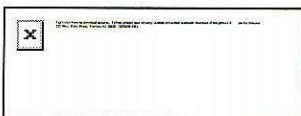


(C)

Lashway, Lisa

From: NJLM - Municipal Clerks [njlm-clerks@cityconnections.com]  
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2008 3:02 PM  
To: Lashway, Lisa  
Subject: Municipal Clerks from NJLM



**LEAGUE ALERT**

Municipal Clerk: Please forward to Mayor and Governing Body.

May 1, 2008

**Re: I May Grant Page Posted**

**Re: II SPEAKER'S PROPOSAL TO GIVE CONSOLIDATION COMMISSION 'TEETH'**

**Re: I May Grant Page Posted**

A new featured article has been posted in our Grant Resource Center. This month's article: *Navigating a Changing Redevelopment Environment* discusses the importance of the redevelopment process.

**New featured grant opportunities** have also been listed. Visit our Grant Resource Center at [www.njslom.org/grants.html](http://www.njslom.org/grants.html).

**RE: II SPEAKER'S PROPOSAL TO GIVE CONSOLIDATION COMMISSION 'TEETH'**

Dear Mayor:

Late last month, Speaker Roberts proposed major changes to the so-called "Consolidation Commission" statute. As we worked with the Legislature's Special Property Tax Reform Session on the creation of the Local Unit

Alignment, Reorganization and Consolidation Commission (LUARCC), so we look forward to working with the Commission, as it fulfills its mission. Accordingly, we welcome the Speaker's involvement in the process. He has been, and continues to be, 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 and statistics and the testimony of experts clearly state that they will not alone meet the needs of New Jersey property taxpayers for real reform.

With that in mind, we comment on the Speaker's proposed three-part 'solution.'

*"\* Focus LUARCC's mission. Require LUARCC to submit two consecutive five-year plans for municipal consolidation. In developing these plans, LUARCC should prioritize towns based on a variety of characteristics, including local interest, size, per capita spending, and service delivery efficiency."*

We know of no measurement for 'service delivery efficiency.' Accordingly, this proposal asks LUARCC to base its priorities on a non-existent measurement. We, however, stand ready to work with the Speaker and the Commission on the development of such a standard. That should be, in our opinion, LUARCC's first task.

*"\* Eliminate escape clauses. Current law provides that a consolidation proposal will not be put before the voters if, within 30 days of the commission's recommendation, the Legislature passes a concurrent resolution opposing the consolidation. Eliminating this provision would ensure that voters have the opportunity to weigh in on all commission recommendations."*

We see no reason for the Legislative veto and, therefore, support the Speaker's proposal.

*"\* Discretionary penalties for towns that reject LUARCC recommendations. Allow the commission to reduce state aid if voters reject a consolidation proposal recommended by LUARCC. Voters should understand that failure to adopt a consolidation proposal could have serious fiscal consequences from the state."*

We must oppose a 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 them 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.

We will keep you posted on any future developments. If you have any questions, contact Jon Moran at 609-695-3481, ext. 121.

Very truly yours,

William G. Dressel, Jr.  
Executive Director

NJLM  
222 West State Street  
Trenton, NJ 08608

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