

**To: Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald, Chairman of the Assembly  
Budget Committee on May 17, 2010**

**Testimony Prepared By: Lisa Clarke Education Reform Chairman, New  
Jersey Parent Teacher Association (NJPTA), 900 Berkeley Avenue,  
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**I am here to speak on behalf of NJPTA's 172,000 members regarding  
Governor Christie's proposed budget that would drastically reduce  
state aid to school districts used to support local education. At  
NJPTA's 2009 Convention, delegates approved the NJPTA School  
Funding Resolution which addresses our position on the proposed  
budget and it reads as follows:**

**Public Education is the most important mechanism for attaining an  
educated citizenry, NJPTA continues to advocate for full funding of  
New Jersey public schools. The New Jersey Legislature shall find a  
method to fund public schools that is equitable and which attains 80%  
state funding. NJPTA, its County Councils and local PTAs' should  
advocate for adequate funding for public education. NJPTA will  
continue to support all efforts and would urge Governor Christie and  
the New Jersey legislature to adequately and fully fund New Jersey's  
public schools through State Revenues.**

**Advocating for children continues to be the core of what we do as an  
association, as such we urged our local PTA's and members to become  
informed locally by contacting their respective superintendents,**

**Boards of Education and State Legislators regarding the issues that affect their district.**

**NJPTA also realizes that the Governor's budget as presented will undergo a thorough vetting from both chambers of the New Jersey Legislature, as such we urged restraint in drawing any final conclusions and suggested that our members become a part of the deliberative process.**

**Although NJPTA is well aware of New Jersey's present economic crisis, I would like to share with you our members concerns as to the impact the Governor's Budget will have on New Jersey's children and families.**

- Reduction of state aid to schools would have a double barreled effect on families whose lives have already been disrupted by the poor national economy in the form of higher local taxes.**
- In an effort to keep the core education program intact, the local school districts are cutting programs that enrich the education experience which in some cases give children the incentive to stay in school.**
- Parents are concerned that budget cuts will result in the reduction of teachers which will increase class size.**
- Districts may be forced to cut support services and programs. These program tutor students that have fallen behind or need extra help to catch up with their grade levels.**

- Reduction in funding for programs such as preschool, at risk children, and summer education is a step backward in improving education outcomes for children.
- The elimination of programs like New Jersey After 3 put our children in jeopardy. New Jersey After 3 provides a vehicle to keep children safe and away from negative forces on the street until parents return from work.
- We are concerned about the families who may have to pay school fees for extracurricular activities and sports and find the fees are beyond their financial means.
- Children need healthy parents. How will a family be affected if New Jersey Cares freezes adult enrollment?
- The elimination of New Jersey Stars Program will result in high achieving students leaving New Jersey for higher education which contributes to the state's brain drain, as they do not return to New Jersey after graduation.

We cannot afford to lose a generation of children because of economic down turns. We need to explore other means of bringing New Jersey's Budget into balance that does not hurt children today and negatively affect their future. Remember Children Are The Foundation Of Our Future.