



NEW JERSEY SENATE

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March 20, 2020

Honorable Phil Murphy – Governor
State of New Jersey
225 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Governor Murphy:

By way of this letter, I am respectfully requesting that you have the State Attorney General and the Election Commissioner immediately **order the Atlantic County Board of Elections Office to seal and secure all of the early voters' mail ballots** that were received in the County. It is my understanding that the number of such ballots is over a thousand (1000).

As you know, on March 19, 2020, I forwarded *your* correspondence requesting that you allow the **"Special Election"** in Atlantic City to be held on March 31, 2020, as planned.

I also expressed in the letter that I think it is appalling for the Office of the Governor and the State Legislature to allow the residents, taxpayers, **and** voters of Atlantic City to be disenfranchised by former Senator Ray Lesniak and his band of casino owners and executives, who simply want to commandeer Atlantic City's government. The consequences of that happening will be detrimental to Atlantic City, Atlantic County, and to the State of New Jersey long after you and I are out of office.

When I forwarded my letter to you, I did not know at the time that you had signed an Executive Order changing the dates of some elections and pushing them into the month of May 2020.

A review of the Executive Order reveals that some serious considerations of extreme importance to the protection of Atlantic City voters' rights need your immediate attention and action:

1) For the Atlantic City Special Election (Referendum), there are over 1000 votes that have been cast using "Vote by Mail." These mail-in ballot votes need to be ordered **impounded immediately** and be counted, applied, certified, and recorded accordantly on the new designated election date of May 12, 2020, due to the Executive Order creating the date change.

The voters should not have to recast their vote due to the Executive Order changing the date of the election.

COMMITTEES
VICE-CHAIRMAN
COMMUNITY AND URBAN AFFAIRS
CO-CHAIRMAN
JOINT COMMITTEE ON
THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MEMBER
HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND
SENIOR SERVICES

2) To avoid more confusion, the Executive Order should be clear or notice sent to the Atlantic County Clerk's office and the Atlantic County Board of Elections office to make certain that the early voters, automatic and other voters who did receive their requested ballot should not receive another automatic vote-by-mail ballot. This would create chaos and legal challenges.

3) Any early or automatic voter and others who requested a ballot or automatic vote-by-mail ballot, who did not receive the requested ballot or automatic vote-by-mail ballot, should be allowed to receive those ballots by calling the Atlantic County Clerk's office.

This process needs to be implemented immediately.

Let me assure you, Governor, that those of us who are elected officials (particularly of color), civil rights leaders and faith-based leaders and organizations who are concerned about the movement taking place to have Ray Lesniak and wealthy casino owners become the dictators of government policies in Atlantic City, also understand that the coronavirus has to be taken very seriously.

As elected officials, civil rights, and faith-based leaders and organizations, many of us are working collaboratively with you and your administration to protect our residents from the harm of the coronavirus. We are working on getting this pandemic under control. However, all other people's concerns and needs cannot be disregarded during this time of crisis and must be taken very seriously as well, particularly the protection of the rights of voters.

In my heart, I believe you are concerned about the harm that will be caused to the government and people of Atlantic City by former Senator Ray Lesniak and the "gangster-like mentality" of this wealthy casino owner cabal. You know very well that it started with "Boss George Norcross." I genuinely believe that you understand their real intent and motivation for financing the takeover of the Atlantic City government under the thinly-veiled charade of local government reform.

In closing, on behalf of the residents, taxpayers, and voters in Atlantic City, Atlantic County and New Jersey in general, I am reiterating my request to you for you to have the State Attorney General investigate the actions and involvement of the casino owners and executives as it relates to New Jersey laws barring casino owners and employees from contributing to candidates, financing candidates, financing campaigns, etc.

Once again, there is a legal doctrine that states that "what the law forbids and prohibits directly cannot be made lawful by doing it indirectly.

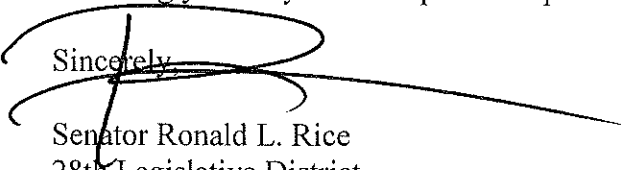
The casino owners and employees financing the Atlantic City government takeover cannot use other organizations and means to circumvent the casino laws governing and barring their political participation. This situation needs not only to be investigated by the Attorney General, but it also needs to be challenged in court if necessary.

Please move forthwith to impound, secure, and protect the vote by mail and other ballots that have already been cast and sent in for the Atlantic City "Special Election." Please expedite an

investigation and court action regarding the involvement of the casino owners, executives, and employees in violation of the casino laws.

Thanking you for your anticipated cooperation, I remain.

Sincerely,



Senator Ronald L. Rice
28th Legislative District

CC: Hon. Sheila Y. Oliver – Lt. Governor

Mr. George Helmy- Chief of Staff to Governor

Hon. Marty Small, Sr., - Mayor

Hon. George Tibbitts – Council President

Hon. Kaleem Shabazz, President – Atlantic City NAACP

Hon. Gawn Callaway-Lewis, Municipal Chair – Atlantic City Democratic Party