

# THE DAILY TARGUM

SERVING THE RUTGERS COMMUNITY SINCE 1869

[Login](#) | [Subscribe](#)

## Corzine highlights NJ achievements during farewell speech

By Ariel Nagi

Associate News Editor

Published: Monday, January 18, 2010

Updated: Monday, January 18, 2010

As outgoing Gov. Jon S. Corzine prepares to hand his seat over to Gov. Chris Christie, he closed his term noting both positive and negative aspects of his time spent in office, during his last annual State of the State address on Jan. 12 at the Trenton Statehouse.

Although Corzine did not get re-elected for a second term, he is not leaving office in complete regret.

"I had hoped today would mark the midpoint, rather than the endpoint of my tenure as governor," Corzine said. "Those years have been fulfilling beyond my wildest imagination. Even though this is a bittersweet moment, I am filled with pride and fulfillment."

He highlighted the accomplishments of his administration, from revitalizing schools in urban communities such as Newark, providing health care for all qualified children in the state and pioneering new criminal justice strategies.

But Corzine said it was impossible to shy away from some of the larger issues affecting New Jersey.

"Now as much good as there is to focus on, I know, and we all know, that the state of our state — like the state of our nation and the state of just about every country — is being tested by the pain of the Great Recession," he said.

One of the biggest issues is the nation's unemployment rate, which stands at 10 percent, Corzine said. Due to these issues, Corzine's administration had to make choices it never would have made in better times, he said.

"For example, really what kind of politician would cut property tax rebates in their re-election year?" Corzine said.

In addition to cutting property tax rebates, this year's revised budget is millions of dollars less than the budget approved for 2005, while after two years of making budget cuts, the state's spending is approximately \$6 billion less than its peak, Corzine said.

But no State of the State address can go without focusing on one of the most crippling problems in New Jersey that has been an issue for half a century: property taxes, he said.

"Let's call it like it is: everyone's property taxes are too damn high," Corzine said.

He said Trenton can only go so far when it comes to property taxes, and the real solution would be constitutional change, because the outmoded system is not tackling the problem efficiently.

Eagleton Institute of Politics Associate Director John Weingart said in addition to high taxes, New Jersey has been in turmoil and in debt for decades not only because of the national economy, but because of the many public services it provides for its residents.

"New Jersey has a high level of government service, and that costs money," Weingart said.

In addition to public government services, New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the country, which also contributes to the cost of living and the level of debt, he said.

Corzine said while he has taken successful measures to accomplish things like creating more jobs and making the state more environmentally friendly by implementing more solar panels than any other state except for California, he admits that not all of his attempts were successful.

"Critics will say that we didn't finish the job. To the critics, I make a confession: You're right," he said.

Rutgers College Senior Benjamin DeMarzo said Corzine's speech was very humble, and he was able to admit all of his flaws as well as his accomplishments as governor.

"Now it's time for Chris Christie to take over and put the state in the right direction," DeMarzo said.

Despite his reluctant farewell, Corzine congratulated Gov. Chris Christie, who will be swearing into office today.

"Governor Christie's success will mean the people of New Jersey are in a better place, and that is what we all want," Corzine said. "Our new governor will need your help, cooperation and good will to make the necessary choices. And let me ask the new administration and legislature to come together to do what's right, not for their party, but for our whole state."



**Recommended:** Articles that may interest you

Kudos Roddick

Value of U.S. dollar decreasing

Dazed and Confused

Exhibit honors reformers

Powered by  and  NETWORKS