By SETH GROSSMAN Political Columnist



Last June, 21 of 40 New Jersey Senators and 42 of 80 Assembly members voted to borrow \$3.9 billion without voter approval. This was to build new schools that were supposed to be built with \$8.6 billion borrowed by the state six years ago. (Atlantic County Democratic Sen. James Whelan voted to borrow the money. Cape

May County Democrats Senator Van Drew and Assemblymen Albano and Mylam voted no. Atlantic County Republican Assemblymen Amodeo and Polistina abstained.)



That debt will be added to New Jersey's previous borrowings totaling \$40 billion. And don't forget the \$25 billion worth of unfunded pensions and \$58 billion obligation for "free" health care benefits for retired public school teachers and government employees. That will give New Jersey \$123 billion of "liabilities" with no money set aside to pay for them.

Only \$3 billion was submitted and approved by voters pursuant to New Jersey's Constitution. The rest was not. Because of this, even New Jersey's left-leaning Supreme Court admits that the legislature can repudiate, or refuse to make

payments on, that \$120 billion ane7s 0.034 Tc0.1249 repthat will make the subprime mortgage crisis seem mild. Hundreds of thousands of private investors

and dozens of mutual and pension funds will seemoney. Voters loved getting something for noth-

ing, and had no problem re-electing politicians they knew were corrupt.

But with a few exceptions (like the Erie Canal), ment-financed, "no money down" d, and the borrowed money never got

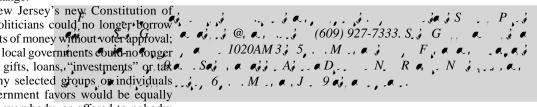
d around the nation, and nearly a dozen r refused to pay their debts. Five years aployment and economic depression

became so angry at their politicians nged most state constitutions so this happen again. New Jersey was the

everybody, or offered to nobody; te and local governments were investing public money in private

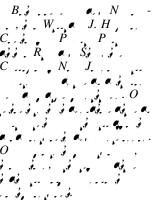
ee basic reforms of New Jersey's ution of 1844 worked brilliantly in and most states for more than 120 minimized corruption in governade our country prosperous.

since 1968, New Jersey's Supreme the words of 1844 Constitution ed." They created loopholes that ts effectiveness. Thanks to them, disaster of 1837 can now happen



Views on ethanol evolving fuel webicles, such are also coming into their food issues, others cropal efficient alternative and too could be first alternative and too could be first alternative because of high energy

By SHARON **SCHULMAN**



Though prices at the pump have eased a bit in recent weeks, fuel surcharges are showing up on many of the products we use in our jobs and daily life. Reports of food price increases and shortages keep cropping up (excuse the pun). The traffic count on state highways is down, and so are Jersey Shore visitors. Talk of alternative fuels and vehicles continues to abound. Using ethanol as an alternative fuel continues to be discussed. Ethanol plants are proposed for southern New Jersev.

Where do our presumptive presidential candidates stand on using ethanol as the biofuel of the future? The answer is: it depends on what kind of ethanol and who produces it.

A couple of months ago the positions of Senator

Obama and Senator McCain were opposite and clear: McCain wanted sugarcanebased eth

McCain favors cane-based ethanol because it burns more efficiently and does not divert 25 percent of the country's corn production away from corn grown for the table and into a type that is used only for fuel. McCain is against the tariff that makes it expensive to get cane-based ethanol from South America and is against "isolationist tariffs and wasteful special interest subsidies" (www. johnmccain.com, June 30,

Usually, McCain is critical of government support of the ethanol industry, but hedged a bit while campaigning for the Iowa

requirements.

investigated and shows some promise. Completely different types of alterna-

Both McCain and Obama have modified **Malaba**produkcis iposiitionaseaovaic f604i() just the one idea of caneor corn-based ethanol and now encourage the development of cellulosic ethanol and other promising alternative vehicles. However, their economic stances have not changed: Obama remains supportive of incentives, and McCain remains supportive of a free market developing the right fuels and vehicles.

And here is where they continue to agree: both take strong positions that would improve fuel economy by the automakers and encourage the development of alternate fuels and alternate means of transportation.

