

**Remarks of Attorney General Peter C. Harvey
Attorney General's Budget Testimony
Senate Budget & Appropriations Committee
May 9, 2005
Committee Room 4,
New Jersey Statehouse
Trenton, N.J.**

**Thank you Chairman Bryant, Vice-Chairman James,
and members of the Senate Budget and Appropriations
Committee.**

**Once again, it is my pleasure to appear before the
Committee, to highlight some of the accomplishments and
key initiatives of the Attorney General's Office since we last
spoke formally, and to discuss our priorities for Fiscal Year
2006.**

**As you are aware, I have served as New Jersey's
Attorney General for nearly two years now. Prior to that, I
served as Acting Attorney General, First Assistant Attorney
General, and Director of the Division of Criminal Justice.**

**Serving in these positions has greatly deepened my
appreciation for the size, scope, and significance of our
Department's mission.**

We are an agency with a complex, broad-based, and ever-evolving public protection mandate.

We also understand that our financial resources are not unlimited.

The Attorney General's Office, formally known as the Department of Law and Public Safety, is one of the largest in State government, and is the largest Attorney General's Office in the nation. It also has the broadest mission and more responsibilities than any other Attorney General's Office in the country. We have approximately 9,400 employees.

We act as legal counsel to every department of State government, and as New Jersey's principal law enforcement agency.

In other words, the Department serves not only as New Jersey's lead attorney, but as its chief protector -- the agency most directly responsible for the physical safety of all who live, work, travel and vacation here.

To be entrusted with this dual responsibility is both a unique privilege and an enormous challenge.

Annually, our Department represents the State in thousands of litigation matters involving -- but not limited to -- such vital concerns as:

- **the well-being of children**
- **protection of the civil rights of people seeking better housing, fair employment, and those who have disabilities**
- **ensuring that consumers get what they pay for**
- **the protection of the quality of our air, water and land**

At the same time, the Department has a duty -- and a commitment -- to protect lives and property.

We are responsible for getting gangs, guns and drugs off the streets.

We are responsible for the safety of, literally, millions of motorists who travel New Jersey highways each day.

We are responsible for protecting New Jerseyans from investment fraud and identity theft, and for protecting children from sexual predators.

But our duties do not end there.

We are responsible for ensuring that the voting process is as inclusive, accessible and user-friendly as possible, and that elections are carried out with integrity.

We are responsible for ensuring that those placed in positions of public trust -- either by election or appointment -- do not betray that trust by misusing public funds, or by otherwise acting unlawfully.

We are responsible for protecting all individuals -- particularly women -- from domestic violence, sexual assault and the feeling of "re-victimization" some describe when, in the aftermath of an attack, they encounter insensitive aspects of the criminal justice process.

Our Department also is responsible for overseeing matters pertaining to juvenile justice, including juvenile detention and parole.

And we are responsible for ensuring the integrity of the alcoholic beverage, horse racing, and casino gaming industries.

Generally speaking, the daily parameters and requirements of our mission are familiar to us -- or they can be predicted with a high degree of reliability.

But contingencies do arise.

And when they do, we sometimes find ourselves facing uncommon public safety problems.

It is our job, then, to remain agile enough as an agency to deal with the "routine" public safety issues that confront us while responding effectively to new challenges as they emerge.

We are mindful that in these difficult economic times, we must do our work with less resources.

On our own, we have developed efficiencies that have both saved money for the State and streamlined our operations.

For example, we have:

- **reorganized the Division of Law into modern practice groups, eliminating certain directorships and other redundancies in the process.**
- **saved the State money via litigation. Specifically, as a result of our Division of Law's aggressive litigation stance on behalf of the Department of Corrections, the DOC's total "pay-out" to settle civil lawsuits in 2004 was reduced by about \$1.4 million compared to the previous year. At the same time, the Division of Law has been vigorously litigating 13 separate suits it filed on behalf of the State to protect New Jersey's Pension Fund investments against allegedly questionable corporate conduct. Among the defendant corporations named in the suits are Sears Roebuck, Motorola and Tyco. One corporate defendant, Gemstar-TV Guide International, Inc., has already settled and agreed to pay the State \$5 million.**
- **Consolidated our Division of Criminal Justice and State Police Computer Crimes units at the newly opened Regional Computer Forensic Laboratory in Hamilton.**

- **Consolidated our State Police and Division of Criminal Justice Corruption Units.**
- **Established a Collections Unit in the Division of Law.**

A: Anti-Terrorism/Homeland Security Responsibilities

Homeland Security is a new task for our Department. I am certain many of you recall that, from August through November of last year, the region encompassing Newark, Jersey City and six surrounding North Jersey counties was placed on Orange Alert after it was learned that al Qaeda operatives had been conducting surveillance in Newark.

Threat Level Orange denotes a “high risk” of terrorist attack, as determined by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

It requires that we mobilize preparedness efforts that are both complex and labor-intensive -- including activation of the State Police Emergency Operations Centers, and assigning added security around critical facilities and infrastructure.

In our quest to ensure that New Jersey is as prepared as possible for a terrorist attack or other disaster, we have worked in collaboration with Acting Governor Codey's Office on a variety of vital homeland security measures.

One example: through the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force, which I chair as Attorney General, our Department led the planning effort for an ambitious homeland security exercise known as TOPOFF 3.

Part of a cycle of preparedness seminars, planning events and exercises required by Congress, TOPOFF 3 was designed to test our State's capacity to deal with a terrorist attack involving weapons of mass destruction.

TOPOFF 3 culminated last month with a week-long exercise involving New Jersey, Connecticut, the federal government, the United Kingdom and Canada.

In New Jersey, TOPOFF 3 involved the staging of a five-day, full-scale exercise in which the ability of various systems designed to address an actual "bioterror" event were tested under circumstances simulating such an attack in Union and Middlesex counties.

Our office, including the State Police, Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force and Office of Counter-Terrorism played key roles in the exercise, as did other departments of State government.

As TOPOFF 3 unfolded, we discovered that, in spite of our extensive planning and preparations, we still had a great deal to learn.

Of course, learning where our weaknesses lay was one of the principal goals of TOPOFF 3 from day one.

At the same time, TOPOFF 3 demonstrated that we have forged excellent working partnerships with key agencies and officials at the local and county levels, and in the private sector, and that we continue to lead a strong homeland security planning effort.

As many of you are aware, we are working closely right now with Acting Governor Codey on an unprecedented initiative to protect New Jersey's children by strengthening security at schools throughout the State.

Specifically, our Department has been central to the creation of a comprehensive check list of security measures every school should have in place.

In addition, we are providing training to help local law enforcement officers conduct security audits of school facilities and procedures.

These audits will provide schools with the information they need to identify vulnerabilities, and to set priorities in shoring up school facilities, as well as strengthening related planning and procedures.

We must fortify our schools with the best security measures available, because hard experience – for example, the Columbine tragedy -- tells us it is necessary.

More recently, we have been reminded by the tragic hostage incident in Russia, in which terrorists seized a school and ultimately killed more than 100 students.

We know by now that extremists and others bent on terror will destroy property and take human life indiscriminately.

We are committed to doing everything we can to make sure our schools are protected.

Across the board, our homeland security efforts are extensive, and if any members of the committee would like more detail about them either today or in the future, I will be glad to provide it.

As I mentioned earlier, taking the lead role in New Jersey's domestic security preparedness effort is our top priority.

However, we will never allow our homeland security mandate to blind us to our broader mission – that of improving the overall quality of life for New Jerseyans through an array of legal, public service and public safety efforts.

In 2004, our Department's 9,400 employees continued to pursue this mission on many different fronts.

B: Gangs, Guns and Drugs Initiative

For example, we pursued a vigorous, two-pronged strategy to return neighborhoods to law-abiding citizens -- and take them away from street gangs, drug dealers and thugs who trade in violence and intimidation.

Through aggressive, multi-agency enforcement efforts involving our Division of Criminal Justice and State Police Gang Unit, we have prosecuted 150 gang members and associates.

As a result of our efforts, many suspected members of a violent drug-dealing gang based at a public housing complex in Atlantic City were jailed, and significant quantities of marijuana, “crack” cocaine and firearms were seized.

In Irvington, the Essex County Anti-Crime Partnership spearheaded by the State Police and Division of Criminal Justice, conducted sweeps in the spring and fall of 2004. As part of these sweeps, we arrested a number of gang members and associates on new criminal charges, as well as outstanding warrants. We also painted over gang graffiti. In addition, significant quantities of illegal drugs and guns were seized.

In Camden, our Safer Cities initiative and Anti-Crime Partnership continue to achieve meaningful results – results that have made the streets safer for law abiding citizens, and provided a seed bed for optimism in city neighborhoods.

The Camden Anti-Crime effort is staffed by approximately 60 law enforcement officers, two-thirds of whom are members of the State Police.

This year to date, we have made 551 arrests in Camden, seized \$74,000 worth of drugs, towed 52 abandoned vehicles, and recovered 10 firearms.

Since the inception of our effort to make Camden safer three years ago, there have been more than 7,000 arrests, \$1.6 million worth of narcotics seized, nearly 2,500 abandoned vehicles towed, and 144 firearms recovered.

We have achieved similar successes in places like Newark, New Brunswick, Pleasantville, and Trenton, to name a few.

We have not only done drug enforcement, but also gang prevention.

These programs are already up and running and making a difference in the lives of young people.

PROJECT VISION is the newest of these initiatives.

PROJECT VISION is a partnership that combines the energy and resources of the Attorney General's Office, County Prosecutors throughout the State, and a variety of community stakeholders.

The program is designed to give thousands of youngsters a safe place to go after school, provide a range of positive, educational and fun activities to engage them, and expose them to mentors who can provide help while also serving as role models.

We launched PROJECT VISION at the Lincoln Avenue School in New Brunswick in December 2004.

Since that time, we have also implemented the program in Glassboro and Bridgeton, and plans are in the works to launch it in Asbury Park and Irvington in 2005 as well.

Another “safe haven” program is the Police Community Partnership Program.

In Perth Amboy, we have combined the after-school safe haven concept with an intensified police presence in a 20-block area that had been blighted and troubled by drug dealing, vandalism, loitering and other problems.

The result has been safer streets, increased community pride, and a relationship of trust between residents and police.

In fact, police officers often spend time working and playing with neighborhood young people at the community center that acts as a safe haven.

We have also taken our anti-gang and anti-violence efforts directly to middle schools and high schools. We have created an effective public awareness video on gangs, and have distributed the video to parents, educators, community groups, law enforcement personnel and other stakeholders.

This video, “Gangs, Guns and Drugs,” contains compelling interviews, visceral photographs and, frankly, may be disturbing to some.

But it paints an authentic portrait of both the gang problem in New Jersey, and the doomed trajectory of lives given over to gang involvement.

It is an important awareness tool – recommended viewing for parents, teenagers and anyone else interested in exploring the issue.

The entire video, which has been incorporated into law enforcement training programs in several other states, can be viewed at www.NJgangfree.org .

For anyone who may be interested, I invite you to read more about our gang prevention programs in *New Jersey League of Municipalities Magazine*, which is featuring our efforts in its latest issue.

C: Voter Education and Election System Improvement

Another of our responsibilities is overseeing the voting process statewide through the Division of Elections.

We invested a great deal of time and energy in 2004 in a voter education effort that we call “Be Powerful, Be Heard.”

The goal is to get more New Jerseyans – and particularly young people of voting age – registered to vote, and actually voting.

As part of the effort, we recorded and aired a series of pro-voting Public Service Announcements for television and radio featuring celebrity volunteers, virtually all of whom have some direct connection to New Jersey.

The roster of celebrities who gave of their time was diverse, and included Hollywood film stars Michael Douglas and William Baldwin, television sitcom actor Jason Alexander, Def Jam records founder Russell Simmons, recording artist and actress Queen Latifah, NBA basketball standout Kenny Anderson, and urban contemporary radio personality Angie Martinez, to name just a few.

These celebrity Public Service Announcements were recorded in Spanish and English and aired on radio and television.

In addition, we sponsored a number of major events to promote voter-registration throughout the year, highlighted by the first-ever Hip-Hop Summit held in September 2004 at the Trenton War Memorial.

The event, coordinated with music impresario Russell Simmons, brought together top recording artists and representatives of government, as well as voting age and soon-to-be-voting-age young people from across New Jersey.

The Summit featured a candid panel discussion, and a question-and-answer segment focused on democracy, governance and the importance of every individual's voting voice.

Approximately 1,800 registered voters from area high schools and colleges attended the event, with thousands of high school and college students watching via the Internet and participating in the question and answer session.

As a result of the Hip-Hop Summit alone, an estimated 3,000 new voters were registered in time for the 2004 general election.

Overall in 2004, our Division of Elections oversaw the registration of 463,000 new voters statewide leading up to the Presidential Election in November.

Those new registrations helped push the total number of registered voters in New Jersey to more than 5 million, and the 73 percent turnout on Election Day was the largest statewide voter turnout in 12 years.

We can always do more – and our hard work aimed at getting more people involved in democracy continues as I speak.

But the outpouring of new voter registrations, and the significant voter turnout on Election Day, suggests to me that our “Be Powerful, Be Heard” campaign made a real difference in getting those who are eligible more involved in the electoral process.

D: Helping Survivors of Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

While empowering voters is important, we have not overlooked our responsibility to empower crime victims to survive tragic circumstances.

One area of focus for our office is survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. These victims, primarily women, find themselves confronting a host of difficult – often overwhelming – legal, medical and psychological needs.

In short, they need help.

New Jersey receives nearly 80,000 reports of domestic violence each year. Approximately 77 percent of the victims are women. In almost 44 percent of the cases, children witness or are also victims of domestic violence.

We have made significant system changes in the area of sexual assault. Our Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART) initiative is the first of its kind in the nation, and it offers services statewide that no other state provides on a statewide basis.

Under this initiative, special Sexual Assault Response Teams are now stationed in all 21 New Jersey counties.

The teams are located within the 21 respective County Prosecutors' Offices, and are made up of rape care advocates, specially-trained law enforcement officers, and registered professional nurses who serve as Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE).

The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners work cooperatively with rape care advocates and police personnel to ensure proper collection of necessary evidence, and make certain all of the victim's needs, concerns and questions are addressed.

With SART/SANE, the victims of sexual assault no longer must wait hours for care in busy, often overcrowded, hospital emergency rooms.

Instead, they are provided quick, thorough and compassionate care in well-equipped, specialized facilities.

E: Protection of the Environment

At the Department of Law and Public Safety, we are also committed to environmental protection as one of New Jersey's chief law enforcement and quality of life issues.

In 2004, the Environmental Crimes Bureau within the Division of Criminal Justice obtained a total of 17 criminal indictments, guilty pleas and/or accusations related to unlawful pollution.

The ECB also collected more than \$1 million in fines and restitution during the past two years.

For the two-year period spanning 2003 and 2004, the ECB charged more than 50 individuals and corporations with polluting New Jersey's water, abandoning hazardous waste in urban neighborhoods, and other environmental offenses.

One individual convicted of repeatedly dumping solid waste and debris in Trenton was sentenced to five years in prison.

Polluters who broke the law in Camden, Newark, Jersey City, Millville, Paterson, and Upper Saddle River, to name a handful of locations where we prosecuted violators, also faced jail time.

Also in 2004, our Department helped draft legislation – now enacted – that significantly toughened criminal penalties for illegal dumpers.

On the litigation front, our Division of Law worked during the past two years with the Department of Environmental Protection to secure more than \$29 million in Natural Resource Damage (NRD) compensation from polluters.

That figure represents more than was obtained by the State during the entire previous decade.

We have also devoted considerable legal resources to suing the operators of coal-fired power plants in the South and Midwest – plants which produce roughly one-third of the air pollution in New Jersey.

And we have continued, in collaboration with Attorneys General in other states, to challenge the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over rule changes that appear driven by a desire to ensure corporate profits – not environmental safety and public health.

We claimed an important, though not final, victory in 2003 with our successful effort to “stay” enactment of a new EPA rule that would enable power plants undergoing modifications to avoid making required pollution control upgrades at the same time.

Here in 2005, the court-ordered “stay” blocking implementation of that EPA rule remains in effect.

In addition to these results, our Department has:

- **Fought public corruption -- In the past three years, our Special Prosecutions Bureau – consisting of State Police detectives and both Division of Criminal Justice investigators and lawyers -- has set a new standard of achievement by charging or convicting a total of 89 defendants for public-corruption related offenses, including misuse of funds and theft. This total does not include and additional 23 Motor Vehicle Commission employees who have been charged or convicted for offenses relating to the fraudulent sale of driver license documents. Adding these 23 to the aforementioned 89 brings the total to 112 public officials. Among those found guilty of betraying the public trust were a sitting member of the State Assembly, a Mayor, and the Executive Director of a bi-state agency. Among those indicted in 2004 were the former chief-of-staff of the New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission, and several local and county-level law enforcement officers.**
- **Led the Investigation of Serial Killer Charles Cullen -- Through our efforts, New Jersey took a lead role in the multi-state investigation and negotiations that resulted in a global plea agreement with accused mass murderer Charles Cullen. A male nurse, Mr. Cullen has pleaded guilty to killing 24 hospital patients, 17 in New Jersey – 13 in Somerset County, three in Warren and one in Essex. By virtue of his plea agreement, Mr. Cullen avoided the death penalty, but now faces 175 years in prison. Thus, he will spend the rest of his life in prison.**

He has also agreed to provide full disclosure regarding murders and attempted murders he may have committed while employed as a student nurse or licensed nurse in New Jersey. In addition, he has agreed to provide information that will assist health care facilities in improving security and operating procedures – particularly where access to patients and medication are concerned.

- **Achieved Important Gains for the Deaf and Blind –
In 2004, my office and the Division on Civil Rights reached settlement agreements concerning access for the deaf and blind with four of the largest multiplex theater chain operators in New Jersey. As a result, state-of-the-art captioning equipment for the deaf is now installed in 34 “first run” theaters across New Jersey. Three theater chain operators with whom we settled also agreed to install DVS technology to enhance the first-run movie experience for those who are blind or suffer some degree of vision loss. We are currently in litigation over these same issues with Regal Cinemas, another major multiplex theater operator in New Jersey.**
- **Combated Housing Discrimination – In 2004, the Division on Civil Rights settled “Section 8” housing discrimination cases filed against four apartment owners and real estate agencies. The complaints were the first filed under a new State law that prohibits housing discrimination by landlords on the basis of a tenant's source of lawful income, or rental subsidy.**

As a result of the four settlements, the State was paid a total of \$80,000 that can be used to further the cause of civil rights. Just as importantly, the settlements required each Respondent to sponsor training on the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination for employees, and to prominently display information on the use of federal Section 8 rental assistance vouchers.

- **Handled School-Construction-Related Screenings -- Consistent with its mission, our Office of Government Integrity has conducted integrity screening reviews on thousands of contractors seeking work under the State's \$8.6 billion Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act – the largest single public works program in New Jersey history. Through OGI's vigilance, 134 contractors have been denied the opportunity to work on School Construction Corporation projects in the past three years. In one case, OGI action resulted in the disqualification – and ultimate dissolution -- of a construction firm that had admitted falsifying invoices to improve cash flow, and had committed potentially-life-threatening job failures related to a middle school gymnasium project in Warren County.**
- **Prosecuted Criminal Activity in School Construction -- Again, through the work of OGI, we obtained an indictment charging a school construction contractor with embezzling nearly \$1 million in public funds.**

Manny Bana, the former owner of Icon Construction Corp. of Somerville, is accused of several second-degree crimes related to his alleged failure to pay subcontractors hired to help with \$7 million worth of publicly-financed renovation work at nine schools in Edison, Middlesex County. One of the subcontractors ultimately filed for bankruptcy. Mr. Bana is free on bail while awaiting trial.

- **Diversified & Strengthened State Police -- Through a variety of efforts, the Division of State Police continues its evolution into one of the nation's finest and most diverse statewide law enforcement agencies. We have witnessed an increase in the number of women and minorities among command staff – those at the rank of Captain or above – by 30 percent. In addition, the State Police has undertaken a new recruitment campaign involving the use of female and minority command staff as recruiters, as well as public service announcements that air through media outlets with a multi-cultural audience. MAPPS – the State Police Management Awareness Personnel Performance System – is now fully operational, allowing for unprecedented levels of accountability by troopers and supervisors. Meanwhile, Independent Monitoring Reports required by a federal Consent Decree continue to praise the “rapid, meaningful and focused” improvements taking place within State Police.**
- **Protected Consumers – Through our Division of Consumer Affairs, we took a number of important actions on behalf of New Jerseyans in 2004.**

We filed suit against Blockbuster, Inc., alleging that its failure to fully disclose terms of the “No More Late Fees” policy it had introduced with great fanfare was, in fact, a violation of state law and advertising regulations. We also filed suit against Nissan North America, Inc., alleging that it knew headlights on 2002 and 2003 Nissan Maxima models were being targeted by thieves, but failed to notify consumers about the availability of devices to prevent the thefts.

The Division of Consumer Affairs also developed a “Physician Profile” Web site in 2004 containing valuable background information about physicians and podiatrists licensed in New Jersey.

- **Combated Underage Drinking – The Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, through a variety of programs, including Cops in Shops, sought in 2004 to discourage underage drinking, as well as the providing of alcohol to those under 21 by store patrons of legal age, and by restaurant servers. To date, police in 200 New Jersey towns have been trained to run Cops in Shops programs. During the Summer of 2004, Cops in Shops resulted in the arrest of 440 people. The ABC has also been conducting an intensive undercover effort in bars, restaurants and nightclubs located in or near college communities. In the first six months of the effort, 90 individuals were arrested for underage drinking.**

- **Prosecuted Securities Fraud** – Through our Bureau of Securities, we have achieved many successes in protecting investors against fraud. Among other cases, we reached settlement with Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner and Smith Inc. in March of this year. Under terms of the settlement, Merrill Lynch agreed to pay \$10 million and implement major corporate governance reforms to resolve charges it had failed to supervise certain financial advisers who handled mutual funds in violation of company policies.

In April 2004, the Bureau obtained a court order freezing the assets of Cobalt Investors Services Inc. of Manasquan, as well as its owner, Richard Thomas Geck of Toms River, after the filing of a State complaint alleging that Geck had swindled at least seven elderly women out of more than \$360,000 in retirement savings. We have also prosecuted Mr. Geck criminally through our Division of Criminal Justice. He pleaded guilty to charges of theft by deception and, in return, was sentenced to five years probation. He was also ordered by the court to pay \$340,000 in restitution.

- **Continued to Battle Insurance Fraud** – In 2004, our Office of Insurance Fraud Prosecutor continued to post impressive results – the kind of results that prompted the independent Coalition Against Insurance Fraud of Washington, D.C., to rank New Jersey's OIFP as the top insurance fraud prosecuting office in the nation in 2003. In 2004, the OIFP obtained 177 insurance fraud convictions, obtained sentences of jail or state prison for fraud defendants totaling 206 years, and obtained court

orders for more than \$16 million in defendant restitution payments – more than double the amount of restitution payments required of fraud defendants the prior year.

Today I want to thank you, Chairman Bryant and Vice-Chairman James, as well as members of this committee, for your continued support in working on issues of importance to the Attorney General’s Office and the Department of Law and Public Safety.

I want to thank you, too, for appropriating the funding that enables us to effectively do our jobs.

I recognize that it is the issue of funding – specifically the \$552 million requested on behalf of our Department by Acting Governor Codey this year – that I am here to discuss today.

But before I share with you some of the priorities we have for using that money in the coming year, I would like to take a minute to put our Department’s budget into context.

Less than half of the funding that supports our Department is appropriated from Direct State Services – and 58 percent of the Direct State Services money we receive goes into funding the New Jersey State Police.

Our next largest funding source -- dedicated funds and revenue-supported programs -- accounts for 29 percent of the Department budget.

Federal funds, which represent roughly 15 percent of our budget, are also becoming a major component, in part due to Homeland Security Grants.

Less than 4 percent of our funding comes from the Casino Control Fund, which supports gaming enforcement efforts in Atlantic City.

Another 2.5 percent is used for Grants-In-Aid and State Aid funding to support juvenile community programs and minor local grants.

As I acknowledged earlier in my remarks, our Department understands that resources are limited, and that having a vital public safety mission does not mean we have carte blanche to spend freely.

We understand that, like every agency of State government, we are obligated to try to accomplish more with less.

And we have done so at every opportunity, achieving a number of important efficiencies through consolidation, maximization of technology, and the use of better business practices.

The Attorney General's Office provides centralized, consolidated administrative support for many newer programs including: the Office of Government Integrity, the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Sentencing Commission, the Office of the Child Advocate, and Elections Management in the areas of accounting, purchasing, budgeting, personnel transactions and information technology assistance.

This consolidated administrative support prevents duplication, and keeps staffing levels moderate.

Federal grants in the pipeline for this budget year are increasing, and may exceed \$200 million, with Homeland Security and Help America Vote Act funds.

Our grants unit has become more efficient and effective -- without staff increases -- to help keep pace with the task of applying for, and meeting the guidelines of, these grants.

The Division of Alcohol Beverage Control has realized significant cost savings -- without compromising effectiveness -- by streamlining personnel assigned to regulatory duties, as well as investigative staff.

The Juvenile Justice Commission has consolidated medical services in an effort to improve the quality of care for juveniles.

During the past year the Division of State Police has gone through a reorganization that centered on the development of the new Homeland Security Branch.

The Branch, comprised of a Special Operations Section and an Emergency Management Section, has pooled critical resources. This pooling of resources has, in turn, served to streamline Division operations.

This streamlining has been done to promote faster response times, and create a more effective and efficient service to the people of New Jersey.

A DNA database from convicted criminals has been developed and maintained so prosecutors can match prior offenders when solving new crimes.

Near the DNA lab is the State's relatively new computer forensic lab in Hamilton, which analyzes digital evidence and is training hundreds of law enforcement personnel in this emerging field.

Because of our new Hamilton Complex and High Tech Center we are delivering better, more efficient services to New Jerseyans.

We are able to operate dispatch services with both the Departments of Transportation and Environmental Protection alongside our State Police telecommunicators.

Our departmental budget request for 2006 involves either “flat” funding or fewer dollars overall for most divisions, yet there will be no compromise in the caliber of work we do, no loss of essential services, and no drop-off in commitment.

Regarding priorities, our 2006 budget request reflects priorities that, I think you will agree, have merit. I’m referring to such priorities as:

- Maintaining the sophisticated information technology systems that help us manage personnel, share vital intelligence, and store and analyze data more reliably.**
- Protecting the public, as well as our State Police troopers, by acquiring 200 new patrol vehicles to replace outdated, high-mileage and potentially dangerous vehicles.**

Incidentally, I would be remiss if I did not mention here my concern over the need to update our existing fleet of State Police Medevac helicopters.

The Medevac helicopters are a crucial, life-saving aspect of the emergency response services we provide.

But the newest of these aircraft is 11 years old, and the oldest is 19 years old.

Among the four of them, the average age is 15 years. Of course, we are scrupulous about inspecting and maintaining these important vehicles.

But the general consensus among aviation experts is that helicopters of this type should be replaced every 10 years.

In order to ensure that each unit in our Medevac fleet is as safe and reliable as possible, I urge that we work together in the near future to identify funding mechanisms that will enable us to replace one or more of these helicopters.

Another priority in the coming year – one that we anticipate having the funding to accomplish -- is the formation of two new State Police graduating classes.

This, too, is a vital need in light of the Division's continuing duty to not only patrol New Jersey's roadways and waterways, but to play a key role in responding to homeland-security-related developments.

We are also investing in the future by providing young people in the care of our Juvenile Justice Commission with improved mental health services, and improved general health care.

The Juvenile Justice Commission is now providing in-house medical care to approximately 650 young people in secure facilities.

The JJC has also arranged, by contract, for the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey to provide juveniles in JJC care with mental health services.

As I alluded to earlier, these changes are part of an ongoing effort to streamline and enhance the delivery of health care and mental health services throughout the JJC system.

Nearly 67 percent of juveniles committed to the JJC are diagnosed with at least one mental health problem including anxiety disorder, post traumatic stress syndrome, depression, and substance abuse.

Of course, the Department has many other priorities for 2006, most of which we will address either through same-level budget appropriations, or with the assistance of state and federal grant funding.

Through our Division of Highway Traffic Safety, we will continue to combat aggressive driving, promote awareness about the proper use of child car safety seats, and work to increase the level of seat belt usage throughout our state.

Across New Jersey, an unprecedented 381 police agencies took part in the Division's May 2004 "Click It or Ticket" seat belt awareness and enforcement drive, conducting spot enforcement of the State's Primary Seat Belt Law.

In all, police issued more than 69,000 seat belt summonses to motorists and passengers who were not buckled up during the two-week enforcement campaign period.

Results from a seat belt utilization survey conducted in the immediate aftermath of “Click It or Ticket” showed seat belt usage at 82 percent – an all-time high.

Through our Division of Gaming Enforcement, we will continue to handle the investigative efforts required to ensure the safety and integrity of the casino gaming industry.

As I speak, Gaming Enforcement is working to ensure that vendors and contractors with ties to organized crime are kept from doing business with the casino industry.

Meanwhile, in 2004, the DGE worked closely with the Division of Criminal Justice to investigate and prosecute criminal conduct impacting the industry.

Among other cases, Gaming Enforcement helped prosecute a casino restaurant waiter who was promoting prostitution and dealing in cocaine.

In addition, DGE had a key role to play in the investigation and prosecution of three men who took part in an armed robbery at another casino in July 2003.

Through the Racing Commission, we will continue to work to ensure public confidence in New Jersey’s horse racing industry.

In 2004, the Racing Commission worked with State Police to identify – and stop – two individuals who were involved in race horse “doping” activity.

Just last month, the Commission reached a settlement agreement resolving a lawsuit it had brought against the Thoroughbred Horseman's Association over certain fiscal management issues.

The settlement is not only good for the integrity of racing, but it paves the way for the Breeder's Cup – one of the nation's most respected and lucrative horse racing events – to be held in New Jersey in 2007.

As I made reference to a few moments ago, our DNA initiative continues to be a major priority.

As some of you may recall, our Department drafted Legislation – since enacted -- that expanded the pool of convicted offenders required to provide DNA samples.

Under the law, any person convicted of a first, second, third, or fourth degree offense must now provide a DNA sample.

In addition, convicted offenders who are already in custody, on probation, or under parole supervision must also provide their DNA.

In conjunction with expanding the State's DNA data base, we have trained approximately 900 law enforcement officers throughout the State in DNA collection since 2003.

We have also established an internship program at the College of New Jersey designed to encourage students to explore careers in forensic science. As part of the initiative, the Attorney General's Office provides State Police Laboratory internships for qualified science majors who seek to work in the area of DNA analysis.

We continue to explore avenues for expanding and enhancing our capabilities in the area of DNA, because DNA is critical to the justice process.

DNA helps convict the guilty, and exonerate the innocent.

In 2004, there was an episode in Camden city that illustrated the importance of DNA.

Late in the year, there was evidence of an apparent serial sex offender on the loose after three similar attacks occurred in Camden's downtown and university sections.

Within weeks of the third attack, however, Camden County Prosecutor Vincent Sarrubi was able to put public fears to rest.

DNA testing had confirmed that all three sex crimes were in fact carried out by the same man, but he was no longer a threat – he was deceased.

The man had been killed in self-defense by a merchant whom he had tried to rob at knife point. Posthumous testing of the man's DNA established him as the same attacker who'd committed the three rapes in downtown Camden.

Without doubt, the sexual assaults lingered as a painful and traumatic reality for the three victims. But DNA science had confirmed that neither they, nor the public, had anything more to fear from the rapist.

Clearly, the role of DNA science made a difference in that situation. And, to be certain, it will continue to do so in the future as law enforcement seeks more effective methods for solving crimes and ensuring public safety.

In summary, I recognize these are difficult times. The “new money” we have asked for is targeted for areas of critical need.

Elsewhere, we have resolved to uphold our usual high standards while doing what all agencies of government must do -- manage resources efficiently and, on occasion, make tough choices.

Our Department’s mission is, as I noted at the outset, a complex, far-reaching and often unpredictable one.

The responsibilities are great and the demands are many, but we welcome the challenge, and we look forward to another year spent serving the citizens of New Jersey. I want to thank the committee members for your time and attention. And I will be glad to answer any questions you may have.