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## NEW JERSEY CIVIC AND BUSINESS LEADERS ENDORSE GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE

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*New Jersey Taxpayers Alliance, dedicated to restoring fiscal responsibility in New Jersey*

Good afternoon and thank you for joining us today. My name is Jerry Cantrell, and I am President of the New Jersey Taxpayers Alliance. We are an organization that came together more than a year ago to represent New Jersey's individuals, businesses and civic groups before the legislature and to shape public policy in a way that will lessen the burden on New Jersey's taxpayers and put our state on a path to fiscal stability.

During that time, we have worked to draw attention to New Jersey's pension debt, its depleted unemployment insurance fund and the ways in which its tax structure negatively affects the lives of our citizens. We have always worked in a non-partisan manner and as an independent voice for New Jersey's most important and overlooked interest group.

This year, New Jersey's taxpayers face one of the most important elections in our history. Our state is deep in recession and likely to have fewer private-sector jobs at the end of this decade than when it began. We have a looming budget deficit, record unemployment, and middle class families that are

increasingly unable to live in the state they were raised in and have lived in their entire lives. When deciding whom, if anyone, to endorse, we were always cognizant of those difficult facts.

Taxpayers have three choices presented by three well-intentioned men. However, only one of them has demonstrated that he understands the need to shrink government and allow New Jerseyans to keep more of the money earned through their hard work and talent.

We have already experienced four years of Governor Corzine, and understand his philosophy too well.

New Jerseyans have the highest state and local tax burden in the nation, and Jon Corzine made it worse with \$9 billion in higher taxes. He increased taxes on small businesses, on individuals, and worsened the debt so that it will raise taxes on our children. In a time when the nation is working to expand access to health care, Governor Corzine increased the tax on health insurance. Even his strategy to cope with the recession has been to raise taxes by more than \$1 billion, including tax hikes on entrepreneurs that we need to create the jobs necessary to emerge from the downturn. Not surprisingly, his plan to plug next year's budget gap is to raise taxes yet again. All of these policies point to someone who is out of touch with the difficulties New Jerseyans are facing.

His term as governor has added to our burden, and been defined by a single solution to all of our problems. Because of Jon Corzine's policies and lack of leadership, the average homeowner pays \$1,000 more today than when Corzine took office. All of this so New Jersey's government could continue to spend, spend, spend, and allow its elected officials to avoid the tough decisions necessary to fix a broken system. The result has been failure, and we face the same problems now that we did when Jon Corzine first took office.

Having lived through the last four years, we need to **hold Governor Corzine accountable** and elect someone new to lead our state. That leaves taxpayers with a choice between Mr. Christie and Mr. Daggett.

While Chris Daggett has demonstrated his willingness to try to bring New Jersey's tax rates more in line with our competitors, his plan is based on the false premise that we need to pay more in taxes and

increase spending just to meet our basic needs. Chris Daggett doesn't seem to understand that New Jersey's problem is not a lack of tax revenues. He does not demonstrate a commitment to smaller government, and his plan makes an unmanageable burden worse while simply shifting parts of that burden from one portion of the tax code to another.

He is proposing a \$ 4 billion sales tax increase. He is proposing a gas tax increase. He says increasing tolls and adding them to roads not already tolled are also necessary. That will take a toll on taxpayers and it is wrong for New Jersey. Corzine and Daggett share a similar flaw, both keep looking at the problem and coming up with the same answer: higher taxes.

While Governor Corzine and Chris Daggett represent four more years of higher taxes, Chris Christie is the only candidate with a promise to trim government, cut income taxes, and reduce property taxes.

We support his proposal to share and consolidate services to bring efficiency to local government, and restoring the ability of homeowners to deduct their property tax bill from their income tax. We also recognize that his plan for reforming our inner-city schools will benefit not only the children in those failing systems, but also the suburban taxpayers who subsidize the status quo and bloated bureaucracies. Finally, we support his proposals for long-term reforms, such as requiring future tax increases be approved by a super-majority of the legislature. (Reference NJTA's Platforms)

Chris Christie's commitment to a smaller government means taxpayers also know that he will use the most powerful governor's office in the nation to veto unnecessary spending, and appoint cabinet officials to serve as watchdogs over the public treasury.

Further as we know it's going to be a battle to change the direction in Trenton, we implore him to employ *us* in the endeavor. We've been here and will continue to be here and intend to be a powerful resource in the upcoming battle for fiscal reform as exemplified by our declaration of a War on Taxes campaign back in 2005.

New Jersey has the nation's most well-educated and industrious citizens. We can do better than what we have, and with Chris Christie as governor, we will. Taxpayers who want a better future can vote for one by supporting Chris Christie, and we are proud to endorse him today.