# 10/02/2025 - Ciattarelli - Cranford

Thank you for all your efforts in the legislature. What we need to stop doing across the state of New Jersey, and I think an overwhelming number of Jerseyians agree, is stop taking garden out of the Garden State. That's exactly what's happening with these statemandated housing quotas. And if you want the perfect and most compelling example of all that's wrong with the current statemandated housing policies, it's right here on the land upon which we stand. to use eminent domain to condemn a 175-year-old family farm in order to accommodate the need to build highdensity housing in a community where there is no infrastructure, where there is no mass transit, where there are no jobs per se, only putting more idling cars on the road is wrong in every way and it needs to end. Overdevelopment of our suburban communities is one of the top four issues in this year's race for governor. And my opponent has failed to say what her plan is. My plan is we're going to stop the statemandated affordable highdensity housing units we're seeing all across our suburban communities. I really do believe we need to take an approach that's more consistent with smart growth strategies. And having lived in the last two communities I've lived in over the last 28 years, I've seen this up close and personal. For 25 years, I lived in Hillsboro Township. 52 square miles of former cow pasture where we've lost builder's remedy suit after builder remedy suit after builder remedy suit. And we see highdensity housing going up in a community where there is no mass transit, where there is no infrastructure, where there is no sewer capacity, and where there are no jobs, per se. And what we only end up with is more idling cars on our already congested roads and higher property taxes. For the last three years, I've lived in a transit hub. That's Somerville, New Jersey, where there is mass tra mass transit, a Rarent Valley train line, a New Jersey transit bus line, where there are large employers, county government, a hospital, a court system, and one mile of Main Street with mom and pop shops that all employ anywhere from five up to 40 people each. We've gone up with highdensity housing in downtown SRL. And it's created a diverse and vibrant local community that is now self- sustaining and no longer dependent upon state aid for its schools or its municipal budget. That is the right approach to addressing the highdensity housing crisis across New Jersey. Is there a shortage? Do more young people need affordable housing? Do our elderly need affordable housing? our disabled people and our veterans. You bet they do. But we need to do this in a way that is more consistent with sustainability. I'd also like to point out that I believe this is one of the two most hypocritical positions the Democratic party will take. They'll often like to portray themselves as the party that is pro- environment. There is nothing pro- environment. There is nothing consistent with sustainability when we're using eminent domain to condemn open space to build more highdensity housing. Nothing. I just find it to be a very very hypocritical position. And so I will continue to talk about this issue no matter where it is I go around the state. I applaud Assemblyman Ziki for the bill that he's put in place. I do not expect it to get traction amongst the Democratic majority. I think the uh the livestock agrees with me here with what I'm saying. They don't want to see this farm go by the wayside either. Tim, thank you for fighting the fight. Thank you. Joe and Marty who are on the ticket this year for state assembly in this district. Thank you. I think we've got a county commissioner candidate here. Do we not? Sheriff. Sheriff. Sheriff. Sorry. Good to see you again, Peter. Uh but Alex, thank you for your leadership. Thank you. And so with that, we'll open up for questions. Uh Jack, if you're if you're governor, what specific actions would you take to preserve this farm? Specifically, are there any executive actions you can take on that? Would you I will take any and all actions that prevent eminent domain to be used to condemn open space. We should be preserving open space here in New Jersey. Every chance we get, not condemning it. And by the way, property rights are sacred in this country. Eminent domain is like fire. Use it the wrong way, you get burned. But it can be a very powerful tool. It was always meant to give municipalities leverage to address blight. I don't see a whole lot of blight. I see what New Jerseyians want to see. More open space. Let's let's stop taking garden out of the Garden State. Would you be open to a citizen uh ballot initiative process? Potentially one that could lead to constitutional amendment to reverse Mount Mo or other forms. Would you support a process like that? Listen, in the end, we need change here in New Jersey. And if initiative referendum, ballot reference is the way to go, we certainly should take advantage of it. Not just when it comes to the Mount Laurel housing doctrine, but also when it comes to school funding, but I'll be looking for Supreme Court justice that agree with me on those two issues. Um, a little topic, but how important do you think black and Hispanic voters are to I'm sorry. How important do you think blackers are? Okay, next question. Charlie, I'm going to take you out of the penalty box. Don't tell me you're illprepared. Off topic question. Let's stick it Let's stick to the topic at hand first here. Okay. authorities in the chambers to do that. What districts are you hoping will give you? I'm certainly open to any and all options available to the governor, uh, which I hope to be and plan to be. Uh, we do know the New Jersey state governor is the New Jersey governorship is the most powerful in in the nation by state constitution. Um, but listen, as I go around this state, I find a lot of Democrats agree with me on this issue. And when you see Republicans winning in towns that are overwhelmingly Democratic over this issue, it tells you that people are having a wakeup call and people want us to stop with the overdevelopment of our suburban communities. That's what's taking place here across New Jersey. So if you don't have a majority, it is a law. What can you do? What I can do is a couple things. uh number one, go before the state supreme court on day one with my attorney general and make the argument that what we're seeing with all this highdensity housing is inconsistent with D policies when it comes to sore capacity and storm water management. This overdevelopment is I want to repeat this. There are regulations at the D that the manner in which that we approach high highdensity housing, it's inconsistent with those regulations, particularly on things like storm water management and uh sewer capacity. So let's point out to our Supreme Court that we over here we're doing housing policy that is in violation of D regulations over here. The second thing that we can do is I do get the opportunity if I have the privilege of serving uh for two terms, two new Supreme Court state justices, one of which is the chief justice. And I've said all along I'm not appointing anybody that doesn't agree with me on the two issues of highdensity housing and school funding. But third, I plan to sit down with the leadership in the legislature, whoever that might be at the time, to talk about this issue. And I think there is a lot of support in the legislature for a different approach to how we address the affordable housing crisis across New Jersey. So let's have that discussion and see what we come up with. You know, when I was in the 16th Legislative District, I represented 14 towns. And there were towns like Raron Township and Hillsboro Township, Republican controlled, that agreed with the leadership in townships like Montgomery and Princeton, Democratically controlled, on what was going on and what was happening to our suburban communities. And if we can have a meetings of minds at that level amongst people from different parties that are leading up our towns, I think we can do it in the legislature. New York Times. Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were signaling. No, never mind. Daniel, I have I have an off topic for you. Um, the Murphy administration has taken steps to expand access to vaccines. Would you keep those in place for your governor? Uh, I'm not familiar with exactly what he's done on CO 19 vaccines. Um, overdevelopment. Lots more. I'm sorry. It's my topic, man. Yeah, let's do it. Um, so where do you put the housing then? You want to put it in places like a Somerville. When we talk about providing more highdensity housing, which we need to do, when we talk about doing that consistent with smart growth strategies, what we're talking about is putting it in places like a Somerville, which is designated as a transit hub because it has a Ritton Valley train line, because it has a New Jersey Transit bus line, because it's got infrastructure, because it has jobs. The goal should be to put fewer idling cars on our roads. Uh congestion is also an issue in the state. And let me be clear, a lot of the congestion you see on municipal and county roads today that you didn't see 10, 15 to 20 years ago, a lot of the flooding that you see today is not just that the rainfall is different. It's due to the overdevelopment. Uh last month, I think it was up in Union County, we saw flooding in places like Scotch Plains, Fanwood, and Westfield that we had never seen before. It has all to do with the overdevelopment that's taking place. regional contribution agreements, the ending of that. The problem with those were that they allowed towns to completely wash their hands of their responsibility and just offer a paycheck to urban areas. Charlie, it's no secret that I'm an advocate for the regional contribution agreements, the RCAs. Uh I do believe we should approach high density and affordable housing on a more regional basis. That is not to say that rural communities like this one shouldn't have a skin in the game. We know that every type of development there's a fee that goes into the affordable housing trust fund and everyone should have a skin in the game in terms of making the housing affordable. Okay. But um but that doesn't mean we should be put in a community such as this nor should we be condemning this farm. Now I know there are those who don't like RCAs that will claim that that is a form of exclusionary zoning. Oh, they don't want that in their town. The biggest challenge we have with the builder remedy suits is that when the fourth round quotas came along, the mandate, and said that any town has to have 100 affordable housing units, the developer comes along and says, "Well, in order for me to afford a 100 units, I have to put up 500 units." Therein lies the problem. So, I'm a advocate for RCA's because I think we need to do it consistent with smart growth strategies, but we also need a different economic model and that's where we have to come up with another solution so that we don't have to put up 500 units in order to accommodate the 100 affordable housing units. Fred Jack, how about like regional planning as opposed to giving letting planning decisions be made by the local planning board? How about like giving the county planning board more teeth? Every single county government in this state has a county planning board. I always felt we did a damn good job in Somerset County of regional planning and you saw that with the very unique relationship between Bridgewater, Raritton and Somerville where planning took place on a regional basis. So yes, but listen the whole point another important point here that should not be lost. We really need to drive population growth in this state toward our major urban centers. You know, I was in Atlantic City recently and they were lamenting the fact that there were so many empty storefronts on Atlantic Avenue. And I understand that there are 72 to be exact. And when I got up to speak, I said, "Did anybody know what the population of this city was 100 years ago?" 100 years ago, the population of Atlantic City was 55,000. Today, it's 35,000. What would 20,000 more people mean to the local economy? The mom and pop shops. If Atlantic City could easily accommodate 55,000 people in 1925 in in 1925, don't you think they could accommodate the same number of people, if not more, in 2025? How would you incentivize the increase in population in those? I believe that people will live where there are a few things compelling and affordable housing, safe communities, good educational choices, and recreational opportunities. And we've seen this happen in some of our towns. If you look at Somerville today and compare it to where it was 15 years ago, you might not believe your eyes. It was a community plagued by blight. It was a community that was dependent on state aid because it couldn't balance its own local budgets. Take a look at what we've done in Somerville. It's diverse. It's vibrant. Low, moderate, and market rates are all in there together because I don't believe that we should be putting the highdensity affordable housing units in the corner of town. Mom and pop shops opening left and right downtown. And now, best part for the next governor, Jack Cedarelli, they don't need any help from the state budget. It's a local self-sustaining economy. Do you know how they got there? Like what was the impetus? We convinced the community that we needed to go up with four, five, and sixtory buildings on Main Street. We got the community to buy into the need for redevelopment zones to attract developers with capital. We used a URG an urban renewal grant from the state of New Jersey to bring in the anchor which is the super the super shop so that we wouldn't have a food desert. These are all things that we need to do and we can do. And by the way, Sville is not the first. Take a look at downtown New Brunswick. Take a look at downtown Morristown. Is there concern on your part that southern development are places like this opport? I believe that it's up to the mayor, the local leadership to determine how economic growth should take place in their town. Uh but it should not be by state mandate. What was happening here was as a result of a state mandate. Now I disagree with the local leadership using eminent domain. This was not the purpose or the spirit of the eminent domain law. It was to address blight. There's no blight here. There's open space and we need open space here in the state of New Jersey. He agrees. Question. President Gateway. So, Governor Chidarelli, what are you doing this this instance? This is a major economic project in this area. We've seen shutdowns before at the federal level, Charlie. There's a negotiation that's taking place, but if you take a close look at the Gateway project, which is managed by the Gateway Commission, that project does not stop because of this shutdown. It continues. Does this how does this affect your campaign? Does this give your opponent the opportunity to say, "Look, this this is an example of how Trump is bringing harm to New Jersey." I think you need credibility in order for someone to believe what you're saying. I don't think my opponent has a whole lot of credibility at this point. Have you reached out to the White House or Secretary just to make that there are no delays on on I reached out to confirm something what I had believed and I confirmed it to be true. The gateway project is man managed by the gateway commission and just because there was shutdown doesn't mean the shovels didn't go in the ground yesterday, today or tomorrow. That project continues. All right, we got to do one more here, guys. So, thank you very much. Anything else on overdevelopment?