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SMITH CALLS FOR ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

(Piscataway) Senator Bob Smith (D-17), who represents the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative District, which includes Rutgers University, expressed the importance of adequate funding levels for higher education. “The ramifications of the proposed budget cuts are wide-ranging and will result in increased tuition and stalled research initiatives”, Smith explained. The proposed budget, released by Governor Corzine yesterday, takes away \$300 million for State public and private colleges. Of the \$300 million the loss of \$169 million in state aid results in a 6.9% cut to county colleges, 15% cut to public colleges and universities and 50% cut to private colleges and universities.

“Our state university is counted as one of the nation’s top public research universities and maintaining this level of excellence in New Jersey must remain a priority of the legislature”, Smith said. After meeting with Rutgers President McCormick early today to discuss the unprecedented reductions, Smith learned that even with significant tuition hikes in the double digits, our state university would fall short and would face cut-backs on all levels; staff, research, classes, programs.

“We are endangering our premiere educational asset and although the administration is faced with difficult decisions, New Jersey students already face the highest tuitions in the country. We need to look to the future of our workforce by investing in New Jersey education to attract and prepare the best and the brightest and keep them here the Garden State”, Smith concluded.

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