

STATE HOUSE NEWS – NOVEMBER 2009

Public and Government Affairs Review

BILLS IN LAME DUCK SESSION

Facing a new administration and a change in leadership in both houses, the Legislature embarked on what should be a very busy lame-duck session earlier this week. The current legislative session ends at Noon on January 12, 2010, when the new Legislature is sworn in; and, Governor-elect Chris Christie takes his Oath of Office at Noon on January 20, 2010.

In the meantime, any bill that passes both houses between November 28, 2009 and January 2, 2010 will become law at Noon on January 11, 2010 if the Governor does not exercise one of his veto powers by Noon on the 11th. The Governor may of course sign this type of bill into law before that time as well. Any bill that passes both houses between January 2, 2010 and by Noon on January 12, 2010 will become law only if the Governor signs it into law by Noon on January 19, 2010. If the Governor does not sign this type of bill into law by the 19th it is considered “pocket vetoed,” and does not become law. However, if the Governor decides to exercise one of his veto powers between the 12th and 19th, this type of bill may become law if both houses agree with the Governor’s recommendation, and pass the bill by a 2/3 majority vote before Noon on the 19th. Got it!

NEW LEADERS IN LEGISLATURE

When the Legislature is sworn in on January 12th, Senator Stephen Sweeney (D-3) will become the next Senate President, and Assemblywoman Sheila Oliver (D-34) will become the next Speaker of the General Assembly. Senate-Majority Leader elect Barbara Buono (D-18) and Assembly-Majority Leader elect Joseph Cryan (D-20), will move up into new leadership roles as well.

NEW DIRECTORY OF LOCAL OFFICIALS

On October 19, 2009, Governor Corzine signed into law SENATE, NO. 1426 (*Whelan D-2/Baroni R-14*) as P.L. 2009, C,141, which requires municipal clerks to compile and maintain a directory of local authorities, boards, and commissions. This new law also authorizes municipal appointing authorities to adopt ordinances establishing a lower absentee threshold, provided that such an ordinance does not permit the removal of a member if the member has been absent for less than six consecutive weeks, or three consecutive meetings, whichever is longer, and without being excused.

The new law should make it easier for concerned citizens to participate in their municipal government as it’s intended to help residents determine what positions are available on local authorities, boards, and commissions. The measure is also intended to make it easier for residents to apply for such appointments, as it requires municipal clerks to develop and make available, a one-page application form for interested citizens to complete and return accordingly. This new law takes effect immediately.

STATE HOUSE TRIVIA

Did you know that in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln officially proclaimed Thanksgiving as a national holiday for the first time, and also declared that it fall on the last Thursday in November of each year.

Congratulations to GluckWalrath attorney Jason Medina, who has been named to the Board of Trustees for the Burlington County Community Action Program (BCCAP). Mr. Medina is a member of the Firm’s litigation and public entity practice groups, and serves as an elected committeeman in Bordentown Township.