



New Jersey Gasoline, C-Store, Automotive Association (NJGCA)

(Formerly New Jersey Gasoline Retailers Association)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President's Anti-Business rhetoric is irresponsible

Businesses succeed despite government, not because of it;

Campaign remarks an insult to business owners and their employees;

Sentiments diminish entrepreneurship, perpetuates distrust of business community.

Sal Risalvato, Executive Director of the New Jersey Gasoline, Convenience, Automotive Association (**NJGCA**), released the following statement on President Obama's recent controversial anti-business comments:

"Two weeks ago today, President Obama made a campaign stop in Roanoke, Virginia and delivered a series of comments that I found incredibly disturbing. Many of my colleagues in the business community instantly reacted to his statements and condemned his speech. Rather than respond immediately, I uncharacteristically kept quiet. Today, however, I find that I can no longer hold my tongue!", Sal stated.

"To the members of my organization, the President's sentiments were a stinging – and lasting – blow to them, their employees, and their families. 'If you've got a business, you didn't build that! Somebody else made that happen!' – How else should they have interpreted his words?", asked Risalvato.

"While some political observers may take these comments as just a few off-the-cuff remarks or merely a misunderstanding, I don't have that luxury. As executive director of a state-wide non-profit, small business trade association, I can't afford to be overly optimistic. My job requires me to be a realist – and perhaps even a cynic – knowing all too well that I've been entrusted with defending the interests of small business owners", said Risalvato.

“With that in mind, I’ve asked myself many times these past two weeks: *Is this really the way the President feels about small business owners – or the business community in general?* All words have meaning and consequences. So in my never-humble opinion, when the President of the United States -- whomever he or she may be -- chooses such words to convey an anti-small business message, it makes me mad as hell!”, exclaimed Risalvato.

“Anyone who has toiled at their own business knows all too well that success in business comes from many places, but the government is not one of them. Business achievement isn’t derived from a benevolent government or compassionate bureaucratic regulations. It has nothing to do with the roads they build, the programs they start, or the initiatives they create,” said Sal.

“No. Businesses do not succeed **BECAUSE** of the government -- Businesses succeed **DESPITE** the government!”, said Risalvato.

“For my members, their businesses exist **DESPITE** environmental policies that continually threaten to shut their doors. They exist **DESPITE** taxes that overwhelm them, preventing them from expanding their establishment, hiring more workers, and providing for their family. And they continue exist **DESPITE** every feel-good, do-nothing, money-sucking idea they come up with that hurts the very customers who patronize your establishment and keeps your doors open”, Risalvato said.

“No, Mr. President. I respectfully – and vigorously – disagree!”, Sal exclaimed.

“No matter how the White House tries to spin this, the reality is that it is NOT government that builds small businesses, its risk-taking men and women with an idea and the passion to see it through. It comes from driven people who want to carve out something of their own, the families that support them, and the loyal employees that thrive as these undertakings succeed. It is their combined efforts – and theirs alone – that enables them to triumph and prosper despite the actions of a government that seeks to control their choices, tax their achievements, direct their energies, and deny them of their property”, stated Risalvato.

“What the President’s sentiments fail to realize is that there is inherent nobility in that struggle. Yet, to undervalue that kind of discipline, dedication, and commitment is to undermine the entrepreneurial spirit of every business owner -- and the capitalist system that they (willingly) compete in each day,” Sal explained.

“I have given President Obama a lot of credit for rolling up his sleeves and doing his best to solve the nation’s economic crisis. I have cheered him on as he championed education reform, freeing children from failing schools and giving parents a choice in how their children are educated. And I’ve continued to admire his ability to inspire people from across the nation to make a difference in their own communities,” Risalvato stated.

“Yet this kind of irresponsible rhetoric inspires nothing but resentment and misplaced-hatred toward business owners – *successful or not* – who DO make a difference everyday in their communities and among their neighbors. It is this kind of nonsense

that fuels class warfare and perpetuates the idea that small business owners are only successful because, somehow, they've cheated, stolen, or robbed what they've earned from someone else. To diminish the hard work and efforts that every small business owner exerts to build their establishment is not only the worst kind of political pandering, it's downright dishonest!," Sal said.

"The livelihood of a small business owner, and that of his or her employees, is not some idle amusement. Despite the constant assertions, the economy is not a zero-sum game. Success does not mean that, because someone has triumphed, someone else must have lost. That kind of simplistic foolishness only sows the seeds of resentment and mindless-hatred, while failing to recognize how my members got to where they are!," said Risalvato.

"When the President or other public figures play the '*you succeed only because of the government*' game, they diminish the sweat and sacrifice of entrepreneurs and their employees. What's more, in making these claims, they also arrogantly fail to recognize where the resources came from to do all these '*wonderful things for business owners*' -- **THE TAXPAYERS!**", Sal exclaimed.

"Despite the endless and misleading rhetoric of anti-business/anti-taxpayer advocates, most fail to comprehend that government CANNOT produce wealth. Rather, they can only inhibit it, redistribute it, and pilfer it. Every dollar they have to '*do something for us*' actually started with you, me, and every other person who pays taxes -- including the small business owner. The machinery of government (*and those who operate it and exploit it*) should **THANK TAXPAYERS** for actually creating the wealth they so eagerly tax to fund such projects," said Risalvato.

"You'd think that with that kind of continuing racket, such officials would be promoting small business owners, not telling folks the government did it for them or implying that their success isn't entirely deserved!,"

"Business owners built their businesses in incalculable ways that government could never hope to understand. It is the small business entrepreneur who took out second- and third-mortgages to afford the down payment on a shop or to purchase equipment. It was they who lost sleep worrying about making the payroll and denied themselves a paycheck to make ends meet. It is the entrepreneur who doesn't take days off for months at a time to make sure his or her shop is running and customers' needs are addressed. No amount of coordinating or planning on government's part could have enabled their success, but have only thwarted it.", Sal said.

"My members - 1,500 proud small business owners – have had enough! When the President or his surrogates insist '*government built it for you*', the angrier they become. When public officials drone on about the need to '*give back more*' because government has '*allowed them*' to be successful, the louder the howls will reach", Risalvato exclaimed.

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