Today, I signed the bi-partisan Fiscal Year 2014 Appropriations Act passed by the Legislature. For the fourth year in a row, this balanced and responsible budget maintains fiscal discipline, while providing for essential services for all New Jerseyans. Equally important, and like the last three budgets proposed by my Administration, the 2014 Appropriations Act contains no tax increases, maintains spending below the levels of Fiscal Year 2008, and includes a prudent surplus.

The 2014 Annual Budget is the result of the tireless efforts of both my Administration and the Legislature working collaboratively to achieve a framework for government that benefits all New Jerseyans. By addressing our State's needs together, without regard for political party but without compromising our fundamental beliefs, we achieved a budget that balances policies, priorities, and needs. I am thankful for the efforts of the Senate President, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the entire Legislature for their willingness to join me in the spirit of compromise to pass this fiscally sound budget that maintains our State's path to greater prosperity. Since taking office, I have worked to repair the fractured and unproductive culture of divisive governance by collaborating with my fellow elected officials. Together, in stark contrast to past practice in Trenton and current practice across the nation, we in New Jersey continue to demonstrate the great good that can be accomplished when public servants put the people, and not petty partisan politics, first. The 2014 Appropriations Act is but another illustration of New Jersey leading by example.

Today, I also return a number of bills without my approval. Accompanying the budget, but not part of the negotiated appropriation, were proposals that would deplete the State's fiscal resources, restructure government in a significant

manner, and significantly alter the policy and spending priorities set forth in the Appropriations Act. Given those impacts, these bills should have been considered as part of the bi-partisan budget negotiated between my Administration and the Legislature. Taken together, these bills would potentially add hundreds of millions of dollars to State and local budgets, frustrating New Jersey's already over-burdened taxpayers and undermining the budget I signed today. While each bill may have merit, consideration of that merit is better accomplished in the context of negotiating a balanced budget, as we have done this year.

Respectfully,

[seal]

/s/ Chris Christie
Governor

Attest:

/s/ Charles B. McKenna
Chief Counsel to the Governor