

For Release: Immediate
Wednesday, October 25, 2006

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SMITH - IT CONSOLIDATION COULD SPELL SAVINGS FOR NEW JERSEY **IN LONG RUN**

TRENTON - Senator Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, the Chair of the Joint Legislative Committee on Government Consolidation and Shared Services, issued the following statement today about the panel's hearing on the State's Office of Information Technology, and potential savings from consolidating IT functions in the State:

"I think the message today was that, when it comes to IT consolidation, we're going to have to spend money to save money.

"Our current IT infrastructure cannot handle the weight of the State's computer needs, but as we move to an e-government model, and expand the architecture on a top-down basis, we can realize savings from IT consolidation in the long-run.

"However, any savings are predicated on a significant up-front investment. The good news is that experts who testified today said we may be able to see a return on our initial investment within seven or eight months.

"New Jersey is currently one of 17 states which is beginning to dip its toes in the information super-highway. The advances we've seen, especially in regards to the digital services provided by the Motor Vehicle Commission, have been impressive, in terms of constituent-services and cost savings. With the support of the State in consolidating digital services and IT functions, we will be able to do more with less in the very near future."