

Budget

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state is in debt, Assetta said New Jersey government should stop spending money and look for ways to cut expenses.

He called the plan to sell the toll roads and public assets "short-term gratification."

"We'll be left with no toll roads," Assetta said. "They've already designated roads they could put tolls on."

Assetta said he voted against funding stem cell research campuses in Camden and Newark, and not furthering research into embryonic stem cell research.

"Other states and research universities are way ahead of us. Let them find the cure. We'll benefit from it. New Jersey doesn't have to start from ground zero and spend a billion dollars up front to build the infrastructure," Assetta said.

He criticized Democrats Van Drew and Albano for tak-

ing a headline stance on immigration.

"Their strategy is, in a generic Republican district like the First District, they will look like Republicans and confuse the voter," Assetta said, criticized the Democrats for branding themselves as independents instead of Democrats.

"They want to disguise themselves as Republicans and steal some of the Republican vote down here and that is their formula for victory."

Assetta said illegal immigration is an economic problem as hospitals provide free health care without being reimbursed and public schools educate children of illegal immigrants. He said a "large percentage" of those incarcerated are illegal immigrants.

"Yes, there are ones coming here doing good things, they're working for landscap-

ers or in restaurants. A great many of them are coming here to perpetrate in illegal activities and we're allowing that to happen and they shouldn't be here," Assetta said.

Assetta said without immigrants, New Jersey couldn't remain a farming state.

"The issue is, can these people be legal and do these people have legal documents?" Assetta said.

According to Assetta, the government, and not the farm owners who hire the workers, should be responsible for determining whether workers have legal status.

"The employer is struggling. They don't have the time to weed out the people," Assetta said.

He called for a reform of the state pension system and said the onus of reform lies with the executive branch and not the legislators.

"The executive branch

hires people. When you hire 77,000 people you have contractual obligations with these people. As governor, it's your job to negotiate year in and year out with the state police, correction officers, CWA (Communication Workers of America) and state workers to make sure you manage that system in a financially responsible way," Assetta said. "I'm reluctant to mandate to the executive branch what they should do. Why is it the legislature's responsibility to correct and reform a system that is negotiated though the executive branch?"

Assetta said the state should find ways of cutting non-essential state workers to save the taxpayers' money. He blames the ruling Democrats for not extracting New Jersey from a budget deficit Assetta said was caused by the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

"They've had six years to lead. They can't lead. They shut down the state government and the gaming industry," Assetta said, adding the neighboring states of Pennsylvania and New York bailed their states out of financial troubles by not hiring state employees and promoting economic development.

"New Jersey (government) hired people and raised taxes. It was just bad leadership," Assetta said.

Assetta called for reforming ethics throughout New Jersey and said the state's Ethics Committee should be comprised of retired judges instead of politicians.

He said dual office holding, where an elected official holds more than one office, should be prohibited.

"Dual office holding should have been eliminated 10 years ago," Assetta said, adding politicians with more

than one office spread themselves too thin instead of concentrating their efforts specifically on one constituency.

He said he doesn't favor civil unions or gay marriage, calling both a drain on the pension system.

"It complicates the system. We have a bleeding pension system and now we're adding more to the pension system. Civil unions create a larger burden on the pension system that is already broke. I'm a very open-minded moderate person."

This is not the right time for us," Assetta said. "Why don't we be the first in the country to grow our economy and create job opportunities or improve our educational system? We never see that. It's always some controversial social issue that this leadership wants to be first in the nation to do."

Election day is Nov. 6.

Waste

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Disney Music Festival to the Wildwoods said funding the arts and economic development benefit each other. Clark said bringing events to the region extends the tourist season and furthers investment by creating jobs.

"We've got to help people," Clark said. "It's why I'm happy to pay taxes as long as I know it's going to help people who need help and it's not being wasted or used inefficiently."

The two Republican candidates said property taxes in New Jersey have increased due to governmental spending. They advocate local gov-

ernment return state refunds back to homeowners as property tax cuts, and getting rid of government waste by capping spending "across the board."

"We need to remind everybody we're all in the same boat," Clark said. Clark and Donohue are critical of a state asset monetization plan to sell or lease public assets such as toll roads, and have made it the centerpiece of their election campaign.

Donohue said residents and local governments have had their tax burdens increased; he said the state should find ways to cut budgets across

departments and give the local taxpayers a break.

"If we could do that over the next five years, we could generate a surplus and then give it to education more than we have," Donohue said.

"Imagine a New Jersey where taxes are being cut and where job opportunities are being created and businesses are given incentives. I am optimistic that could happen, but not if it is business as usual."

Illegal immigrants are a problem in the district, Clark and Donohue said, but the burden of detecting them should not rest on the employers who hire them but

the government.

"Countries are built on law. When you start to erode that rule of law, you start to have problems," Donohue said.

According to Donohue, in New Jersey it costs taxpayers \$2 billion a year for incarceration, health care and education of illegal immigrants.

The two Republicans also advocate barring state agencies from contracting with employers who can't certify they aren't employing illegal immigrants, the ability for state authorities to check the immigration status of anyone arrested for a crime, and for making English the official

language.

Clark and Donohue believe the federal government should allow state law enforcement officers to enforce federal immigration laws.

"That's a federal law and it needs to be enforced and we need to find a way to either get authority to do that or face the federal government to do what they're supposed to do," Donohue said.

Both candidates said they support civil unions for gay couples to receive health benefits, but are opposed to extending marriage to include gays.

"The people I talked to in

the gay community are happy with civil unions. There are some people in the gay community that won't be happy until we redefine marriage," Clark said. "I think marriage has been defined over the ages as between a man and woman so I would not be in favor of redefining marriage."

While Donohue said society should "recognize a commitment that benefits society," he said he did not want to change the definition of marriage.

"Marriage is a long-standing institution that should not be sent though the legislature," Donohue said.

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Entered at Post Office in Cape May, NJ 08204 as a periodical

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES: By mail in Cape May County: \$22; East of Mississippi, \$25; West of Mississippi: \$29, Mail subscriptions paid in advance. Newsstand price .50 per copy.

PUBLICATIONS SCHEDULE: Weekly, every Thursday.

POSTMASTER: Send address change to Cape May Star and Wave, 600 Park Blvd. #28, West Cape May, NJ 08204.

ASSISTANCE: For information on starting mail home delivery of the Cape May Star and Wave, call (609) 884-3466 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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