

Office of the Governor
NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE: May 8, 1998

MEDIA ADVISORY
Governor's Weekly Radio Message
Addresses Making New Jersey the Best Place to be a Mother

Gov. Christie Whitman provides a weekly radio message to radio stations throughout the state. Each week, the message focuses on a different concern or event of interest to New Jerseyans.

This week the Governor discusses her efforts to make New Jersey the best place to be a mother. New Jersey has several laws and programs created specifically to help mothers and their children. Gov. Whitman established the KidCare program, which helps to provide health insurance to over 100,000 New Jersey kids. Another program, Bright Beginnings, helps provide child care options to mothers who work outside their homes. The Governor has passed a law requiring insurance companies in our state to cover at least a 48-hour maternity stay for all mothers at the time of their delivery. In addition to these programs, she has also helped parents to raise children who will be safe by passing Megan's law and prepared for the future by establishing new core curriculum standards.

Attached is the text of the message.

The radio message can be accessed by calling the Governor's actuality line at 609-292-3249. It will be available today, beginning at noon, and will run through the weekend.

Governor's Weekly Radio Message
May 8, 1998

A wise person once described motherhood this way. "A mother," she said, "is a person who, seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie."

My mother, Eleanor Schley Todd, was a lot like that. She passed away several years ago, but I will always remember and appreciate her influence and inspiration in my life. She convinced me that I was capable of anything I put my will and talent toward achieving.

As Governor, I want to make my mother proud. With the help of citizens and the Legislature, I want to make New Jersey the best place to live in America - and that includes making it the best place to be a mother.

Here are a few ways we're doing that.

To protect the health of expectant mothers and their children, we passed a law that requires doctors to tell them about the benefits of being tested for HIV infection.

To protect the health of brand-new mothers and their infants, we made sure that insurance companies in our state cover at least a 48-hour maternity stay - and twice as long if it's a c-section.

To make sure that all parents can give their children the health care they need, we started a program called KidCare, which will help provide health insurance to more than 100,000 New Jersey kids.

To help moms and dads rear children who learn what they'll need for the future, we established rigorous new core academic standards for every public school in New Jersey.

To assist mothers who work outside the home, we initiated a program called Bright Beginnings to improve and increase child care options in New Jersey.

To give parents a little more help in protecting their children, we passed Megan's Law to inform communities when convicted sex offenders move in.

To improve the health of mothers and, indeed, all women in our state, we established a Breast Cancer Research Fund and added a check-off box on the income tax form for that fund.

Sadly, we recognize that some mothers don't get the respect and treatment they deserve. Too many of us know someone who is the victim of domestic violence.

We've passed a number of laws to help and protect domestic violence victims. Just as important, we fund a statewide domestic violence hotline, 1-800-572-SAFE.

I'll repeat that number in a moment. I ask you to write the number down, and make sure your friends have it too. The best gift on this Mother's Day just might be to help save a woman who has been the victim of domestic violence. Once again, the domestic violence hotline number is: 1-800-572-SAFE.

Fortunately, most of us who are mothers enjoy healthy, happy lives. For most mothers, life is filled with the chores and challenges and miracles of motherhood.

In that spirit, I want to leave you with a quote from a woman named Maureen Hawkins, who described a mother's special relationship with her child this way. She wrote: "Before you were conceived, I wanted you. Before you were born I loved you. Before you were here an hour I would die for you. That is the miracle of life."

Happy Mother's Day.
