

South Jersey

Commentary

Letters

Aid for older suburbanites in their homes

The Inquirer series "Aging in the suburbs" was very informative, shedding much-needed light on many of the problems that aging baby boomers will experience all too soon, if they haven't already. Jewish Family and Children's Service of Southern New Jersey's Service of senior services, was prominently quoted in the Oct. 3 article, "A lonely struggle to care for loved ones." We would like to add that our agency offers practical solutions to many of the problems highlighted in the article.

As a nonprofit agency that serves people of all ages, religions and economic backgrounds in Camden, Burlington and Gloucester Counties, we provide a variety of critical services that enable the elderly to live independently and with dignity in their own homes. Our affordable services include home health care, housekeeping, medication monitoring, delivered meals, transportation, respite care, and visits to the homebound from our volunteers.

Soon we will significantly expand our scope when we open a government-subsidized Naturally Occurring Retirement Community, or NORC, for senior residents at the Towers of Windsor Park in Cherry Hill. This program will provide a multifaceted program of medical, social, homemaker, meals, respite, and home health-care services on the premises. By providing assistance when and where it is needed, seniors can continue to maintain their normal lives while remaining in their homes without having to give up all of their independence.

The government is smart enough to realize that ultimately, this will save lives as well as money, and it is establishing NORCs throughout the country. For more information about any of these services, please contact Jewish Family and Children's Service at 856-424-1333.

Sherry Wolkoff
Communications coordinator
Jewish Family and Children's Service
of Southern New Jersey
Cherry Hill

Corzine and women

Although he has claimed that women's issues are important to him, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jon Corzine doesn't even have a women's-issues link on his campaign Web site. This lack of focus and information makes it impossible for voters to find out his views on women's issues.

Although Corzine reaches out to Hispanics on the Web site, he ignores women, while Doug Forrester, the Republican candidate, has a direct link to his Women for Forrester Coalition, which clearly sets forth his stand on the issues of importance to women. I'm voting for Forrester.

Lin Johnson
Cherry Hill
ljohnsonemail@earthlink.net

No tax solution yet

Governor hopefuls Doug Forrester and Jon Corzine relentlessly push their programs as the answer to New Jersey's property-tax problem.

Forrester's plan to reduce property taxes by 30 percent over three years would not fix the problem, and he has yet to answer to anyone's satisfaction how he intends to pay for it.

Corzine's proposed 40 percent increase in rebates to homeowners also wouldn't fix the problem. *Rebate* is a feel-good term — a gimmick. No one pays a fair share to support the schools or the local services, and until everyone wakes up to that, the gimmicks will be dangled at the end of the election stick.

The continual threat of the need to adjust all taxes, especially the income tax, to pay for schools and local services is a problem for the politicians, from the governor on down. The simple fact is that taxes are how revenues are raised in this and every other state in the union.

It is time that the Legislature deals with reality. The cash cow of property tax via the assessment of land and buildings is sacred. Article VIII of the New Jersey Constitution has made it so. And it needs to be gotten rid of.

Walter Helfrecht
Upper Freehold Township, N.J.



BARRIE MAGUIRE

Helping colleges helps the state

By George A. Pruitt

With voters across New Jersey about to decide who will be governor in 2006, we now know that each major candidate has pledged to make higher education a top priority in his administration.

The presidents of the state's 57 colleges and universities look forward to partnering with our next governor to help the state grow economically, create jobs, stimulate research, and improve the quality of life — issues integrally linked to higher education.

How Jon S. Corzine or Douglas Forrester handles the considerable challenges facing higher education in New Jersey is critical.

New Jersey's system, as we know it today, was largely built between 1965 and 1975 in response to a surge in population and the accompanying unprecedented demand for higher education. During this time, most of our state's community colleges were established and institutions such as New Jersey Institute of Technology, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Thomas Edison State College, Ramapo College, and Richard Stockton College were created. It was also when New Jersey's six teachers' colleges were transformed into more comprehensive colleges with broader curricula.

New Jersey's institutions have since earned national and international acclaim, keeping demand for access high among residents in our state and around the country.

Today, we face another surge in demand that rivals the one the state faced about 40 years ago. But this time, the state has yielded to other pressures on its resources and has engaged in more than a decade of disinvestment in higher education despite the extraordinarily high demand.

As a result, tuition has been driven up, and higher education's capacity to serve our residents is not what should be, given the demand.

We in the higher-education community are encouraged by Jon Corzine's and Douglas Forrester's participation in a forum focusing on New Jersey's colleges and universities. The candidates appear to understand the challenges facing our institutions.

We are pleased that both have pledged to protect the indepen-

dence of college and university boards of trustees, support the expansion of infrastructures, and work with the higher-education community and the private sector to create the system of higher learning that the state deserves. It is also heartening to hear the candidates recognize the direct link between higher education and economic development.

That the candidates have acknowledged higher education as a priority is good not only for those of us leading New Jersey's colleges and universities but also for all residents of the state.

New Jersey faces significant questions in higher education, including tuition increases and capacity issues. Our next governor's answers will affect us all.

The demand for attending college is at an all-time high. As our campuses burst at the seams, an investment to expand capacity, make college affordable for more families, and better retain talented graduates is critical to helping the state compete globally in technology development and research — industries that bring jobs and prosperity.

New Jersey's strong service economy requires a highly educated and skilled workforce, especially in critical areas related to teaching, health care and new technology.

The partnership between higher education, the governor and the Legislature is more important than ever. The partnership is not just about textbooks and student facilities; it is also about the quality of life — today and for future generations.

This election is an opportunity to create a better New Jersey. Our next governor will lead the state's agenda and, we hope, give higher education the priority it requires to play a strong supporting role.

The presidents of New Jersey's colleges and universities are ready to increase our efforts to partner with the next administration and make New Jersey the national leader in access to college opportunities for our residents, ensuring academic excellence and, as we do with our students, help New Jersey be the best it can be.

George A. Pruitt is chairman of the New Jersey Presidents' Council and president of Thomas Edison State College in Trenton.