

REMARKS OF GOVERNOR THOMAS H. KEAN

AT THE

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 1985

THANK YOU, BILL, FOR THAT INTRODUCTION -- AND FOR INVITING ME TO YOUR ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON.

YOU KNOW, CORRECTIONS WAS ONE OF THE FIRST AREAS TO DRAW MY IMMEDIATE ATTENTION WHEN I FIRST CAME INTO OFFICE ALMOST FOUR YEARS AGO. AND IT IS ONE OF THE DEPARTMENTS WHOSE PROGRESS I AM PROUDEST OF TODAY.

WHEN I CAME INTO OFFICE, WE FACED A SEVERE PRISON OVERCROWDING CRISIS. THE CHALLENGE BEFORE THIS DEPARTMENT WAS GREAT.

WELL, YOU RESPONDED TO THE CHALLENGE -- AND YOU RESPONDED WELL.

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WE HAVE ADDED MORE THAN 3,200 CELLSPACES THROUGH THE MOST AGGRESSIVE PROGRAM TO INCREASE PRISON CAPACITY IN NEW JERSEY'S HISTORY.

THAT'S A RECORD THAT EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM -- AND EVERYONE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS -- CAN BE VERY, VERY PROUD OF.

AS YOU KNOW, WE PLAN TO INCREASE THE SYSTEM'S CAPACITY BY 2,700 MORE CELLSPACES. IF THE LEGISLATURE RESPONDS TO OUR EMERGENCY REQUEST -- IF THEY ACT RESPONSIBLY -- MORE CELLS ARE ON THE WAY.

MORE INMATES MEANS MORE CHALLENGE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS. THAT INCREASE MEANS MORE WORK FOR THE DEPARTMENT, MORE JOBS, AND THE CONTINUED NEED FOR QUALITY CORRECTIONS PERSONNEL -- FOR THE KIND OF PEOPLE WHO SHARE A COMMITMENT TO SEING THAT THIS VERY TOUGH JOB IS DONE -- AND DONE WELL.

THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE BEING HONORED TODAY HAVE SHON THAT SPECIAL COMMITMENT -- A SPECIAL KIND OF PRIDE IN YOUR WORK THAT MERITS SPECIAL RECOGNITION.

I WANT TO CONGRATULATE YOU. YOU HAVE BEEN NOMINATED BY YOUR PEERS -- THOSE WHO KNOW YOUR WORK BEST. TO EARN THE RESPECT OF YOUR COLLEAGUES, IN MY VIEW, IS THE HIGHEST FORM OF FLATTERY -- THE HIGHEST FORM OF RECOGNITION THAT ONE CAN GET.

YOU CAN BE PROUD OF YOUR DEPARTMENT, AND YOUR DEPARTMENT CAN BE PROUD OF YOU.

YOU KNOW, NEW JERSEY'S CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT IS ONE OF THE BEST IN THE NATION.

FORTY OTHER STATES IN THE NATION HAVE FACED FEDERAL COURT ORDERS OR LITIGATION BECAUSE OF OVERCROWDED FACILITIES. NEW JERSEY HAS NOT.

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OTHER STATES HAVE HAD TO TURN CRIMINALS LOOSE IN THE STREETS BECAUSE OF A LACK OF PRISON SPACE. NEW JERSEY HAS NOT.

OTHER STATES HAVE SEEN CRIME FALL -- BUT NEW JERSEY'S CRIME RATE IS FALLING FASTER THAN OTHER STATES IN THE REGION OR IN THE NATION AS A WHOLE.

YOUR DEPARTMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT OUTSTANDING RECORD.

AND THOSE OF YOU BEING HONORED TODAY HAVE HELPED BUILD SUCH AN OUTSTANDING DEPARTMENT.

I AM IMPRESSED WITH THE WAY WE ARE MEETING THE CHALLENGE THAT HAS FACED US SO FAR.

THERE ARE MORE CHALLENGES AHEAD, AND I ASK FOR YOUR CONTINUED HELP IN MEETING THEM.

I CONGRATULATE OUR AWARD WINNERS ON THEIR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE.

AND TO ALL OF YOU, I SAY: KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.

THANK YOU.