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NO MENTION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN GOVERNOR'S STATE OF STATE ADDRESS

One-year moratorium on development would violate the Mount Laurel doctrine; appears intended to further postpone the release of Third Round affordable housing obligations.

Gov. also fails to acknowledge that concentrated poverty and racial segregation in Newark contributed to the death of Faheem Williams.

Proclaimed interest in education and smart growth belied by Gov.'s failure to address true root causes of our state's social problems.

Cherry Hill, New Jersey- Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC) today responded to Gov. McGreevey's State of the State Address by declaring that Gov. McGreevey is misguided if he believes his proposed reforms address the root causes of our state's social problems. FSHC contends the land use proposals are neither smart nor constitutional under the Mount Laurel doctrine.

According to FSHC Executive Director Peter J. O'Connor: "The Governor claimed he was interested in smart growth, but no serious student of smart growth would propose reforms without promoting regionalized affordable housing. That is Smart Growth 101. Concentrated poverty and racial segregation are a cancer that Gov. McGreevey is afraid to admit are the true root causes of most of our social problems. Any program that exacerbates the social isolation of our state's urban dwellers is not smart."

FSHC also condemned the Governor's efforts to stop growth while permitting open space acquisition to continue. "Encouraging the acquisition of open space while preventing the development of affordable housing in the suburbs will keep the poor, mostly racial minorities, trapped in the urban ghettos. McGreevey's failure to recognize that his policies are disadvantaging, rather than protecting, young children who live in Newark and Camden reveals that he doesn't understand the social forces that contributed to the death of Faheem Williams. The root causes of poverty and dysfunctional urban families cannot be solved solely by giving DYFS more money," said O'Connor.

Regarding affordable housing, he continued, "One does not have to be a conspiracy theorist to see that Governor McGreevey and Commissioner Levin, two former suburban mayors who were sued for affordable housing violations and who are holding up the release of the Third Round fair share obligations, are attempting to keep the poor in our urban areas. Encouraging open space acquisition in the suburbs while stopping affordable housing construction is a recipe for disaster for urban children who are stuck in the ghetto and violates the Mount Laurel doctrine. Governor McGreevey's version of smart growth will hurt, not help, New Jersey."

Regarding the Governor's claim that he is most interested in education reform, FSHC notes that the State of New Jersey has the most racially segregated school system in the country. "If the Governor really wanted to reform our educational system, he would not condemn our state's Black and Hispanic students to racially-segregated school systems," said O'Connor. "Again, it is elementary that one of the root causes of the failure of our urban schools is the racial segregation and concentrated poverty that plagues them. If he wants to talk about education reform, he's got to be willing to do away with our urban ghettos and promote social integration of the poor into the suburbs."

Fair Share Housing Center has worked to protect and advance the housing rights of New Jersey's poor since 1975. The Center is the only public interest organization dedicated solely to the preservation and growth of the Mount Laurel doctrine as a tool for social change. ###