

# News From NJ Senate Democrats



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## **VITALE STATEMENT ON HEALTH CARE CUTS IN FY 2010 BUDGET**

**TRENTON** – Senator Joseph F. Vitale, D-Middlesex, and Chairman of the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee and a member of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, issued the following statement today at a news conference at the Statehouse with New Jersey Citizen Action on proposed cuts to health care programs like NJ FamilyCare, Medicaid prescription drug benefits, and the AIDS Drug Distribution Program in the FY 2010 Budget:

*“New Jersey government is facing one of the biggest challenges in modern history in advancing a fair and balanced budget in the face of a multi-billion dollar deficit in revenues. Our convictions are going to be tested, as we come to terms with the fact that we simply don’t have enough money to fund all of the State’s priorities at the level that we have in the past.*

*“However, certain funding requests are more than just line items in a budget. These are programs that mean the difference between life and death for those struggling to make ends meet in this difficult economy.*

*“NJ FamilyCare has been a crucial safety net program for New Jersey’s hard-hit residents, helping to fund primary health care coverage for the uninsured. Medicaid prescription drug benefits help those at the lowest ends of the income spectrum afford the prescription drugs they need to stay healthy. And the AIDS Drug Distribution Program provides access to state-of-the-art medications for dying patients, and helps control the spread of the disease.*

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*“While I recognize that we have to reduce the level of State spending to meet our constitutional mandate of a balanced budget, these are programs that have such a significant human impact that we simply have to find the funding. New Jersey cannot in good conscience and in good faith to the residents of our State pass a balanced budget on the backs of the uninsured, the poor and the dying. We have to find the money somewhere.*

*“I am willing to talk to Governor Corzine and work with his administration to identify alternatives to these cuts. But at the end of the day, I cannot, and I will not, vote for a budget that cuts funding to these vital programs.*

*“Unless funding is restored for programs like NJ FamilyCare, Medicaid prescription drug benefits, and the AIDS Drug Distribution Program, I will be voting against the FY 2010 Budget. Some programs are too important, and some convictions are too strong, to be on the budget chopping block.”*

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