**Excerpts:**

*I think the staff and the governor [Florio] had read Machiavelli and determined that you get everything done at the beginning of your term. You do all the hard things first so that eventually, by the time you have to run again, people will not have necessarily remembered all the difficult things you had to do.* (Page 4)

*[Y]ou need to have the skills and the abilities but you also need to have the luck and sometimes the luck’s with you and sometimes it isn’t and in Florio’s case it wasn’t.* (Page 7)

*I think the mistake in 1993 was that they did not spend enough time in the urban centers and campaign sufficiently in the urban centers. If they had spent more effort and time doing that, I think [Florio] would have won.* (Page 16)

**Full Interview:**

**Rick Sinding:** Hello. I’m Rick Sinding. It’s Monday, October 6th, 2014, here at the Eagleton Institute of Politics on the campus of Rutgers University today for the Center on the American Governor. We have with us Joe Doria, who served as Assembly Speaker during the tumultuous first two years of the administration of Governor Jim Florio. In addition to his service in the Assembly, Joe also served a term in the State Senate, in the executive branch of state government as the commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs, and also at the local level as the mayor of Bayonne. Joe, normally I would say welcome to Eagleton but that would be presumptuous of me since you teach two courses here and have been doing that for a long time, but it’s nice to see you here.

**Joe Doria:** Well, it’s nice to be here with you.

**Rick Sinding:** Before we get into discussing your reminiscences and reflections on the Florio administration, tell us a little bit about yourself, your own upbringing,
where you went to school, and how you got involved in the rough-and-tumble world of Hudson County politics.

**Joe Doria:** Well, I was born in Bayonne. My mother was the daughter of immigrants, born and raised in New York City, went to New York City public schools, and my father was an immigrant who came here from Italy in 1920. He had served in the Italian army. His father had actually lived in the United States and used to move back and forth between the United States and Italy, which was not uncommon in those days. He actually was a miner in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, and would go back to Italy and have children and come back here. He eventually got black lung and died from spinal meningitis when he was 33 years old and my father was left helping to pay and support his family—his mother and two brothers and a sister—when he was 11 years old, so my father had a 3rd-grade education. And I went to Catholic schools in Bayonne, went to Assumption Grammar School, Marist High School, and then St. Peter’s College. I graduated from St. Peter’s in 1968, majored in history but also English and French, went on fellowship to Boston College and got a Master’s in American Studies, and taught a little high school, but went almost immediately back to St. Peter’s College where I taught and was an administrator for 29 years. During that time I tried law school and hated it, went to NYU and finished everything but a dissertation and got involved in government, first at the Board of Education level—running for the Board of Ed, losing, and then winning, and being president of the Bayonne Board of Education—and then running for the legislature in 1979 and winning and serving in the legislature there from 1980 until I left to become commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs in 2007. So I served 12 terms in the Assembly and almost 1 full term in the Senate.

**Rick Sinding:** Is it true that if you’re born in Bayonne, there’s only one road that goes out of town so you always wind up staying in Bayonne?

**Joe Doria:** A lot of people do and I did and I was very fortunate. My wife was from Bayonne and we’ve lived there our entire lives except for the time I spent at Boston College. My graduate work beyond Boston College was as I said NYU and then I did my doctorate at Columbia Teachers College and got that in 2000 when I got to be an older man. <laughs>

**Rick Sinding:** Your first four terms in the state Assembly pretty much coincide with the administration of Governor Tom Kean.
Joe Doria: Well, the first two years Brendan Byrne was governor and then Tom Kean for eight years and then Jim Florio. I was successful in becoming Speaker for the first two years of the Florio administration when we had a Democratic majority in both the Assembly and the Senate—that was 1990 and ‘91.

Rick Sinding: How did you rise through the leadership ranks in the legislature between the time that you were elected and the time that you became Speaker?

Joe Doria: Well, the first two years I spent a lot of time listening and learning, sitting in the caucuses watching the members to see how things were done. For the first two years of my term in the legislature, Chris Jackman was the Speaker, from Hudson County. I then supported Alan Karcher against Chris Jackman in the 1981 leadership election in 1982. Alan Karcher became the Speaker, Tom Kean became the governor, and the legislature began to have some interesting times playing back and forth with Tom Kean and Alan Karcher, both of them very strong personalities. And I moved into the leadership as chair of first the Assembly Higher Education Professions Committee and then over time became the conference chair and then a deputy minority leader and from deputy minority leader I moved up to Speaker.

Rick Sinding: As deputy minority leader, there must have been a minority leader over whom you leaped in order to become Speaker.

Joe Doria: Willie Brown was the minority leader, John Paul Doyle, myself and Wayne Bryant were the deputies, and we all wanted to be Speaker. I spent a great deal of time talking to my fellow Assembly members to encourage them to support me. Willie Brown made a strategic error by putting off the leadership election and by doing that he gave me the opportunity to work with the other individuals who were running for Speaker and working out accommodations so that I ended up being the Speaker.

Rick Sinding: You enter the Speakership at a time when Jim Florio, having won a decisive victory in the 1989 gubernatorial election, comes in with what he and his administration definitely consider to be a mandate for certain actions to occur. Walk us through if you will what the atmosphere in the legislature was like and the Assembly for those first two or three months of the Florio administration; the series of initiatives rolling out.
Joe Doria: It was a very hectic period and I think it was an overwhelming period for most of the members. Some of them were new, just newly elected because we had just come back into the majority in the Assembly. The initiatives just came rolling in. I think the staff and the governor had read Machiavelli and determined that you get everything done at the beginning of your term. You do all the hard things first so that eventually, by the time you have to run again, people will not have necessarily remembered all the difficult things you had to do. And there were things that were very important that had to be done—car insurance, for example. It was at that time a major issue. We had the highest car insurance costs in the country and it had to be dealt with and there was a lot of effort to put that together. Greg Lawler was the lead person in the administration on that; he did a very good job. It was controversial; it was difficult. Mike Adubato was the Assemblyman who was chair of the Insurance Committee and there was concern about whether Mike would be willing to go along. There was created a special committee on insurance to deal with the issues. Mike was not necessarily overly pleased with that.

Rick Sinding: That would be putting it mildly.

Joe Doria: As you know, Mike was a very intelligent, very competent legislator but also very volatile and it took a while and a lot of convincing on the part of the governor and me for him to realize that this was the best way to move forward. And it did move forward and we were able to move the insurance initiatives very quickly and very effectively and solve a number of the major issues of that time. As you know, the issue of insurance continued to be one of concern to the citizens of New Jersey for many more years, into the Whitman administration—the second term—when there was another study commission that I served on that again dealt with insurance, and that continued into the McGreevey administration. So car insurance and the cost of car insurance in New Jersey has been a bugaboo for many long years.

Rick Sinding: What kind of blowback did you get from the industry during the time that you were considering this?

Joe Doria: Oh, there was a great deal of controversy over the reforms. Obviously, they weren’t happy but in the end they came along reluctantly. We were able to actually solve some of the issues. The big issue was the Joint Underwriting Association, which had become very, very expensive and the cost to the state government was high and the impact on the car owners was also significant, and so
that had to be solved and that was probably the most difficult part of the insurance discussions.

Rick Sinding: Was the reform package that was ultimately agreed upon a bipartisan vote or was it strictly along party lines?

Joe Doria: It was mostly along party lines. There was some support from Republicans—minimal, but there was some support.

Rick Sinding: As I recall, the next major piece after auto insurance was assault weapons.

Joe Doria: Yeah. That was probably the most contentious issue. It was very contentious. And it was seen by the administration as being extremely important, but the membership was very concerned by that issue. The caucus was split on that issue. There were a number of south Jersey legislators who did not want to deal with the issue and were not supportive and it took a while to move forward on that issue. There was a belief that we were trying to do too much because we were also at that time dealing with the issue of whether Abbott versus Burke would be occurring, whether we had to deal with budget problems and some holes in the budget. And so the discussion about the assault weapons bill was one that was much more controversial, definitely was not bipartisan at least in the Assembly, and created a lot of conflict between the members of the Assembly and the governor and the governor’s staff.

Rick Sinding: How did you feel personally about the issue?

Joe Doria: I was supportive of the issue; I felt that the issue of assault weapons was a very significant one and one we should take action on. I didn’t know whether the timing was the best timing but I did think it was one that we needed to deal with. I had never been very supportive of guns. I have always been a believer that the proliferation of guns is a negative thing, not a positive thing and that we should try to control guns and the access to guns as much as possible. I’m not one of those believers that the Second Amendment means everybody should be able to own a gun and carry it and use it when they want.

Rick Sinding: Did you have any sense at that time of the role that the NRA, the National Rifle Association, would play in subsequent elections in New Jersey?
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Joe Doria: I definitely realized the NRA was very, very much out there. Their lobbyist was working everybody very significantly, having meetings, cajoling, threatening, whatever was necessary in order to try to prevent the actions of the legislature to outlaw assault weapons in New Jersey.

Rick Sinding: Simultaneous with this initiative comes education reform and with it tax changes that were necessary just to cover the budget deficit that was looming for the coming fiscal year. Walk us through the process that the legislature went through in grappling with first the budget deficit and then also the education reform package.

Joe Doria: Well, I think what happened here, and again hindsight being 20/20, is rather than wait for the actual decision on Abbott versus Burke a determination was made by the governor’s office and by some of us in the legislature that we should begin to deal with the consequences and the costs of Abbott versus Burke.

Rick Sinding: Because you knew what the decision was going to be.

Joe Doria: We basically knew that the court was going to decide that there needed to be increased funding for the urban districts which became the Abbott districts as a result of the ruling so yes, there was a realization that we needed to deal with that. And so we began to deal with it before the actual decision came down, which in the end as I say, looking back, we probably should have waited and created some type of a crisis. Rather we decided that we would be proactive and being proactive I think we politically hurt ourselves.

Rick Sinding: Do you think that most citizens recognized that sort of nuanced difference between anticipating a decision that later came down anyway versus waiting a month or two and then saying, “The court’s forcing us to do it”?

Joe Doria: I think that no, initially they would not have realized the nuances but eventually they did because obviously the impact of the QEA, the Quality Education Act, and the taxes that were passed to deal with the budget deficit and to fund the QEA became major issues amongst the electorate. So I think in the end they did realize what was going on but it worked to our detriment.

Rick Sinding: One of the arguments that has been made over the years is that Governor Florio’s predecessor, Tom Kean, was very successful in getting a number of taxes passed by being dragged kicking and screaming by the legislature to enact
them whereas Governor Florio’s position was to be proactive and go to the legislature and submit these proposals. Do you think that the relative popularity of the two governors was reflective of that difference and that Florio would have been smarter to have waited for the legislature to take the lead on some of these issues?

**Joe Doria:** I think that Governor Tom Kean was a very intelligent and very competent governor as was Governor Florio. Governor Florio was extremely knowledgeable in the area of policy. I think Tom Kean was very, very intelligent in allowing the situation to fester for a while and then to create a situation where we came in in one day on the eve of New Year’s Eve after an election and passed an increase in almost every tax in the state on a bipartisan basis. Obviously in the situation with Governor Florio, we moved proactively ahead, but the bigger difference in my opinion is that after we passed the Kean tax package the economy boomed and the economy moved forward and did very well whereas after the passage of the Florio tax package the economy did not boom. In fact we went into a little bit of a recession, not the result of those taxes in either case but a result of the national economy.

And so in Governor Kean’s situation, the revenue increased significantly and we had more than enough money for the period of time after the ‘85 election and through 1985. Governor Kean won with the largest majority ever as a result of the improving economy and all the money that the state had to spend whereas Governor Florio was not as lucky. The national economy went into a recession and thus even with the increase in taxes we weren’t able to necessarily do all that we should have been able to do with the new money. So I think that obviously the impact of the national economy on state politics and state decision making had a lot to do with the perceptions of both governors, both governors very competent, both governors very able and very knowledgeable, but again now you need to have virtù and fortuna. As Machiavelli would say, you need to have the skills and the abilities but you also need to have the luck and sometimes the luck’s with you and sometimes it isn’t and in Florio’s case it wasn’t.

**Rick Sinding:** They say in golf that timing is everything in the stroke.

**Joe Doria:** Yeah. Timing is everything in life.

**Rick Sinding:** Yeah, I guess so. The Quality Education Act was a fairly radical departure from the status quo at the time in terms of a fair amount of redistribution of educational expenditures. It also included a very controversial provision to have
local school boards rather than the state take over the responsibility for teacher pensions.

**Joe Doria:** No. It wasn’t taking over the responsibility.

**Rick Sinding:** Okay. I’m sorry.

**Joe Doria:** The state would still be paying the pensions but the money that the state provided for the pensions would be included and shown as aid to the individual district. So the district wasn’t going to be paying for the pensions; rather the districts were still going to be receiving the money for the cost of the pensions from the state, but the amount of money that each district would not have to pay for the pensions of their certificated employees would show as aid to the district. So what was happening is for the first time a real number was going to be shown for what the district was receiving from the state that included the cost of pensions and social security, which had never been shown. Every district in the state receives money whether they’re the richest district or the poorest district in the fact that the pensions are being paid for by the state of New Jersey. Now, contributions haven’t been made in many years now but the state has the responsibility for making those contributions, different than let’s say the local municipality, which has to pay the state on a yearly basis for the cost of the contributions for each of their employees who are in the state pension. So what happened is the calculation was the issue. It wasn’t that the districts were going to be asked to pay; it was that you would know what they were receiving.

**Rick Sinding:** If it was simply a matter of knowing what they were receiving as opposed to placing any more responsibility on the local districts, why was the NJEA so adamantly opposed to this?

**Joe Doria:** They were opposed very strongly because they believed once the actual amount of money that was being spent on pensions at a local level and being paid for by the state was included in the state aid package, that this would then open the opportunity for negotiations on the pension—that now this became part of the state aid money that a district was receiving, so the discussion could now take place over pensions and the cost of pensions and what pensions provided and they did not want to open that discussion. They did not want anybody to realize that, because up until that time and even to the present most people don’t realize that the state of New Jersey pays the cost of the pension for all certificated employees, so it was really the creation of the visibility of the pensions as part of the aid received by a school district that became the big issue.
Rick Sinding: So it was a slippery slope argument.

Joe Doria: It was a slippery slope argument. Their concern was that this just opens the opportunity to negotiate pensions and they did not want to negotiate pensions and they didn’t want anybody to realize that places like Millburn and Summit actually received significant amounts of money from the state whereas the Florio administration and the legislators believed, “Hey, we’re spending this money. Everybody should know when they complain that all the urban districts are getting so much money that everybody’s getting some money and actually some of that money is significant.”

Rick Sinding: A significant amount, yeah.

Joe Doria: So that was that argument and that was the crux of the issue with the NJEA. Otherwise they loved the QEA. They will tell you to this day that everything else in the QEA was really much better than has ever existed, but the problem was that within the internal politics of the NJEA—and Betty Kramer was the president at the time and she was a Republican, not that that had much to do with it—they were concerned about how it would impact on the negotiation process. And their members didn’t understand the differentiation that was taking place and that created the great controversy, and once you stirred the members up over the QEA there was nothing else that could be done.

Rick Sinding: Did it occur to you at the time or did it occur to a number of legislators that we’re now June, July of 1990, you’ve alienated the--

Joe Doria: It was June actually because we passed everything in June.

Rick Sinding: All right. So you’ve alienated the automobile industry, you’ve alienated the National Rifle Association, you’ve alienated the New Jersey Education Association, and those are a trio of pretty powerful interest groups in this state. Might there have been some sense even at that point that hey, maybe we ought not to get the NJEA on the other side here; maybe we ought to start currying some favor from some of these interest groups?

Joe Doria: Let me assure you it did occur to all of us and I was not supportive. In the end I was loyal and I supported the administration’s move but I was very concerned and my caucus was very concerned about each of the issues. It was not easy to get the votes for either the assault weapons ban or the QEA in the
Democratic caucus. In fact, it was very difficult and there was a lot of weeping and gnashing of teeth to get it done, but again the members, being loyal to the governor and loyal to me, in the end followed through and we passed it. But yes, we did realize that we were creating a very difficult situation especially when we had people yelling and screaming at us during the time we were getting ready to vote and voting, with the NRA members breaking windows in the temporary chambers because we were at that time in temporary chambers in the Statehouse Annex and not in the permanent chambers. Windows were actually broken on the day of the vote for the assault weapons ban and in fact that helped me in caucus get the votes from the three to four members who were not going to vote that we needed to get.

**Rick Sinding:** The overreaction?

**Joe Doria:** The overreaction and the fact that the day of the vote the state police for some reason allowed the NRA members to actually crowd the halls to where we couldn’t even walk to the chambers. We had to walk through crowds of NRA members—angry NRA members—chanting as we walked through the halls to get to the chamber. Instead of them controlling the crowd—now I’m not saying there was any intention on their part—they allowed the crowd to actually fill the halls of the annex and create a very difficult situation, and they were out in the courtyard and during the preliminary discussion on the assault weapons bill they actually broke the windows. They later apologized but that really was a means by which I was able in caucus to get the final votes that were necessary to pass the assault weapons bill in the Assembly.

**Rick Sinding:** Very interesting. Clearly, there was a calculated decision made and I think that Doug Berman, who was the state treasurer and had been the campaign manager for Florio during the campaign, has publicly stated that the idea here was you’ve got some political capital, spend it and, as you indicated earlier, spend it quickly, and then you’ve got three and a half years or so to build it back up again, but members of the Assembly didn’t have three and a half years.

**Joe Doria:** Yeah. We only had eighteen months and maybe a little less than that. Doug Berman was a very intelligent man but he didn’t understand New Jersey politics. He read Machiavelli but he didn’t read all of it, and he had the Harvard problem—that is, obviously if you go to Harvard, you’re smarter than anybody else—and that really worked against us. I mean, he wanted to push, to get it done. In the end the governor listened to him and we supported the governor and, as I said, we all respected Governor Florio as a very intelligent, competent individual, a
very good politician. Unfortunately, here I think he listened to his advisers too much and was too enamored of the concept of doing the hard things first. I know I said a number of times that the problem of adding the pensions into the formula calculations was not a good idea, but in the end that’s what they wanted and so that’s what we did and it worked against us. In fact, we ended up having to change it less than two years later because it was such a controversial move. It was the right move—let me say it was the right move—but it was a controversial move and it was one where we couldn’t win, given as you point out all the other issues that we had to face.

Rick Sinding: At a time when controversy was not necessarily needed.

Joe Doria: Yeah. We didn’t need any more controversy and we had made the worst enemy in the NRA who was not above doing whatever they had to do to take down what they considered their enemies.

Rick Sinding: Before we get into the consequences from July or August on, let’s talk a little bit about your dealings with the front office of the Florio administration during these first few months. How much of the interaction that took place between the Assembly leadership and the governor’s office was directly with the governor, with Steve Perskie, his chief of staff who was basically assigned responsibility for dealing with the legislature, with Doug Berman as the treasurer who did all of the testifying about the budget or with any other individual members of the front office?

Joe Doria: It depended on the issue. Obviously, most of the time was spent dealing with the staff, sometimes very positively, sometimes negatively. The governor came into the situation towards the end when crunch time came and he got personally involved. I mean in some instances, such as with Greg Lawler and the auto insurance issue, it went well. Greg was able to maneuver and get things done and was very effective at what he did. In other instances, such as the situation with the guns, it was not as effective. Steve Perskie was able to do some negotiations but it began to look like, who was trying to outgun the other member of the administration. We got insurance done but that was Greg Lawler. Now with Steve Perskie, it’s guns and the QEA and taxes is Doug Berman and we all want to prove we’re as good as the other one.

That became a little bit of, let’s say, trying to show each other up or trying to prove that they can get the job done as well. That created conflict. The membership lost a lot of faith. The members of the Assembly very much began to lose faith in some of
the members of the governor’s staff and some of the administration, and so in order to get things done there was a need to bring in other people who the legislators trusted. For example, the State Chair was Phil Keegan. Phil Keegan came in and promised as state chairman that he had been told by the governor’s office that when we passed the taxes and the QEA that they would go out with a big campaign to sell this to the public and he knew that would happen, and for that reason the members of the Assembly voted. In the end Phil Keegan wasn’t told the truth because it never happened. Instead of going out there and trying to explain what we did, and do a lot of press hits, and the governor going out there and the staff, what ended up happening is they went into the bunker and everything was just left lying there. The various policy groups that were upset with us were just banging away at us while the administration didn’t really respond effectively and didn’t do what Phil Keegan had said. Everybody trusted Phil and Phil was a good man, a friend to all of us and a friend of mine, but it didn’t happen, and that created a great deal of controversy.

**Rick Sinding:** This is the first I’ve heard any suggestion that within the front office of the administration there were tensions or there were rivalries and you specifically mentioned Greg Lawler, insurance, and then Steve Perskie on the guns and Doug Berman on financial economic issues. Expand a little if you will on that.

**Joe Doria:** That was the perception of the Assembly members. I can’t say if it was true or not but that was the perception that existed amongst the members of the Assembly. Whether that existed in reality, I can’t say. I wasn’t sitting in the governor’s office. But there was a perception that they all were trying to outdo each other.

**Rick Sinding:** It’s interesting. Was there any time when you went directly to the governor to express your concerns about how the rank and file was responding to this?

**Joe Doria:** Yeah, I mean obviously I did and he took it into consideration and said, “No. We’re going to try to work to solve these problems.” And I believe that he really wanted to do that. But I do believe that sometimes what happened is the governor gets in a situation where he’s dependent upon his staff. And this was the agenda and we were going to follow the agenda no matter what.

**Rick Sinding:** What kind of personal relationship did you have with Jim Florio leading up to this? How much interaction did you have?
Joe Doria: I had a very good relationship with the governor. I felt that he was always honest with me and open. We were able to have free discussions. They weren't often but we did have the opportunity, but again as we dealt with the issues it was mostly the members of the governor’s office who dealt directly with us and with the legislature on the various issues.

Rick Sinding: Picking up on the Phil Keegan statement, you mentioned that there was a presumption that the administration would be going out there and actively explaining all of the activities that had taken place. Perhaps there was no way of knowing at the time what influence a particular radio station was going to have on events that took place shortly thereafter. Do you think that the reaction fueled undoubtedly by the rise of New Jersey 101.5 ended up being far greater in response to what the legislature had done than what you anticipated?

Joe Doria: Oh, there’s no question. I mean talk radio was something totally new to New Jersey. The convergence of 101.5 and the efforts to gain market share and their desire to create controversy through exaggeration was definitely there and at the same time The Trentonian went into a new format and created sensationalism, headlines. They decided that they were going to become much more of a tabloid than they had been. So the convergence of those two things obviously had an impact statewide. Now 101.5 when it started really impacted more from Trenton south, but eventually it touched the north—by the election of 1993—but it definitely impacted the legislature and no one realized that. And again, the legislature, the Assembly specifically, and I can only speak to the Assembly, believed that there was going to be a major effort to go out and sell everything we had done, which never seemed to take place.

Rick Sinding: A lot of people have suggested that what happened in the summer of 1990 in New Jersey was a harbinger of the Tea Party. Do you think that there’s some truth to that?

Joe Doria: Well, I think it’s a harbinger of a populist type of movement, an anti-movement. It’s easier to get people to be against something than for something. I don’t believe it’s a harbinger of the Tea Party. I mean, it’s people not being happy, people being upset, the economy being bad and the media stirring the pot, and in this instance talk radio really helped to stir the pot and the creation of Hands Across New Jersey--

Rick Sinding: Which came out of the radio station
Joe Doria: --which came out of the radio station and the NRA really had a major effect. The NRA was involved in helping to seed that type of opposition.

Rick Sinding: For the next 18 months, from July, August of 1990 up through the--well, that would be 12-14 months, through the election of 1991, many of the Democrats who were in their first terms or even second or third terms in the Assembly knew that they were going to be in trouble in the 1991 midterm.

Joe Doria: We knew immediately that there were going to be problems and we expected that we were going to have a very difficult election and it was even more difficult than we expected.

Rick Sinding: What ended up happening in the 1991 midterm was that the Republicans gained a veto-proof majority in the Assembly.

Joe Doria: Yes.

Rick Sinding: You’re now the minority leader.

Joe Doria: Yes.

Rick Sinding: I guess the view is a bit different from that seat.

Joe Doria: The view was significantly different obviously from being in the majority as Speaker to the minority with a very small minority. Yes, it was very significant and we had to deal with the reality that now we were going to be not as relevant.

Rick Sinding: But you were the party of the governor.

Joe Doria: We were still the party of the governor, yeah, but a very small party of the governor.

Rick Sinding: Governor Florio speaks of several accomplishments in this second half of his administration, notably with respect to economic development activities and a number of other aspects, where even though there were some very harsh
words traded between the new Speaker, Chuck Haytaian, and the front office, there actually was some give and take and some—I wouldn’t necessarily call it bipartisanship, but some meetings of the minds.

**Joe Doria:** Yeah. We were able to accomplish a number of things during that time. The governor worked with Chuck Haytaian. I worked with Chuck; we had a very positive relationship. He had been the minority leader when I was the Speaker and we had worked cooperatively at that time. Obviously, he was in the opposition and wanted to become the Speaker but even when he became Speaker we were able to work together and I still consider Chuck a friend. We disagreed on some policy issues but yes, we did work together.

**Rick Sinding:** It’s interesting because there’s certainly a perception today in politics, particularly in Congress, that not only are the Republican and Democratic members at loggerheads but they really do not like each other. We’re talking now about 20 years ago in New Jersey and it sounds as if, and my recollection is, that there were good personal friendships among people across both sides of the aisle even though there were differences of opinion on policy.

**Joe Doria:** There were. Chuck and I would have dinner; we would discuss issues. Jack Collins was the Majority Leader. We were able to get along and work together and we actually liked each other and considered each other friends. There weren’t the personal animosities that seemingly exist today so we were able to work together with the Republican majority and Governor Florio worked with the Republican majority also. I mean, it was more difficult but we were able to do it and to be successful. And you had people like Bobby Franks who was the Republican chairman during that period, again someone who was a very strong partisan but also someone who you could work with and who was a friend.

**Rick Sinding:** There were a lot of Democrats who lost their seats in that 1991 midterm who obviously blamed Governor Florio for their loss.

**Joe Doria:** Governor Florio and myself, no question about that.

**Rick Sinding:** Why you?

**Joe Doria:** Well, I was carrying the water in the Assembly then. It wasn’t necessarily a happy time. When you lose you’re looking to see why you lost. I mean, I was there pushing the governor’s agenda. Obviously, they were angrier
with the governor and not so much the governor but some of his staff. There was a
great hatred for Doug Berman and for some of the other members of the governor’s
staff, yes.

**Rick Sinding:** That’s interesting that the governor personally did not carry the
same animosity among the folks who had lost.

**Joe Doria:** No. I honestly believe that the personal animosity towards the
governor was not as significant as some of his staff. I think they realized the
governor’s good intentions. I think they felt that he had not been served well by
some of his staff.

**Rick Sinding:** When 1993 came along and there was a very, very close
gubernatorial election, one of the things that I think is probably often forgotten is
that the strategy that the Florio administration employed of getting the really tough
things out of the way in the first six months and then building it back up again
almost worked.

**Joe Doria:** It almost worked. I think that he should have won. I think the mistake
in 1993 was that they did not spend enough time in the urban centers and
campaign sufficiently in the urban centers. If they had spent more effort and time
doing that, I think he would have won. I think their strategy was to, for some
reason, not do as much as they could in the urban centers and I can’t explain why.

**Rick Sinding:** Did you counsel the Florio campaign in 1993 to do that?

**Joe Doria:** We felt that they should be doing more in the urban centers and we did
courage them to do that, but again I wasn’t intimately involved in the campaign
strategy.

**Rick Sinding:** You represented southern Hudson County in the Assembly in what
everyone would say is probably one of the safest if not the safest seat in the
legislature.

**Joe Doria:** It is a very Democratic district—blue-collar Democratic district. It is not
a very liberal district. There are some liberal elements, but Bayonne being very
blue-collar, Jersey City a little less so, a large African American population and a
growing Hispanic population at the time so yeah, it definitely was a Democratic
district. In 1985 when the rest of Hudson County went Republican in the Kean landslide, our district stayed Democratic, but in 1991 we had a hard time holding on in the general election. We won.

**Rick Sinding:** What was your plurality in ‘91?

**Joe Doria:** It was maybe 1500, 1700. We lost Bayonne by a maybe a little over a hundred votes, but we won Jersey City. But again the problem was the perception that we were arrogant, that we had done something without getting input, that it was done too quickly. You had the projection of what the media was pushing forward and what Hands Across New Jersey was pushing forward, and in a blue-collar town like Bayonne, it was not an easy election. We won the election and it was a case of where Bayonne didn’t do as well as it had been doing.

**Rick Sinding:** Who were “we” at the time? Who were your running mates?

**Joe Doria:** At that time all three of us ran. The running mates were: for over 20 years it was Ed O’Connor, then Senator; Joe Charles was the other Assembly member. The three of us are probably the longest-serving legislative team in modern state history. We stayed together as a team for 20 years and ran as a team and won some difficult primaries. We had one or two very difficult primaries, ‘81, ‘87 where we should have lost and we won.

**Rick Sinding:** There was a subsequent primary where you didn’t win. We’ll get to that in a bit. Let’s talk a little bit now about post 1993 now. Christine Whitman is the new governor. You are still the minority leader, a whole new set of circumstances and a whole new relationship with a whole new governor. Give us some sense of the difference between dealing with the Whitman administration, front office, cabinet and so forth and the Florio administration.

**Joe Doria:** Well, obviously I didn’t deal with them as much. Being in the minority, I dealt more directly with the Assembly leadership, Chuck Haytaian and Jack Collins, and then when Jack Collins became the Speaker, Jack Collins and Paul DiGaetano who was the majority leader. So my relationships were more with them but I did have a good relationship with the front office and obviously with the governor. I always was able to talk to her. We didn’t always agree but we did get called in for meetings on various issues and some of her staff, Peter McDonough obviously, director of communications, with whom I’ve taught a course here [at Eagleton] for 14 years, and some of her chiefs of staff. So we had relationships
even though it was different being in the minority than being in the majority. But we were able to work together and work on various issues together.

**Rick Sinding:** What was your sense of the difference in management style, executive leadership between Whitman and Florio?

**Joe Doria:** It wasn’t as aggressive. The leadership style was not as aggressive on the part of the governor and her administration. They did try to get things done but there wasn’t the same aggressiveness on issues as the Florio administration. Things were not as time sensitive. Things got done but it was a different style, a very different style, much more laid back.

**Rick Sinding:** In the final year of what would have been the Whitman administration, when she left to become the Environmental Protection Administrator in Washington, a former colleague of yours from the legislature, Donnie DiFrancesco, became the acting governor. Did that have any influence on the way in which you dealt with the governor?

**Joe Doria:** Well, obviously I had a continuing relationship with Don and was able to get a number of things through. I was mayor of Bayonne by that time and he was helpful on a number of major issues, as was Governor Whitman, so I can’t complain. I was always treated with respect and was able to get a lot of things done. Obviously, it wasn’t like having Florio there from your own party but Governor Whitman and Governor DiFrancesco were very helpful and supportive and helped to accomplish some of my major agenda items.

**Rick Sinding:** What was it that prompted you after so many years in the legislature and with a career in higher education to decide to run for mayor of Bayonne?

**Joe Doria:** That’s a good question. I never wanted to do local politics, never had a desire to run for local politics. I was on the Board of Ed and then I ran for the legislature and stayed out of local politics. My political mentor was Mayor Dennis Collins of Bayonne who supported me when I first ran for the legislature and was very supportive during those years. He was mayor from 1974 to 1990. When he left office, the relationship with the mayor’s office was not as good. We had Mayor [Richard] Rutkowski but I was able to deal with him. Mayor Rutkowski lost in ’94 to Mayor [Leonard] Kiczek and our relationship was a little bit more strained and there were a lot of issues that I felt were not going well. And, to be honest, Mayor Collins
spent a lot of time lobbying me to run for mayor. I never I thought I would run for mayor, I never thought my wife would want me to run for mayor, and I made a mistake. I basically said to Mayor Collins, “If my wife says I should run I will run” and he convinced my wife so I did run. I ran because I felt it was time. I felt Bayonne was floundering. I felt that a lot of things weren’t moving forward, that there was a lot of unnecessary conflict within the city politically and socially, and I felt that we could get a lot of things done. And so I ran in 1998 and ran against the incumbent mayor and the mayor who was incumbent before that and another candidate. We have a runoff provision but I won with 57 percent of the vote so there was no runoff. Out of four candidates, I came out with 57 percent.

Rick Sinding: So like Brendan Byrne in 1977 you split the opposition.

Joe Doria: And I was able to get 50 percent plus 1. Usually with that many candidates there’s a runoff. I didn’t have a runoff, so I became mayor. As I said, I enjoyed my time as major and I felt we got a lot done. We renovated almost all the parks in the city, repaved the roads. We took over the Military Ocean Terminal and we didn’t have to pay the federal government. We got an economic development conveyance through the support of at that time Congressman [Robert] Menendez who was very helpful. We were able to start some development there, the opening of the cruise port with Royal Caribbean. I built three new parks and I added over 40 acres of park land in an urban city. So we were able to do a lot. We brought in new businesses, economic development. It was a good time, sometimes frustrating, but it’s different to be an administrator than being a legislator and I found out the difference, having never thought that I would be someone who ran a city. So I enjoyed the time I was there.

Rick Sinding: How do you respond to critics of dual office holding?

Joe Doria: I don’t see a problem with it. I think it works better for the constituency because you can get more done. As long as you’re doing your job and you’re doing it well and doing both jobs well, I see no problem with it. I never have. I think again the issue becomes one of perception rather than reality.

Rick Sinding: There were never circumstances where you felt there was any kind of a conflict between your role as mayor and your role as legislator?

Joe Doria: Never, because I didn’t perceive conflict. I was working on behalf of the citizens of Bayonne and the citizens of the state and I saw their interests
coinciding. Their interests were very similar. They were concerned about taxes. They were concerned about jobs. They were concerned about the environment. And they were similar concerns, maybe slightly different approaches to it, but I didn’t see necessarily any type of conflict in the representation of the two groups. But I was in a unique situation. I represent a very urban district, Bayonne and Jersey City. The interests are very similar and my interests statewide have always been more urban issues so I wasn’t in conflict between suburban versus urban issues. I was urban at all times and the issues were the same.

**Rick Sinding:** Sometime during this, and you’ll have to refresh our memory about the year you wound up on the losing side of a slate of candidates.

**Joe Doria:** Yeah, what happened was in 2004 both Joe Charles and Ed O’Connor had moved on to judgeships and I was there still running. I should have run for the Senate but I ran for the Assembly instead. I didn’t want to leave the Assembly. And the Mayor of Jersey City, Glenn Cunningham, ran for the Senate with a ticket and I ended up losing by two or three hundred votes for the Assembly seat, so I was on the losing side in that battle in 2004. Unfortunately, Mayor Cunningham died less than three months after he was sworn in and the seat became open and I was selected and elected to serve out the remainder of the term, which was basically a full term.

**Rick Sinding:** So you wind up in the Senate.

**Joe Doria:** I wind up in the Senate.

**Rick Sinding:** How different is it from the Assembly?

**Joe Doria:** It is different. It’s smaller. In many ways senatorial courtesy really changes how you deal with things. For me it wasn’t that different but I think that it’s a different perception, a different way of approaching things.

**Rick Sinding:** Was this a two-year term or a four-year?

**Joe Doria:** Four-year term, from May of 2004 until I left in October of 2007. So almost a total term.
Rick Sinding: That was to be appointed as another executive position.

Joe Doria: Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs.

Rick Sinding: So now you had served in an executive capacity at the local level. You were no longer mayor of Bayonne I take it.

Joe Doria: No. I gave up the mayoralty to become the commissioner.

Rick Sinding: There certainly would have been a conflict.

Joe Doria: There would have been a conflict, yes. Obviously, I wasn’t going to stay because there would be a conflict. Governor [Jon] Corzine offered me either the Department of Community Affairs or the Department of Education and that was a difficult decision. In the end I felt I had always done education so it would be a new challenge and a different kind of challenge to become the commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs, so I made the determination to go to Community Affairs. The other issue was dealing with a new education formula that Governor Corzine was putting in and I had worked on that formula, on the committees to put that formula together. And Lucille Davy was the commissioner and I felt she should have the opportunity to go forward and to sell the formula. In the end, ironically, I ended up spending a lot of time in my first two or three months as commissioner back in the legislature selling and getting the votes and helping Governor Corzine get the votes for the—

Rick Sinding: For the education package?

Joe Doria: So I was back dealing with the legislature now and doing what I used to say the people in the front office did, and that was cajoling and convincing my former colleagues—both Republicans and Democrats, and I was successful with a number of Republicans—that the formula was good and we should pass it.

Rick Sinding: Certainly, observers of New Jersey state government would say that there’s very little power vested in the Department of Education and a considerable amount of power in the Department of Community Affairs.
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**Joe Doria:** I don’t know if I agree with that. I think the Department of Education has a lot of influence over the education of our young people.

**Rick Sinding:** Influence, yes, but power?

**Joe Doria:** If it was wielded properly, power.

**Rick Sinding:** I guess I’ve never seen it wielded properly.

**Joe Doria:** Very rarely has it been wielded properly, but if it’s wielded properly yes, there is a great deal of power.

**Rick Sinding:** The Department of Community Affairs is a fascinating department in New Jersey and, for viewers or listeners or readers of the transcript of this interview who are not familiar with it, it was founded in the 1960s as the Great Society implementer in the state of New Jersey and morphed over the years into what many people refer to as the one-stop shop for mayors to come to have their grievances responded to at the state level.

**Joe Doria:** It’s been a catchall also. I mean, when I was there it was dealing with a lot of different issues. Obviously, the Bureau of Local Government Services deals with the municipalities and the Director of Local Government Services reviews the budgets. The Local Government Board approves budgets, they approve bond issues, so they’re dealing on a continuing basis with local municipalities.

**Rick Sinding:** Like housing for example.

**Joe Doria:** Well, when I was there the big issue was COAH, the Council on Affordable Housing, and as commissioner I sat as chair. It was functioning at that time—not like under the Christie administration where it hasn’t functioned—and we were going through trying to put together new regulations. I had obviously sat in the legislature when we passed the original COAH legislation.

**Rick Sinding:** We should probably explain that this was in response to a New Jersey Supreme Court decision, *Mt. Laurel*, about every municipality and every growth municipality in the state offering a fair share of low- and moderate-income housing.
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**Joe Doria:** It was the *Mt. Laurel* decision in 1983 and *Mt. Laurel II* which set up the builder’s remedy. The builder’s remedy was basically that if a builder came into a community and was given approval to build, as long as they were building affordable housing, the community zoning laws could be overturned in order for the development to take place, a very simplified approach—my statement here is much more complicated. And the biggest problem with COAH when I came in, and we had some very good people there, was that the regulations were too complicated and we were trying to simplify it so we could build affordable housing because the problem with building affordable housing in this state has been a continuing—

**Rick Sinding:** It turned into constant litigation.

**Joe Doria:** Yeah. We’re talking about now almost 30 years of litigation between municipalities and the state and going to the court and there was so much conflict that my goal was to try to simplify and to actually build affordable housing. Remember New Jersey’s one of the few states that has created a constitutional right to affordable housing, so COAH was a big part of the job when I was there. There’s also obviously all of the remainder of all the Great Society programs.

**Rick Sinding:** Such as they existed.

**Joe Doria:** Well, the local poverty agencies have become economic development. There are a lot of different things happening. State plan was under the Department of Community Affairs.

**Rick Sinding:** That has since moved.

**Joe Doria:** That’s been moved but nothing’s been done. We were actually moving towards a new State Plan. The Christie administration has come in and nothing’s been done. In addition, as the commissioner I sat as the chair of the Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency and also the Meadowlands Commission, which is another whole experiment in bringing communities together for development purposes, or non-development, depending upon how you want to approach it.

**Rick Sinding:** Also the only regional compact in New Jersey that includes municipal tax sharing.

**Joe Doria:** That’s absolutely right.
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Rick Sinding: Which is a critically important component.

Joe Doria: And we were trying to develop a new way to deal with municipal tax sharing.

Rick Sinding: There was a revolt going on among some of those municipalities.

Joe Doria: Communities who were paying in rather than taking out and we were trying to come up with a new methodology to deal with that, but again not a lot has happened. So there was a lot going on, also the state fire safety construction code officials and the construction code, recreation, the whole issue of amusement rides and amusement ride inspections.

Rick Sinding: That’s right. I forgot all the regulatory authorities.

Joe Doria: So there are all the regulatory authorities. So other than the Department of Community Affairs, I was dealing with a myriad of issues and problems and concerns that were important, so it was a great experience I have to say. I learned a great deal. I thought I knew everything having spent up to that time 28 years in state government and suddenly I found out I really didn’t know everything and I learned a lot.

Rick Sinding: Maybe I’ll add a little personal experience here. One of the feelings that I had, and I did spend some time in state government, was that particularly in the agencies there is a tendency so often to get caught up in the crisis of the day, and given all the different responsibilities that you had at the Department of Community Affairs it must have been multiple crises per day, and that it causes one very often to sort of lose sight of the bigger picture. How do people in executive positions in state government or any government for that matter reconcile these two problems?

Joe Doria: Well, number one, you need a very good staff. You need people who are able to handle the problems and deal with the issues intelligently and able to come in and present them to the commissioner and present various options. I was very fortunate. I had a very good staff, I had a very good deputy commissioner, Chuck Richman, who had been there forever and had all the experience and so I was able to trust the people in charge to do what was best and to deal with the issues, the major problems, when they came up. It wasn't totally crisis management I have to say. We were able to move forward on a number of issues
and get things done. Obviously, there was a lot happening every day, but interestingly enough I feel sometimes more overburdened today as Dean of the School of Education at St. Peter’s than I did when I was Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs with almost twelve hundred employees.

Rick Sinding: You know what Henry Kissinger says about academic politics, that it’s so nasty because the stakes are so low.

Joe Doria: Well, I agree with that and sometimes I feel more overwhelmed doing this than I did doing the commissioner’s job because you have the people there who are dealing with problems on a day-to-day basis and they come to you with the major issues, presenting alternatives and being able to sit down and solve a problem intelligently in discussion with those people who you trust. And I came to trust some of them very much. Some of them are still there like Melissa Orsen was the counsel to the COAH and she’s still back there now as the deputy commissioner, very good, and she was working with Lucy Vandenberg [Director of the Council on Affordable Housing] who was also very good. So we were able to deal with the issues. There was controversy. There were problems. But we felt very secure that we were dealing with them and that was true of so many of the other areas. There were crises but it wasn’t always crisis management. You were actually able to get things done. I felt very good. We built a lot of homes and we built affordable housing. We got a lot done. The State Plan was moving. Unfortunately, when I left and the new administration came in everything started to just unravel.

Rick Sinding: This was the second or third time you’ve made reference to the Christie administration and what it’s done in areas that you had an interest in. In the limited amount of time we have left, why don’t you give us sort of an overview of your sense of what Governor Christie has done or hasn’t done in his almost five years now in office.

Joe Doria: He’s done a good job at running for President; otherwise I think there are a lot of problems in the state of New Jersey that have not been dealt with. We’re going to be running out of money soon for the Transportation Trust Fund, again a great idea put forward by and initiated by Governor Tom Kean—something that we have continued to fund but maybe a little bit too dependent in the past and up through this administration on bonding, but a very important issue. We’re not anywhere near solving the problem of how we’re going to continue to fund the Transportation Trust Fund. You look at the bond rating for the state; it’s gone down continuously. If a Democrat had been there and the bond rating had gone down six times, everybody would be screaming bloody murder. There’s a great deal of
deflection. If you make a lot of noise, sometimes people don’t pay attention to the real problems and I think there are a lot of real problems that have not been solved that are going to fester. Again transportation, which was an issue in addition to education that I was always concerned about—the tunnel and what are we going to do about transportation and dealing with a need for an additional tunnel that Amtrak’s pushing for at the present time.

**Rick Sinding:** In fact, there was just a story a couple of days ago about Amtrak saying that it’s going to have to shut down one of the tubes going under the Hudson River for an extended period of time because of deteriorating conditions owing to Sandy.

**Joe Doria:** And that’s going to negatively impact New Jersey Transit and the New Jersey Transit trains going to New York City. As you go through the various issues, the issue of payments into the pension—there’s no question everybody’s responsible for that going back four administrations, and the problem has to be solved and supposedly there’s a solution then the governor reneges. There are issues there that are significant that I don’t think have been dealt with, but if you’re out of the state most of the time it’s pretty hard to deal with the problems of the state of New Jersey.

**Rick Sinding:** As something of an elder statesman of the Democratic Party at this point but no longer holding public office--

**Joe Doria:** Thankfully.

**Rick Sinding:** Do you find yourself called upon these days to offer advice or to be involved in any of the deliberations of the Democratic Party? Or do public officials in general come to you for advice and guidance?

**Joe Doria:** I still speak to a number of the members of the legislature on both sides of the aisle. If they ask me for my opinion, I give it but I don’t volunteer it and I don’t chase them. But I’m happy always to give them the benefit of my time in the legislature even though things change. Every year the legislature’s different. One of the things I think people don’t appreciate is that the legislature has its own culture. The rules don’t change significantly, but the people change and there is a different culture based upon the people and the issues and the times, and so the culture of the legislature’s changed. The leadership changes. We have good leadership on both sides of the aisle whether it be a Tom Kean or a Steve Sweeney.
or a Jon Bramnick and a Vince Prieto who is from Hudson who is a really good guy and is working very hard, but the culture is changing and so you can’t necessarily impose what happened even a year or two ago on what’s happening today. And I think a lot of people don’t realize that and when you’re in the legislature you begin to realize that things may seem the same but they change and it’s dependent upon the issues, the people, the times; everything has an impact. And so the culture has changed and it will continue to change, and I’m not saying it’s changed for the worse; I’m just saying it changes and I think neither better nor worse.

**Rick Sinding:** How much of that has to do with the personality of the governor?

**Joe Doria:** Obviously, the personality of the governor has an impact and what influence the governor has on the process, yes.

**Rick Sinding:** And the governor, being constitutionally one of the most powerful chief executives in the country--

**Joe Doria:** Probably the most powerful as a result of the 1947 constitution.

**Rick Sinding:** The legislature has always been seen as sort of the weak second link of government. Does it bother you to hear people suggest that?

**Joe Doria:** I don’t believe it is. I believe that it has become and still is a very strong partner in the process of government in New Jersey. I think with the professionalization of staff, the professionalization of the Office of Legislative Services—sometimes they do a better job than even the governor’s office in things like predicting revenue. Dave Rosen for example: his experience far outweighs anybody who’s treasurer in the front office. He’s been there for a long time and has gone through many different governors and many different cycles of the economy. So the professionalization of the Office of Legislative Services and the partisan staff of both the Democrats and the Republicans have put the legislature in a better position to deal with the agendas of the governors. And I think you have to give credit to the people who were involved in setting up the Office of Legislative Services a great deal, Sam Alito, who was the first Executive Director, and Al Porrioni who’s been there for many long years, over 30 some odd, have done an exceptional job and Alan Karcher who realized the importance of professional partisan staff and really developed that. Over the years each of the Speakers and each of the Senate Presidents have done... a great deal. It’s just a matter of what has to take place, but I think that the legislature is a coequal branch and should
stay a coequal branch of government with the governor. It doesn’t get the same publicity because in New Jersey we don’t have the media. We don’t have the TV stations. Ben Franklin said we’re a keg tapped at both ends. Well, we are—the sixth largest media in Philadelphia and the largest media in New York. We get lost in the sauce. And that’s part of the reason you don’t have the perception. The governor takes the main stage but the legislature has a lot to do with what’s happening in the state.

**Rick Sinding:** I’ve always liked not only the keg tapped at both ends but I don’t know who it was who referred to New Jersey as a valley of humility between two mountains of conceit.

**Joe Doria:** <laughs> That’s very good.

**Rick Sinding:** It is nice.

**Joe Doria:** I haven’t heard that one before but I that’s very good; that’s very true.

**Rick Sinding:** I’d be remiss if I didn’t ask you for some final reflections on Jim Florio, the governor, Jim Florio, the man.

**Joe Doria:** Well, my comments are very positive. Jim Florio the man is a very good person, very hardworking, very committed, very intelligent, very much involved and has always been involved in the basic mechanisms of government and very much more so than a lot of political leaders in the nitty-gritty details. He knew the policy issues. He knows them still very well. He enjoys it and that’s the difference. He always enjoyed it and he still enjoys it and I think he contributed a great deal to New Jersey during the four years that he was governor. Even after he was governor and before as congressman, his involvement with the superfund and environmental issues, his involvement in the community—as a person very positive. As governor, he did a very good job within the limitations of the times, the economy. I think he allowed his staff maybe to have a little too much free rein. He trusted them maybe a little bit too much, but he himself always was there, was committed and worked well with the legislature. There were problems; there were issues. We had to deal with some very difficult times. The NRA in the end was in my opinion the major reason for our defeat, the seed money they gave to Hands Across New Jersey, their ability to turn the issue of taxes against us rather than guns. Let me tell you, their lobbyists told me the day that we passed the gun bill that they would never get us on guns. They knew in New Jersey it didn’t sell, but
they would get us on any other issue and they’d take us down and they did on taxes. It was all about the guns but it was really that they wanted to send a message: You take us on, you may think you beat us, but in the end we beat you. And that’s a shame that that type of an interest group can have that much control and be that duplicitous in how they deal with public issues.

Rick Sinding: Joe Doria, thanks very much.

Joe Doria: You’re welcome. Thank you. It was a pleasure.