

## Integrity of Our Govt. Most Important Campaign Issue

BY SEN. TOM KEAN, JR.

Rarely in recent memory have the American people trusted their government less. A recent CBS News/New York Times poll found that 70 percent of Americans believe that special interests bribing members of Congress is the normal order of business in Washington. It seems that every day another case of influence peddling or outright bribery surfaces in our nation's capital.

"Super lobbyist" Jack Abramoff showed his ill-gotten gains around Congress in the form of golf junkets, tickets to luxury boxes at sporting events and free meals at his D.C. restaurant. Former California Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham demanded and received millions in bribes from defense contractors in exchange for lucrative military contracts. Both are now headed to federal prison.

That these obvious outrages have been thoroughly prosecuted is reassuring, but we should not be complacent. Most members of Congress, Congressional staff and lobbyists are honorable people who scrupulously obey the rules. But too often some skirt the rules, trading on their positions and contacts to enjoy a lifestyle well beyond their means as public servants. Put simply, Washington is broken — even if some who have been there too long have not noticed.

The plans working their way through the House and Senate are a good first step, but they are not nearly enough. True ethics reform must include all of the following elements:

**Greater transparency and comprehensive disclosure.** Lobbyists should be required to disclose their clients and incomes on a quarterly basis, rather than twice a year, and report all contributions made to campaigns and Political Action Committees. Lobbyists should also be required to report all fundraisers they sponsor, on whose behalf and the amount of money they raised. "Grassroots" lobbyists (like Jack Abramoff's former colleague Michael Scanlon), who are paid to drum up public pressure to influence lawmakers, must also be subject to reporting requirements.

These requirements should include contributions made to non-political organizations that honor public officials, or non-profit entities the official controls. These areas remain the most unreported and unregulated conflicts of interest. The same holds true for the funding of institutions established in the public official's name (for example, presidential libraries).

Finally, all disclosures should be made available electronically, so that the press and public can monitor these activities.

Regulating Congressional travel. I

would restrict funding of Congressional travel to two sources: the government and non-profit organizations expressly approved by Congress's ethics oversight bodies. If it is important either to the national interest or to help members do their jobs more effectively that they visit certain places, the government should pay the costs. If such trips are for humanitarian or other charitable purposes, a reputable organization — known to all — that has taken this cause as its mission may be able to finance it. (There is a clear difference between a well-known charitable foundation and the type of shell nonprofit set up by Jack Abramoff.) I would forbid registered lobbyists from participating in these non-profit financed trips. Finally, members of Congress should no longer be able to fly on private jets with corporate lobbyists, while paying far less than this travel's true cost.

**Gift ban.** I would ban members of Congress or their staff from accepting gifts of any value from registered lobbyists. Public servants should pay for their own meals, luxury goods, sporting events and entertainment, just as their constituents do.

**Enforcement.** Congress has proved over and over again its inability to effectively police or discipline its own members and staff. To ensure that ethics rules are strictly enforced, Congress should establish an entirely independent entity, insulated from partisanship or special interest manipulation, to investigate ethics complaints and recommend consequences.

Unfortunately, last week, a Senate committee voted against creating such a body. This battle is not over. If elected, I will work with Senators McCain, Collins and Lieberman to continue the fight for this essential reform.

**Slowing the "revolving door" between public service and lobbying.** The moratorium on former public officials lobbying ex-colleagues should be extended from one year to two.

**Curbing patronage.** My plan would make it a federal crime for federal officials to "steer" business to lobbyists. The practice of a public official attempting to set up a former aide in business, by demanding that donors or political allies throw business a certain lobbyist's way, is appalling.

**Making "earmarks" transparent.** As Senator John McCain has noted, the appropriations process is broken and needs to be fixed. I would abolish the current practice of members adding "earmarks" to legislation after appropriation bills have cleared both houses. While earmarks are often justified and necessary, this particular practice makes a mockery of the appropriations process. I would also pro-



**CAR SAVERS...**After receiving recognition for their courage and dedication, members of the Union County Auto Theft Task Force (ATTF) pose with Union County Prosecutor Ted Romankow, second from right (sitting), and Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, right (kneeling), who presented the citations on behalf of the 21st Legislative District.

### Resolution Opposing Airspace Plan Passes

TRENTON — A joint resolution (AJR-88) sponsored by Assemblyman Eric Munoz (LD-21, Summit) opposing the New York/New Jersey/Philadelphia Metropolitan Airspace redesign proposal passed the New Jersey General Assembly on March 2 by a 69-2 vote with five abstentions. It now heads to the State Senate for consideration.

BY SEN. TOM KEAN, JR. (continued)

hibit earmarks not contained in a bill's actual legislative language, also known as "soft earmarks."

**Ending special access for former members of Congress engaged in lobbying.** Finally, I would ban registered lobbyists who once served in Congress from access to the House and Senate floor or member gymnasiums.

Over the next month I will travel across New Jersey to share my plan to clean up Congress with the citizens of our state. The Kean plan to clean up Congress is strong medicine — just what Washington needs in these ethically challenged times.

Ethics should not be a legal formality. Ethical behavior should be a sacred code of honor for public servants. There is no more important issue in this campaign, and for our country, than the integrity of our government. I look forward to discussing my record on this issue and my plan for reform in the weeks and months ahead.

State Senator Tom Kean, Jr. is a candidate for the United States Senate.

### Bramnick, Romankow Honor Auto Theft Unit

COUNTY — On February 23, Assemblyman Jon Bramnick presented citations on behalf of the 21st Legislative District honoring the courage and dedication of the men and women of the Essex and Union County Auto Theft Task Force.

On October 27, 2005, Asm. Bramnick and Union County Prosecutor Ted Romankow joined with the Essex and Union County Auto Theft Task Force (ATTF) to observe their operations in Newark and Irvington. The purpose of this trip was to learn about the program and begin a campaign to raise funding from private insurance companies. The county prosecutor's offices developed the ATTF 13 years ago to patrol targeted cities for cars that were recently reported stolen.

The ATTF is a successful and productive law enforcement unit. In the past 13 years, the ATTF has been responsible for the recovery of 5,200 stolen vehicles valued at \$56,000,000 and for uncovering several "chop shops" in Essex and Union Counties. The ATTF has made over 3,200 arrests leading to more serious charges of carjacking, armed robbery, aggravated assault, weapons offense and homicides.

## Letters to the Editor

### With Support, Westfield United Way Will Serve Public For Many Years

Please consider that 380 Westfield senior citizens received a light breakfast and lunch daily at the Westfield Community Center; 2,345 teens participated in Westfield Y programs directed at combating obesity, improving self-esteem, and positively channeling their energy; 483 Westfield first graders learned about substance abuse prevention through an interactive program from Prevention Links; 647 Westfielders of all ages received counseling to resolve addiction, depression, anxiety and family issues through Youth and Family Counseling Services.

What organization made this, and so much more, possible? The Westfield United Way (WUW).

I have been a member of the Board of Trustees of the WUW for 35 years — serving as president and chairing both the Fund Distribution Committee and the annual campaign. The WUW is an integral part of the community, reflecting the spirit of caring and giving that makes Westfield so special.

Virtually everyone who lives in Westfield benefits in some way from an agency supported by this organization. From the Westfield Community Center to the Girl Scouts to the Westfield Y to numerous daycare centers and senior citizen programs, the member agencies of the WUW address the needs of your family, friends and neighbors.

With your support and contributions, the Westfield United Way has

### Asm. Neil Cohen Denounces Ports Deal

TRENTON — Legislation sponsored by Assembly Deputy Speaker Neil Cohen (LD-20, Roselle) denouncing President George W. Bush's approval of transfer of control of some U.S. port operations to a company owned by the United Arab Emirates was released by a state assembly committee on February 27.

The resolution opposes the deal, which includes the ports of Newark and Elizabeth. A similar resolution by Asw. Linda Stender (LD-22, Fanwood) was combined with Asm. Cohen's (D) in committee.

The legislation now heads to the assembly speaker for consideration.

served our community for 70 years and will continue to do so for many more years.

Jim Gruba  
Trustee, Westfield United Way

### State, Freeholders Need To Lower Govt. Cost

A few months ago, I spoke to our county freeholder board, hoping to convince them to take action on play-to-play at our county level. I even went out of my way to draft them a resolution. A couple of weeks ago, I mentioned this again but this time Board Chairman Al Mirabella told me that they follow state rules. Our state debt is well over \$5 billion and our county budget continues to spiral out of control at the rate of 10 percent a year, not to forget this year's budget is \$413 million. So here are some recommendations.

First, the state and county don't belong in the real-estate business. Also Mr. Corzine, let's cut Abbott Districts funding, which I find discriminatory, and begin a full state and federal investigation on the school construction fiasco and set up how Abbott monies are being channeled within these 31 districts. Now we learn it's going to cost another \$6 billion to fix this fiasco, there is no reason the state can't take steps on moving forward on spending caps not only at the state level but county as well.

Twenty-three states having spending limits, four have tax limits and three have both; a number of states operate under voter approval. New Jersey is not one of these states.

The freeholders, as elected officials, must take drastic action to address taxpayers' yearly increases on the property-tax issue. They should require voter approval for such tax increases — New Jersey is the highest in the country and I believe the state is negligent on tracking economic ups and downs; in closing outsourcing, the union's state and county pension fund would be also a burden off the taxpayers' back. They should be in control of their own pension just like in the private sector.

Kevin Retcho  
Linden

## "Free Glaucoma Screening and Personal Consultation"

A FREE Event at Sunrise Assisted Living of Westfield

Please join us at Sunrise of Westfield for a free screening for glaucoma, a potentially destructive eye disease which causes irreversible blindness if not diagnosed early. Often, there are no warning signs, so the screening is extremely important. Handouts will be provided.

Sunrise Assisted Living is committed to furthering the knowledge of senior living topics through events and seminars designed to help and inform seniors and their caregivers.

#### EVENT DETAILS

"Glaucoma Screening & Personal Consultation" by Dr. Heather Deeble, O.D.

**Date:** Tuesday, March 14, 2006  
**Time:** 9:30am-1:00pm  
**Place:** Sunrise of Westfield  
240 Springfield Avenue  
Westfield, NJ 07090

RSVP by March 10 to 908-317-3030



Our presentation is open to the public, but an RSVP is requested.

For more information and a FREE online newsletter, visit [www.sunriseassistedliving.com](http://www.sunriseassistedliving.com)

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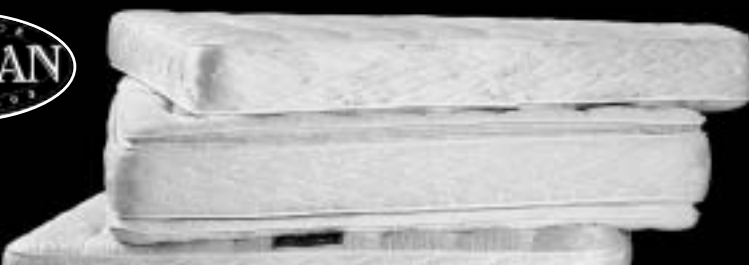
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**CURTIS HERITAGE BLANC \$11.99**  
An imitation of a southern French white made from 59% Viognier, 30% Roussanne and 11% Marsanne. Floral accents compliment the peach, pear, mineral and citrus flavors. There is enough spice to work with Asian foods, but we love it all by itself too.

**SANTA BARBARA WINERY Z.C.S \$14.99**  
This is a rich blend of Zinfandel, Carignane and Sangiovese. Tons of rich black fruit and filled with spices, earth and a dash of pepper. This is California wine at its affordable best. Try it with ribs or a hearty stew.

### Wine Of The Week

**Takler Heritage Cuvee \$21.99**

A very rich and complex blend of five grapes from Hungary. Think of it as Hungary's version of Bordeaux. It is filled with dark berry fruit and tones of cherry. A lot is going on here with leather notes, spice, earth and even a touch of chocolate. Try it with hearty and spicy dishes.

**Your Favorite Wines**

Blackstone Merlot	\$8.99	750ml
J Lohr Chardonnay	\$10.99	750ml
Simi Chardonnay	\$12.99	750ml
BV Coastal Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay/Pinot Noir	\$7.99	750ml
Hess Select Chardonnay	\$9.99	750ml
Toasted Head Chardonnay	\$10.99	750ml

**Your Favorite Vodka**

Absolut 80	\$31.99	1.75L
Ketel One	\$34.99	1.75L
Grey Goose	\$25.99	750ml
Smirnoff	\$18.99	1.75L
Stolichnaya	\$30.99	1.75L
Sky	\$23.99	1.75L
Wolfschmidt	\$13.99	1.75L
Gordons	\$14.99	1.75L

**Your Favorite Gin**

Bombay Sapphire	\$34.99	1.75L
Tanqueray	\$30.99	1.75L
Hendricks	\$27.99	750ml
Beefeater	\$28.99	1.75L
Gordons	\$14.99	1.75L
Seagrams	\$15.99	1.75L

**Your Favorite Scotch**

Dewars White Label	\$29.99	1.75L
Chivas Regal	\$51.99	1.75L
Johnnie Walker Black	\$55.99	1.75L
Johnnie Walker Red	\$29.99	1.75L
Cian MacGregor	\$16.99	1.75L

**Your Favorite Whiskey**

Jack Daniels	\$35.99	1.75L
Jim Beam	\$23.99	1.75L
Seagrams 7	\$14.99	1.75L

**Your Favorite Rum**

Captain Morgan	\$23.99	1.75L
Bacardi Silver	\$19.99	1.75L
Bacardi Gold	\$19.99	1.75L
Malibu	\$23.99	1.75L

**Your Favorite Value Wines**

Mondavi Coastal Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$16.99	1.5L
Beringer Founders Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$15.99	1.5L
Woodbridge Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$10.99	1.5L
Vendange Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$6.99	1.5L
Fetzer Cabernet/Chardonnay	\$12.99	1.5L
Cavit Pinot Grigio	\$11.99	1.5L
Walnut Crest Cabernet	\$8.99	1.5L
Cesari Pinot Grigio	\$10.99	1.5L
Bolla Soave	\$10.99	1.5L
Beringer White Zinfandel	\$8.99	1.5L
Franzia Burgundy/Chablis/Chianti	\$10.99	5L
Carlos Rossi Burgundy/Chablis/Paisano/Sangria	\$8.99	4L
Opici Homemade Barbarone	\$11.99	4L

**Your Favorite Cordials**

Baileys	\$17.99	750ml
Romana Sambuca	\$17.99	750ml
Kahlua	\$15.99	750ml
Southern Comfort	\$13.99	750ml
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