

NJS Presents***Invited Talks*****In this Issue:*****50 Years of New Jersey History*****By Senator Loretta Weinberg****DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v4i2.123>**

The following remarks were delivered by NJ State Senator Loretta Weinberg at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the New Jersey Historical Commission on December 4, 2017 in Trenton. The New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) is a state agency dedicated to the advancement of public knowledge and preservation of New Jersey history. Established by law in 1967, its work is founded on the fundamental belief that an understanding of our shared heritage is essential to sustaining a cohesive and robust democracy. The NJHC receives its funding primarily by legislative appropriation. It fulfills its mission through various initiatives, including an active grant program. The goal of the grant program is to engage diverse audiences and practitioners in the active exploration, enjoyment, interpretation, understanding, and preservation of New Jersey history.

As a member of the New Jersey Historical Commission and a strong supporter of its mission, I am honored to be here today as we mark 50 years of work by the Commission. The Legislature made a commitment in 1967 to preserving the state's rich history through the creation of this agency, and half a century later we can say that the work done by so many passionate and dedicated individuals – as well as the investments made – has had a significant impact on the state.

Many of you know firsthand the work of this commission, and if you are in this room you know the importance of preserving our history – to understanding our roots, but also our successes and our mistakes.

I want to talk about a historic site that is located in my backyard, which I believe demonstrates the value of preservation and importance of the work of the New Jersey Historical Commission to our residents, but also to generations to come. New Bridge Landing in Bergen County was the site of a crucial bridge crossing by General George Washington, who led his troops across the Hackensack River in retreat from the British in November of 1776. This was a critical point in the Revolutionary War and the New Bridge was literally the crossroads of the American Revolution. Had Washington not crossed the bridge with his troops, leading them to safety, he certainly would have seen defeat and the end of the war. This was one of the great moments of American history – and students don't have to read about it in a history book; they can visit the site and stand on the grounds where the troops found safety.

I have worked during this administration and the previous one to help to preserve the Historic New Bridge Landing site and to bolster it as a tourist attraction. The process sometimes has been slow, and we are continuing to work, but it is also worth the effort. There are so many sites in New Jersey that are significant to our history and to shaping our nation. We cannot let these sites be lost or forgotten. That is the work of the New Jersey Historical Commission and the commission members. All of you – and your dedicated partners – should be very proud of the work we have done. Together. Congratulations on 50 years. I look forward to our continued success.

Loretta Weinberg is a Democratic Party politician. She has served as a member of the New Jersey Senate since 2005, where she represents the 37th Legislative District. She currently serves

as Senate Majority Leader. Weinberg served in the General Assembly before being selected to replace retiring Senator Byron Baer. You can see more about the Senator [here](#).