

Testimony to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee
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Department of State
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Secretary of State

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am delighted to be with you today to speak about the many exciting accomplishments of the Department of State and our vision of tomorrow.

I want to begin with thanks to the Legislature for its continued support and to Governor Corzine for his steadfast leadership and devotion to our mission during these very difficult budgetary times. I am pleased with our progress and I am proud of the positive and significant role played by the Department of State in improving the economy and building stronger communities.

Improving the education of our children, building a stronger economy, leveraging greater private investment, bolstering pride in our state and our capital city, promoting tourism and celebrating the diversity of our people—these are the core principles that bind the diverse agencies of the Department of State into a cohesive whole, one that tells the story of our people and makes the quality of life in New Jersey better. This small, diverse Department, collaborating both internally and with other departments and the private sector, can pack a wallop in making a difference in people's lives and the well-being of communities.

First and foremost, our initiatives focus on the education of our children, and it is very exciting and rewarding to see scores of yellow buses arriving at the War Memorial almost every week bringing thousands of students, many of whom have never attended programs there, for new programs designed to inspire and teach our state's children and expose them to the visual and performing arts. A recent program drew 3,000 Trenton High School students to the arts—again, many for the first time in their lives! As I mentioned last year, transportation for such field trips is a hurdle for many organizations, and, as promised, we provided buses for various groups through the Patriots

Theatre Foundation. Our magnificent War Memorial is celebrating its 75th anniversary as a major performing arts venue, advanced in a very big way with our 'Trenton on the Move' series, setting record attendance figures for events starring legendary performers. We are planning a summer concert series to further promote our capital city....more news on that to follow soon.

Thousands upon thousands come to our State Museum to learn the culture and history of our great state, and to visit our planetarium, the largest between Philadelphia and New York, and to participate in our booked-to-capacity Super Science Weekend and Kaleidoscope Kids Summer Camp Programs. Many of the children who will attend these programs will do so via stipends funded by corporate sponsors statewide. It should also be noted that more than 4 million New Jersey children attend events sponsored by arts groups funded by the Council on the Arts.

To help keep children safe from violence and learn the ideals embraced by the great Reverend King, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission awarded 32 grants to schools and organizations. This month, the Commission hosted a leadership conference at Stockton State College for 500 students, beginning an on-going series of pre-college conferences to help students plan their futures. It also awards scholarships on an ongoing basis to help students continue their education. The Commission will sponsor a program this fall addressing the widening achievement gap among minority students.

Having a positive impact on youth and education in New Jersey is a goal that runs through every Division in our Department. The Arts Council, with the Department of Education and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Music for All Foundation and Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey, completed an exhaustive survey of the status of arts education in every K-12 public school in our state, which achieved a 98.4% return rate. We presented preliminary findings to the state board of education and will soon publish a complete report. While New Jersey is ahead of the curve in some respects in meeting the arts core content standards mandated of all schools, we still have a long way to go. More than 77,000 students currently receive no arts education. Yet we know that an arts education has a profound impact on academic achievement, including higher test scores, graduation rates and SAT scores, and it imparts the life skills most valuable in the modern workplace:

creativity, innovation, communication, self-confidence, discipline and teamwork. We can and must continue to expand the arts for all of our children, to insure their academic success.

We also know that the arts can change the lives of youth at risk. Through its new arts education after school program task force, the Arts Council supported three pilot programs and will co-sponsor a statewide seminar this fall on the ways arts can play a greater role in sustaining our children during those critical hours between 3 and 6 p.m., giving them powerful alternatives to risky behaviors.

Many of the grants from the Office of Faith Based Initiatives target that same goal, including alternatives to gangs and violence prevention. Even with severely reduced funding, the Office of Faith Based Initiatives provided support in FY 07 to 30 faith and community based organizations providing after school programs critical for at-risk youth, substance abuse recovery support, and juvenile offender re-entry programs. The goal of these programs is to address the tremendous void created by many difficult societal problems. In addition, our Office of Faith Based Initiatives has been asked to provide technical assistance to states seeking to create similar agencies.

Continuing to refine the curriculum for teaching our children about New Jersey's great past and its relevance to their lives, the Historical Commission is developing a new website called New Jersey History Kids. The Commission recently cosponsored a conference on the teaching of history in the classroom, bringing together 250 educators and staff of the state's historic sites and museums. And, our agency, the Amistad Commission, has completed a draft of the first-ever curriculum devoted to teaching all children about African American history and will continue to work to infuse it into the state's history curriculum.

The Governor's Office of Volunteerism and the state Commission on National Service, i.e. AmeriCorps, has focused on coordinating information and strategies to increase volunteers. They are collaborating on a conference with the state Commission on Higher Education, and we have launched a website [njvolunteerism.com], providing information about available volunteer opportunities statewide. The response to this website has been

overwhelming! We believe this website will generate more volunteers than ever before in New Jersey.

The financial value of volunteerism to educational institutions, hospitals, community and recreational facilities, cultural organizations and other non-profits is enormous. In 2006, New Jersey residents contributed more than 224 million hours of volunteer service, representing more than \$4 billion in service to our state at an estimated hourly value of \$18. Our Volunteer Office also just completed the first-ever survey of volunteerism needs to identify how best to mobilize and direct the tremendous power of private citizens eager to help in their communities. We are also partnering with the business community to increase the number of volunteers from major corporations in New Jersey through a Business Volunteer Council.

The organizations and programs in which state funds are invested have a huge economic impact and benefit. In short, we are fulfilling the Governor's mandate of "doing more"—and, may I say, so much more—"with less."

All around the state we see examples of the power of the arts to transform communities, attract business and people, increase property values, improve storefront occupancy rates and restore confidence and pride. The arts are a \$1.5 billion industry supporting 18,000 businesses and 100,000 jobs.

Annually the arts community presents nearly 35,000 public programs attended by over 18 million people who spend over \$400 million in local economies. Council on the Arts grants are overmatched nearly 10:1, largely with private money. In fact, the \$36 million in taxes that the arts community returns to the state exceeds the state's investment. For every 200,000 patrons of the arts, the impact on the local communities is \$247 million. For every one dollar spent at a cultural venue, four dollars is returned to the economy. The arts, history and culture are big business!

Trenton should be a showplace that inspires pride and welcomes all and the Department of State is dedicated to achieving that. A major attraction in downtown Trenton is the New Jersey State Museum, and one of the most exciting initiatives of my Department is the renovation of this incredible institution, which is part of the cultural complex adjacent to the State House. The Museum, a 75,000 square foot structure built in 1963, is currently near

completion of a \$15 million renovation. The Museum re-opening will be highlighted by a year-long exhibit celebrating the cultural diversity of our state, for which we received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Our collection of over 2 million stunning pieces of natural history and fine art requires new exhibit spaces costing \$13 million for reinstallation. Private fundraising is underway to reopen the Museum and Planetarium, including a new café, Museum shop, expanded reception areas, exhibit spaces, galleries and classrooms. The Museum auditorium, recently renovated, draws thousands of patrons annually to wonderful public programs. One such program is an enhanced collaboration with the Newark Museum on the Newark Black Film Festival in Trenton. We expect the Museum to be an incredible tourist attraction and an even more vital part of the community.

In a similar vein, we re-instituted a statewide cultural festival, held last year here in Trenton in collaboration with arts, cultural and history organizations from around the state and with major corporate support. This festival will be an annual event celebrating the richness of our cultural diversity. The State of New Jersey has 147 ethnic groups and is the most ethnically diverse state in the nation.

Looking to the future of this great city as a regional and national tourism destination, we were pleased to collaborate with the Department of Environmental Protection in a design competition to create a major new urban park, right here along the Delaware River, devoted to the themes of our rich history and culture.

Tourism is our second largest industry. We have learned that tourists who come for our cultural and heritage attractions spend more, stay longer and come back more frequently, so our strategy should be to attract more and capitalize on our cultural and historical riches. Recently we opened discussions with Newark International Airport to boost the visibility of our cultural opportunities. And next week, the New Jersey Heritage Tourism Task Force, on which our Department is represented, will convene for the first time.

Many of the treasures of New Jersey, including its 1,100 cultural venues, theatres, historical sites, performing arts centers and museums remain well-

kept secrets. If the plan of reorganization is approved, and Travel and Tourism is transferred to State, the ability to jointly market cultural and heritage tourism will create an unprecedented opportunity to showcase the totality of the New Jersey tourism experience.

We are also playing a role in streamlining government and preserving New Jersey's heritage, through DARM's (the Division of Archives and Records' Management) Public Records Archives Infrastructure Support (or PARIS) Grants program, providing \$25 million annually in building and improving county and municipal records management systems. As with arts and history grants, PARIS grants leverage local investment. We estimate as much as \$100 million in direct savings, cost-efficiencies and avoided costs to state, county and municipal governments. Over \$20 million was collectively saved by the eleven counties that share the PARIS-funded New Jersey Land Records E-Filing Portal and expandable electronic recording system.

As I close, let me assure you that you that we have heard and responded to the concerns you and the Governor have expressed throughout these difficult times. We are leaner than ever, stretching our resources, raising greater private sector investment and expanding partnerships. We are working more efficiently than ever and upholding the very highest standards of public accountability. Our grant distribution process is a rigorous, highly structured and well-developed process that ensures that funds are awarded fairly to arts and history organizations, both large and small, located throughout Northern, Central and Southern parts of the State.

Finally, let me share a vision of what lies ahead through your investment in our work and what we require most to be our best. After a massive public planning process, the Arts Plan New Jersey document, providing a new blueprint for a better New Jersey through the arts, is now under final review. It calls for our best efforts to stabilize and expand the capacity of cultural organizations and underscores the vital importance of funding from the dedicated revenue source and the value of the New Jersey Cultural Trust, which this year passed the \$2 million mark in funds distributed from its earnings. When fully funded, this model public/private partnership, now with 272 qualified organizations, will have its fullest impact in our communities and endure for generations to come.

We will continue efforts to improve access to our cultural resources in July when the Arts Council will announce the first grants of a new program to broaden, deepen and diversify cultural participation. We will continue our cultural festivals and spotlight our cultural diversity, especially through the reopening of the State Museum.

Last, but not least, we will continue to improve our communications both about the opportunities we present and the public value we help create. Our new Departmental website offers greater access to programs and services, connecting more and more people to community resources.

On June 21st, I will be hosting a morning conference here in Trenton devoted to the enormous economic benefits of investing in arts, history and culture and I invite all of you to come.

Thank you for your support and your time today. I am happy to answer any questions you have at this time.