

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 4386

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Bill No. 4386 with my recommendations for reconsideration.

In August 2014, I conditionally vetoed Senate Bill No. 387 (Second Reprint) (2014) because it risked the integrity of our school elections by politicizing them. Permitting school board candidates to circulate petitions jointly and to be bracketed together on a ballot under a chosen slogan, including slogans commonly associated with one political party or another, could very well inject partisan politics into our nonpartisan school elections. Having expressed these concerns in my conditional veto, I recommended that the bill be amended to require the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, to conduct a review of the bill's impact on school elections and to report their findings and recommendations before any such proposal is implemented.

The Legislature instead has now returned the same proposal I vetoed last year, except that this bill also adds a version of the recommended study. Contrary to my recommendation, however, the study would occur after, not before, implementation. While I appreciate that the sponsors recognize the benefits of such a study, I believe that transforming school election ballots by grouping candidates' names and campaign slogans compels us to first assess the risk that such a proposal would politicize our nonpartisan school elections, especially when the proposal lacks the support of the New Jersey School Boards Association and the bipartisan group of county election officials. I therefore cannot sign the current bill and once again call upon the Legislature to concur with my prior recommendation.

Accordingly, I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 4386 and recommend that it be amended as follows:

<u>Page 2, Title, Line 2:</u>	After "elections," insert "and"
<u>Page 2, Title, Lines 2-3:</u>	Delete ", and amending P.L.1995, c.278"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Lines 8-45:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 3, Section 1, Lines 1-4:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 3, Section 2, Lines 6-48:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 4, Section 2, Lines 1-21:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 4, Section 3, Lines 23-48:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 5, Section 3, Lines 1-19:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 5, Section 4, Lines 21-48:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 6, Section 4, Lines 1-32:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 6, Section 5, Line 34:</u>	Delete "5." and insert "1."
<u>Page 6, Section 5, Line 38:</u>	Delete ", as provided for in"
<u>Page 6, Section 5, Lines 39-41:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 6, Section 5, Line 42:</u>	Delete "three years following the enactment of the act"
<u>Page 6, Section 5, Line 45:</u>	Delete "following the certification of the results from the last annual"
<u>Page 6, Section 5, Line 46:</u>	Delete "school election held in the third year"
<u>Page 6, Section 5, Line 46:</u>	After "enactment of" delete "the" and insert "this"
<u>Page 7, Section 6, Line 1:</u>	Delete "6." and insert "2."

Respectfully,

[seal]

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Thomas P. Scrivo

Chief Counsel to the Governor