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**Sent:** Tuesday, November 24, 2009 12:34 AM  
**To:** Lashway, Lisa  
**Subject:** NJLM - A-3119 - Increases LUARCC Powers

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### **A-3119 - Increases LUARCC Powers**

The League opposes **A-3119**, which **would grant greater power to the Local Unit Alignment, Reorganization and Consolidation Commission (LUARCC), and impose unfair financial penalties on voters who disagree with the Commission's recommendations.**

Originally scheduled for Committee consideration today, the bill was held at the sponsor's request. **We expect action on this legislation before the end of the year.**

Speaker Roberts, who sponsors this bill, was the major force behind efforts to empower a Citizens Convention for Property Tax Reform. Thanks to his efforts, a percentage of the State Sales Tax is dedicated to property tax relief. Though not the preferred option, he worked tirelessly with the Legislature's Special Session for Property Tax Reform. The LUARCC is a product of that Session. We have cooperated with the Commission, since its creation. And we have supported all of the Speakers other property tax relief initiatives.

Speaker Roberts has been a passionate and consistent ally in our ongoing efforts to secure meaningful, substantial and reliable property tax relief for the people of our State.

Those people should not be led to believe that the work of the LUARCC will deliver that relief. Service sharings and consolidations will be, at best, a part of the solution. While they are a part that should not be ignored, studies, statistics and the testimony of experts clearly state that they will not alone meet the needs of New Jersey property taxpayers for real reform.

**A-3119 would rename the Commission in honor of the late Assembly Speaker Alan J. Karcher. We remember Speaker Karcher, not as an author, but as a strong proponent of property tax relief. As such, he sued a Governor, in an effort to prevent a State skim of statutorily dedicated municipal revenue replacement funding. That honorable effort should be remembered.**

**The bill directs the Commission to place particular emphasis on the assumption, by counties, of municipal functions. We see no reason to ask the Commission to slant their recommendations in any particular direction. We hope the**

**Commissioners will continue to go in the direction dictated by the facts.**

**The bill requires the promulgation of two five-year plans. Again, we prefer that the Commission be permitted to go at its own pace.**

**Section 7 of the bill would remove the imposition of a Legislative veto, between the Commission's recommendations and a vote by the people. We see no reason, and have never asked, for the Legislative veto. We, therefore, support this provision.**

**A major problem concerns Section 6 of the bill. This would impose serious financial hardships on voters who democratically reject a Commission proposed consolidation. Those voters would be denied the benefit of Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Act (CMPTRA) funding for five years, and be denied full revenue replacement funding for another five years after that. We vigorously oppose this proposal which would, on the one hand, allow the voters to express their will; but, on the other hand, inform those voters that they will be punished, if their will does not comport with that of a majority of the appointed members of the LUARCC.**

**It cannot be argued that taxpaying voters who democratically reject an option offered by an agency of the State bureaucracy should, thereby, forfeit the right to property tax relief funding. As taxpaying citizens of the State of New Jersey, they must be allowed the unencumbered right to determine the future government of their communities. And they must be assured equitable access to the benefits secured by their own tax dollars.**

**Accordingly, we oppose A-3119. We strongly suggest you contact your State Legislators to urge them to oppose this proposal. If you have any questions please contact Jon Moran at (609) 695-3481 ext. 121.**

Very truly yours,

William G. Dressel, Jr.  
Executive Director

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