



## Chris, call Marcia: She didn't get your message on COAH

By Paul Mulshine/The Star Ledger

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At the beginning of February, I **noted that** as a candidate Chris Christie had promised to rid of the state Council On Affordable Housing by January of 2010.

I reminded readers that in February of last year, when he was kicking off his primary campaign, Christie said during an appearance in Toms River "Here is what we will do in January of 2010: We will stop COAH."

By the next stop in Monmouth County that day, Christie had toughened up his tone.

"If I am governor, I will gut COAH and I will put an end to it," he said to cheers.



The Star-Ledger

Governor Chris Christie: Does the left hand know what the right hand is doing?.

Christie didn't meet that deadline in January of 2010 and he seemed a bit peeved at me for bringing it up. But soon afterward he seemed to have recalled those quotes - perhaps because I reprinted them - and he set up a committee that would study how to get rid of COAH.

That sounded good, but check this memo from a housing-rights coalition on what the leader of that committee, former state Senator Marcia Karrow, said to the group in a recent meeting (scroll down to the interesting parts in bold):

The Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey, Fair Share Housing Center and other groups met on March 5, 2010, with Governor Christie's Housing Opportunity Task Force, which has been charged with finding ways to improve on the work of the Council of Affordable Housing. The task force consists of former state Senator Marcia Karrow, who is the chairwoman, Rutgers University Professor James Hughes, Perth Amboy Mayor Wilda Diaz, Morris Plains Mayor Frank Druetzler, and former director of the state Housing & Mortgage Finance Agency Ira Oskowsky.

HCDNNJ is the statewide association of community economic development organizations and others supporting the creation of homes and jobs for New Jersey's residents. We want to thank the administration and the task force for the opportunity to offer input during the informal discussion. We hope the administration will continue to be open to informed opinions from concerned parties, and will take action on our recommendations. HCDNNJ staff will release a longer report of the task force meeting in the near future. Here are a few highlights:

Task Force Chairwoman Karrow permitted discussion of S.1, Senator Lesniak's proposal to abolish the Council on Affordable Housing, a measure HCDNNJ strongly opposes because it offers no solution to the state's housing crisis or any fair, comprehensive plan for future development, and would make a bad situation worse. Chairwoman Karrow said that the version of S.1 she had seen would not satisfy the provisions of the Mount Laurel decisions and would, therefore, leave municipalities exposed to legal action.

**Both Chairwoman Karrow and Task Force Member Oskowsky said several times that the Christie administration, as far as they know, has no intention of challenging the Constitutionality of the Mount Laurel decisions, and that the task force has been charged to make its recommendations within the existing laws regarding fair housing.** Karrow and Oskowsky also **said they have received no instructions from the governor to "gut" or "blow up" or otherwise destroy the Council on Affordable Housing.** Karrow acknowledged that the Governor has made public statements about "gutting COAH," but that he made

no mention of that in their instructions.

**Karrow said that both she and Governor Christie have publicly expressed disagreement with the Mount Laurel decisions, but reiterated that those personal opinions do not change the intent of the governor and the task force to respect the Constitutionality of the Mount Laurel decisions, and stay within their framework in developing recommendations on improving the state housing delivery system**

Hold on just a minute, Governor! You promised to get rid of COAH and instead you appointed a committee whose members weren't informed of that promise?

And your attorney general, who's busy **defending Jon Corzine's gun-control laws**, doesn't have the time to oppose the Mount Laurel decisions?

Why did we bother getting rid of Corzine if we're keeping his philosophy of government?

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