



NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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April 30, 2019

The Honorable Gurbir S. Grewal
Attorney General of New Jersey
25 Market Street, Box 080
Trenton, NJ 08625-0080

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

This past weekend Mayor Frank Caramagna of Elmwood Park in Bergen County was arrested on charges of election fraud and forced to resign. As you have said in the past, voting is a linchpin of democracy, and protecting the rights of our voters and the integrity of our elections must be resolved promptly and fairly.

Prior to implementing the new vote-by-mail law, we each expressed concerns regarding the need for proper procedures to ensure the election process could not be corrupted. Unfortunately we now have several examples of why your office must take an active role in investigating any and all allegations of voter fraud throughout our state.

Mr. Caramagna filled in the ballots of other voters between March and November 2017 to help himself win a narrow victory. This is not the first time vote-by-mail has been corrupted. Last year, the U.S. Attorney's office charged a Hoboken resident with offering voters \$50 in order to apply for and cast mail-in ballots in the November 2013 Hoboken municipal election.

Likewise, a trial recently took place involving unlawful and fraudulent vote-by-mail ballots cast in Westwood in favor of a Democratic candidate for council in 2018. Judge Estela M. De La Cruz, in a written opinion dated Feb. 6, 2019, reversed this close municipal race; deciding that several ballots cast via vote-by-mail were indeed mailed to and completed by people who had not lived in the community for years.

Coincidentally, last year county election officials were forced to quickly implement laws automatically providing vote-by-mail ballots unless voters opt out. As we have now seen firsthand, vote-by-mail ballots provide easy opportunities for fraud and hastily implemented changes have only lead to more confusion for officials and voters.

The Division of Law and Public Safety has broad powers in the security and integrity of elections by auditing election results (N.J.S. § 19:61-9), examining legal matters brought by the legislature, and providing legal advice to state officers and entities – such as the Division of Elections - consistent with your mission to enforce state laws and the constitution (N.J.S. § 52:17A-4).

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We request that you provide legal advice and guidelines for the N.J. Division of Elections to issue rules for county superintendents of elections on handling the vote-by-mail process to ensure it is fair and secure. We also request a thorough investigation of any and all allegations raised regarding voter fraud.

This is consistent with your initiative to combat corruption and increase confidence in government by forming the Office of Public Integrity & Accountability (OPIA).

It is imperative that rules are prepared and distributed to county superintendents of elections to prevent this from happening during the 2019 primary and general elections. We hope to work with you to address this issue and look forward to your quick and efficient response.

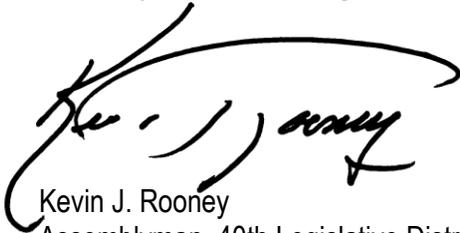
Sincerely,



Holly Schepisi
Assemblywoman, 39th Legislative District



Robert Auth
Assemblyman, 39th Legislative District



Kevin J. Rooney
Assemblyman, 40th Legislative District



Christopher DePhillips
Assemblyman, 40th Legislative District