

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY GOVERNOR JIM FLORIO  
ANNUAL BURLINGTON TRI-CLUB MEETING  
MT. HOLLY, NEW JERSEY  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1990

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THE VOTERS REMINDED ME OF SOME THINGS IN LAST WEEK'S ELECTION. THEY SENT ME A MESSAGE THAT I NEEDED TO LISTEN A LITTLE MORE. THAT I NEEDED TO CONCENTRATE MORE ON BUILDING CONSENSUS.

MY VISION OF LEADERSHIP IS SOMEONE WHO MAKES THE HARD CHOICES. SOMEONE WHO HAS THE COURAGE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS ACTIONS, AND THE PASSION TO LIVE UP TO HIS PRINCIPLES. MY HEROES ARE PEOPLE LIKE TEDDY ROOSEVELT AND FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT, AND JOHN F. KENNEDY.

BUT THE MESSAGE OF LAST WEEK WAS A REMINDER THAT THERE'S ALSO ANOTHER IMPORTANT SIDE TO LEADERSHIP: LISTENING AND BUILDING CONSENSUS. THE GOVERNMENT IS AT ITS BEST WHEN IT MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES. SO, WE'RE GOING TO DO A BETTER JOB OF GETTING PEOPLE INVOLVED.

I'LL BE MAKING SOME ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT THAT IN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS, ESPECIALLY AS IT AFFECTS OUR SCHOOL PROGRAM.

BUT TONIGHT I WANT TO FOCUS ON ANOTHER MESSAGE THAT CAME THROUGH LOUD AND CLEAR IN THE ELECTION. PEOPLE FEEL GOVERNMENT IS TOO BIG, AND THAT IT DOESN'T WORK LIKE IT SHOULD. THEY DON'T THINK THEY'RE GETTING THEIR MONEY'S WORTH OUT OF THEIR TAX DOLLAR. YOU KNOW SOMETHING, THEY'RE RIGHT.

STATE SPENDING SPUN OUT OF CONTROL IN THE LAST DECADE. THERE WAS NO DISCIPLINE. WHEN MONEY CAME IN ABOVE EXPECTATIONS IT WAS SPENT ON NEW PROGRAMS, LIKE PRIVATE OPERA SCHOOLS.

EFFICIENCY HASN'T EXACTLY BEEN THE STATE'S MOTTO FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS. STATE SPENDING GREW BY 12 PERCENT A YEAR, AND LOCAL SPENDING INCREASED AT NEARLY THE SAME RATE. AND, I DON'T KNOW ANYONE WHO FEELS 12 PERCENT SAFER; OR 12 PERCENT HEALTHIER.

SO, I SET ABOUT IMMEDIATELY CUTTING GOVERNMENT. I CAME INTO OFFICE FACING A DEFICIT OF \$600 MILLION IN THE BUDGET WE INHERITED FROM THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. WE CLOSED THAT GAP, AS WAS OUR DUTY BY LAW. AND THEN, WORKING WITH THE LEGISLATURE, WE CUT OUT \$2 BILLION FROM THIS YEAR'S BUDGET.

YOU MAY RECALL THE PROTESTS AGAINST THOSE CUTS BY THE DISABLED, FARMERS, ARTISTS AND EVERY OTHER GROUP AFFECTED.

WE IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT GETTING RID OF UNNECESSARY PERKS FOR STATE WORKERS, LIKE RAIL PASSES AND TELEPHONE CREDIT CARDS. AND, LET'S NOT FORGET THOSE INFAMOUS STATE CARS. ALREADY, MORE THAN 1,000 STATE CARS HAVE BEEN TURNED IN TO THE TREASURER'S OFFICE.

OUR BUDGET WAS ALSO UNUSUAL BY RECENT NEW JERSEY STANDARDS. IT GREW BY ONLY TWO PERCENT AS COMPARED TO THE 12 PERCENT AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH OF THE PREVIOUS DECADE.

THE MESSAGE OF THE ELECTION, HOWEVER, WAS THAT WE WERE TOO MODEST IN OUR AIMS. BECAUSE, IT'S NOW CLEAR THAT THE PEOPLE WANT MORE. PEOPLE WANT US TO GET BACK TO BASICS, TO LOOK AT THE FUNDAMENTALS OF GOVERNMENT.

DO WE NEED EVERYTHING THAT'S OUT THERE, THEY'RE ASKING. ALL THESE PROGRAMS, COMMISSIONS, DEPARTMENTS?

WELL, MAYBE WE DON'T. SO I'M ANNOUNCING TONIGHT THAT I'VE DIRECTED MY CHIEF OF STAFF TO TAKE A GOOD, HARD LOOK AT WHETHER WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET RID OF SOME OF OUR DEPARTMENTS. WE HAVE 19. I SUSPECT WE COULD DO WITH LESS. I'VE GIVEN HIM UNTIL THE END OF THIS YEAR, SO WE CAN USE THE RESULTS IN PREPARING THE NEXT STATE BUDGET.

WE'VE GOT A TEAM OF OUTSIDE EXPERTS SCRUTINIZING OUR BIGGEST STATE DEPARTMENTS. OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS THEY'VE MADE SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS WHICH WILL SAVE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

I KNOW WE CAN FIND BETTER, SMARTER WAYS TO DO THE JOB OF STATE GOVERNMENT.

GOVERNMENT CAN'T BE A FAR-FLUNG AFFAIR. GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO BE ACCOUNTABLE TO PEOPLE -- TO YOU, AND YOU, AND YOU. RIGHT NOW, FOLKS KNOW THEY'RE NOT GETTING THE GOVERNMENT THEY PAY FOR. AND THEY'RE NOT SHY ABOUT SAYING SO.

ALTHOUGH THE BUDGET I SUBMITTED THIS YEAR ACTUALLY WAS SMALLER THAN THE PREVIOUS YEAR, IT'S CLEAR WE CAN MAKE MORE CUTS. NO, PEOPLE DON'T WANT IMPORTANT SERVICES CUT -- BUT THEY THINK WE CAN DO BETTER.

PEOPLE READ IN THE PAPERS ABOUT GIANT CORPORATIONS MAKING MOVES TO TIGHTEN UP AND THEY SAY, "WHY CAN'T GOVERNMENT DO THE SAME?"

I'M COMFORTABLE WITH THAT MESSAGE. WE'VE BEEN SAYING AND DOING JUST THAT SINCE I TOOK OFFICE.

BUT IT'S CLEAR THAT THE PEOPLE FEEL WE CAN DO A BETTER, AND QUICKER, JOB OF BRINGING STATE GOVERNMENT UNDER CONTROL.

WE WILL.

BUT, I'M ALSO GOING TO NEED THE SUPPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY ON THIS. BECAUSE YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE TO SAY NO, LIKE I'VE HAD TO DO TO AGRICULTURE PEOPLE, ARTS SUPPORTERS, AND ADVOCATES FOR THE DISABLED. I'VE MET WITH COLLEGE STUDENTS UNHAPPY ABOUT POSSIBLE TUITION HIKES. I'VE ALSO LISTENED TO OPERA SINGERS BELTING OUT SONGS OF WOE ABOUT BUDGET CUTS FOR A PRIVATE OPERA SCHOOL.

AND WHILE SOME PEOPLE PROTEST SPENDING CUTS, OTHER PEOPLE COME UP TO PROTEST SPENDING MORE ON ANYTHING. THEY'RE ALL PART OF THE PROCESS, ALL PART OF THE DEBATE. WE ALL HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER TO DECIDE WHERE WE WANT TO GO, AND HOW WE WANT TO GET THERE. I'D LIKE YOUR HELP, TOO.

AND OF COURSE WE HAVE TO KEEP IN MIND THE BACKGROUND FOR ALL THIS. WASHINGTON HAS ABANDONED SO MANY OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES. ROADS. SCHOOLS. CLEANING UP POLLUTION. WHATEVER YOU THINK ABOUT THAT, IT MEANS THERE'S MORE FOR THE STATES TO DO TO MAKE SURE OUR CHILDREN ARE EDUCATED. OUR STREETS ARE SAFE. OUR WATER IS CLEAN, AND OUR ECONOMY CREATES GOOD JOBS.

THE FEDERAL BUDGET JUST APPROVED CONTINUES IN THAT UNFORTUNATE TRADITION. IT PASSES ON MORE OF THE COST OF MEDICARE AND MEDICAID TO THE STATES. MEDICAID ALONE NOW COSTS NEW JERSEY \$1.2 BILLION OF OUR \$12.4 BILLION BUDGET.

WE CAN MEET THE CHALLENGE. BUT, AS WE MAKE A BETTER GOVERNMENT, WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT THERE ARE TWO PARTS OF WHAT WE NEED TO DO.

ONE IS TO MAKE SURE GOVERNMENT IS AS COST-EFFICIENT AS POSSIBLE.

OVER THE PAST DECADE, THERE WAS NONE OF THE NECESSARY PRUNING OF STATE GOVERNMENT. AND, AS ANYONE WHO DOES ANY GARDENING KNOWS, THE MOST PRODUCTIVE GARDENS ARE TRIMMED AND DIRECTED IN THEIR GROWTH. FROM TIME TO TIME, YOU HAVE TO STEP BACK AND TAKE A LOOK AND WHAT YOU'VE GOT.

SOME MEMBERS OF MY CABINET TELL ME THAT AFTER EIGHT OR TEN MONTHS ON THE JOB, THEY'RE STILL DISCOVERING POCKETS OF BUREAUCRACY. AND THEY'RE NOT EVEN SURE WHAT THE BUREAUCRATS IN THOSE POCKETS DO, EXCEPT MAYBE GENERATE RED TAPE.

FROM 1980 TO 1988 THE NUMBER OF FULL-TIME STATE EMPLOYEES INCREASED BY 19.6 PERCENT, WHILE OUR STATE'S POPULATION DROPPED RELATIVE TO THE NATION.

IT MAY BE THAT SOME STATE WORKERS WILL LOSE THEIR JOBS AS WE CUT BACK STATE GOVERNMENT. ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, THAT SHOULDN'T MAKE ANYONE HAPPY. BUT, WE ALL HAVE TO SEE WHAT'S SO CLEAR TO SO MANY PEOPLE: STATE GOVERNMENT MUST AND CAN GET BY WITH LESS.

AT THE STATE LEVEL, THAT ALSO MEANS GETTING AS MUCH ASSISTANCE AS POSSIBLE TO COUNTY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO HELP REDUCE THE PROPERTY TAX BURDENS ON HARDWORKING PEOPLE. WE STARTED THAT PROCESS IN EARNEST WHEN I SIGNED A LAW THAT SAYS NEXT YEAR THE STATE WILL PICK UP THE COST OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS THAT COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES PAY NOW THROUGH LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES.

THE OTHER PART IS GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO BE A CATALYST FOR GROWTH. BEFORE THE ELECTION, I TALKED ABOUT HOW THE STATE CAN USE PUBLIC WORKS TO MAKE SURE THAT PEOPLE HAVE JOBS TODAY AND A SECURE ECONOMIC FUTURE TOMORROW. THAT HASN'T CHANGED.

GOVERNMENT HAS TO HAVE THE COURAGE TO STEP IN WHERE IT'S NEEDED, AND THE WISDOM TO GET THE HELL OUT OF THE WAY WHEN SOMEONE ELSE CAN DO A BETTER JOB. THAT'S NOT PROFOUND. IT'S JUST COMMON SENSE.

ONE PLACE WHERE IT'S NEEDED IS IN BUILDING NEW ROADS, BETTER SCHOOLS, HIGH-TECH AIRPORTS AND PORTS AND SO ON. THE KINDS OF THINGS NECESSARY IF OUR STATE IS TO KEEP IN THE WORLD MARKETPLACE.

FORTUNATELY, IN NEW JERSEY WE'VE BEGUN TO MAKE THE TOUGH BUDGET CHOICES NEEDED TO KEEP OUR FISCAL HOUSE IN ORDER AND TO BALANCE OUR BUDGET. WE'RE KEEPING OUR STATE'S TRIPLE-A BOND RATING, THE HIGHEST IN THE NATION AND THAT WILL ALLOW US TO MAKE THESE KINDS OF INVESTMENTS IN OUR FUTURE WHERE OTHER STATES AND CITIES CAN'T.

AND, IT'S IN THIS WAY THAT THE TWO ROLES OF GOVERNMENT ARE LINKED. IF WE'RE NOT LEAN AND RESPONSIVE, GOVERNMENT WON'T BE ABLE TO BE THE ENGINE THAT HELPS DRIVE OUR ECONOMY AND CREATE JOBS. IN FACT, IT CAN DRAG THE ECONOMY DOWN. THAT'S BEEN OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE FEDERAL BUDGET DEFICIT.

WHAT, IN THE PAST, HAS BROUGHT US PROSPERITY? REAL, COMMON SENSE VALUES, LIKE OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AND HARD WORK.

THOSE ARE VALUES OUR STATE GOVERNMENT FORGOT. IT SPENT MONEY IT DIDN'T HAVE. IT MORTGAGED OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE, LIKE A FAMILY THAT BUYS A PORSCHE BEFORE PUTTING AWAY FOR THE KIDS' EDUCATION.

LET'S GET BACK TO THE VALUES OF OUR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS. MY GRANDFATHER, STEPPED ASHORE AT ELLIS ISLAND LOOKING FOR A BETTER LIFE FOR HIS FAMILY. HE WORKED HARD TO SAVE MONEY TO INVEST IN HIS BUSINESS: A HORSE AND A WAGON. HE HAULED COAL IN THE WINTER AND ICE IN THE SUMMER.

SOME PEOPLE SAY THESE VALUES ARE DEAD -- THAT THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY IS A THING OF THE PAST. THEY'RE WRONG. LET'S NEVER ACCEPT FAILURE; NEVER BE SATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO.

YES, SOME PEOPLE ARE HURTING RIGHT NOW. SOME BUSINESSES ARE HURTING. UNEMPLOYMENT IS UP. SO ARE GAS PRICES. SOME PEOPLE ARE BEING DRIVEN TO DO DESPERATE THINGS; LIKE THE WOMAN WE LEARNED ABOUT RECENTLY WHO KEPT HER DAUGHTER IN THE TRUNK OF HER CAR WHILE SHE WORKED TWO JOBS.

BUT, THE WORST THING WE CAN DO, IN UNCERTAIN TIMES LIKE THESE, IS DO NOTHING.

FRIENDS, IF WE ALL WORK TOGETHER WE CAN GET THROUGH TOUGH TIMES AND LAY A FOUNDATION FOR REAL GROWTH IN THE FUTURE. THAT IDEA OF WORKING TOGETHER -- WHETHER IT'S SIMPLY POOLING IDEAS OR TAKING HAMMER AND NAIL TO RAISE A BARN AS ONE COMMUNITY -- IS THE SPIRIT THAT MADE AMERICA AND NEW JERSEY GREAT. IT'S THE SPIRIT THAT BRINGS ALL OF YOU TOGETHER FOR A TRI-CLUB MEETING EVERY YEAR.

SO I WANT TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS ABOUT WHAT WE CAN DO. AND I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT IN TRENTON WE'RE NOT PARALYZED BY FEAR OF THE ECONOMY. RATHER, WE'RE TAKING THE STEPS NECESSARY TO PUT THE STATE GOVERNMENT BACK ON TRACK SO WE CAN KEEP THE FUTURE SECURE FOR ALL OF US, AND MOST OF ALL FOR OUR CHILDREN.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.