

ON S. CORZINE
Governor

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Governor Corzine Receives Immigrant Advisory Panel Report

JERSEY CITY - Governor Jon S. Corzine today received a report from the Governor's Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel on Immigrant Policy, a group charged with developing recommendations to successfully integrate foreign-born New Jersey residents.

"New Jersey's strength has always been in its diversity, and within that diversity is amazing opportunity - especially important during these uncertain economic times. And all it takes to tap into this resource is a fundamental change in how we work with the immigrant population," Governor Corzine said. "For the time being, the economy is clearly priority one, priority two, and priority three."

Governor Corzine noted that 1.7 million New Jersey residents are foreign-born, and they comprise 40 percent of all advanced degree holders in the state. One-in-five entrepreneurs in New Jersey are foreign-born.

Key recommendations of the report include:

- Development of an objective data collection standard for law enforcement;
- Creation of a Commission on New Americans to oversee immigrant issues;
- Establishment of cultural competency guidelines to help define how the state will communicate with those with limited English proficiency;
- Allowing in-state tuition rates for foreign-born New Jersey students;
- Allowing the issuance of drivers' license for undocumented immigrants.

Governor Corzine said that while he supported many of these recommendations, some were impractical. He said that he supports allowing all resident children in New Jersey the opportunity to attend college at the in-state rate, but found the drivers' license issue problematic.

"There are some recommendations, no matter how well intentioned, that cannot be accomplished without a comprehensive policy at the federal level, and drivers' licenses for the undocumented is one of them," Governor Corzine said. "This is a tremendously important but complex issue that cannot be resolved with piecemeal solutions at the state level absent of a comprehensive federal policy."

The Blue Ribbon Panel on Immigrant Policy was created in August 2007 by Executive Order 78. The Panel was charged with examining a number of areas important to New Jersey's immigrant population, including education, citizenship status, civil rights, fair housing, healthcare, language proficiency and employment and workforce training. The panel was chaired by Public Advocate Ron Chen.

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Photos from Governor Corzine's public events are available in the Governor's Newsroom section on the State of New Jersey web page, <http://www.nj.gov/governor/news/>