey, that will promote self-sufficiency--not dependency.

Fellow citizens, we in New Jersey have every reason to be proud. Proud of who we are -- the many faces of our one family.

Proud of an environment that includes some of the most wonderful beaches, lakes, and countryside found anywhere.

Proud of a government that listens to the people and recognizes their right to make their own decisions.

And proud of the creativity, talent, and energy that make this a dynamic state.

As we look ahead to what we can achieve in the coming months, our vision must stretch as far as the eye can see. There is, after all, no limit to what the people of this state can accomplish.

We are leaders. Everywhere you look you see places where New Jersey is setting the standard. I am proud that New Jersey is truly showing the nation what a difference a state makes.

If we continue to lead, if we continue to move forward as I know we can, then we will truly enrich our great state in the months and years ahead.

We will live in a New Jersey where everyone works, where all of our children receive the finest education, where we are safe in our homes and on our streets, where we can breathe clean air and drink clean water, where people admire the vibrancy of our cities, and where we fully celebrate the varied tapestry of our rich history and heritage.

So let us continue down the road to this better tomorrow.

And let us make this important journey together.

Thank you.