



NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATE HOUSE
PO BOX 098
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0098
(609) 847-3400

May 21, 2020

The Honorable Craig Coughlin
569 Rahway Ave.
Woodbridge, NJ 07095

Dear Speaker Coughlin:

Please allow this letter to serve as our formal request to create a bipartisan special investigative committee with subpoena power to review the state's handling of nursing homes during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are troubled by a recent investigation regarding the Health Department's handling of the situation in nursing homes. Among some of the more disconcerting issues outlined in this investigation were delays associated with testing, nursing home inspections, and the deployment of the National Guard, the redirection of personal protective gear away from these facilities, the failure to investigate cross-contamination of homes, and the lack of information provided to family members about their loved ones.

We are all saddened by our constituents' stories of lost loved ones at these facilities. More than 40 percent of the deaths in this state have occurred at long-term care facilities, a figure which probably underestimates the true impact. Nearly one in 13 residents in New Jersey facilities, those most vulnerable, have died from the pandemic. These figures also do not take into consideration those workers who were also infected or died during the outbreak.

It is important to begin to review the actions of these facilities and the state, determine what needs to be remedied, and strategize on how to prepare these facilities and protect our residents before another coronavirus wave or emergency hits.

These facilities need to do more to protect its residents. Many of our constituents have complained administrators did not follow the law as the coronavirus outbreak worsened, initially failing to inform patients and families of residents testing positive for Covid-19. However, the blame does not lie solely on a few nursing home operators. In fact, the facility with the most deaths in New Jersey is the state-run Veterans Memorial Home in Paramus, and the responsibility to ensure our state's laws and protocols are enforced lies on the state Department of Health.

Speaker Craig Coughlin

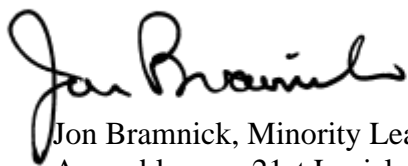
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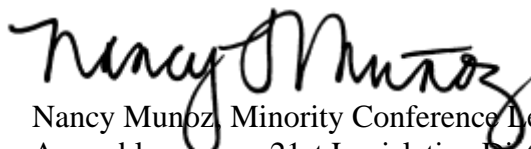
Since the Open Public Records Act cannot be used to evaluate the state's records on the handling of nursing homes and many other issues related to the pandemic, a committee with subpoena power is the only way to make the administration's decisions public and transparent. The administration has already denied requests for information on nursing home health inspection reports, state contracts with laboratories and consultants, and personal protective gear data, hospital capacity, and ventilator use. The public has a right to know how its government is handling this emergency.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation. We welcome the opportunity to move forward in a truly bipartisan fashion to address this situation and provide meaningful measures to help protect our constituents.

Sincerely,



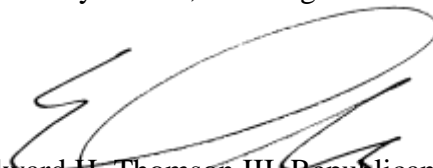
Jon Bramnick, Minority Leader
Assemblyman, 21st Legislative District



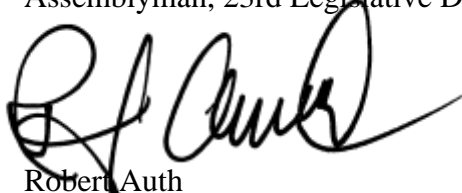
Nancy Munoz, Minority Conference Leader
Assemblywoman, 21st Legislative District



John DiMaio, Co-Minority Conference Leader
Assemblyman, 23rd Legislative District



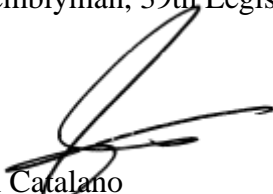
Edward H. Thomson III, Republican Whip
Assemblyman, 30th Legislative District



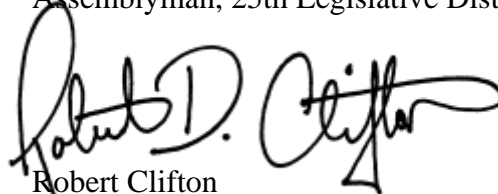
Robert Auth
Assemblyman, 39th Legislative District



Brian Bergen
Assemblyman, 25th Legislative District



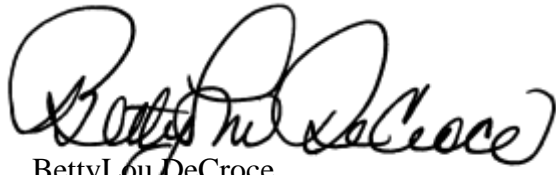
John Catalano
Assemblyman, 10th Legislative District

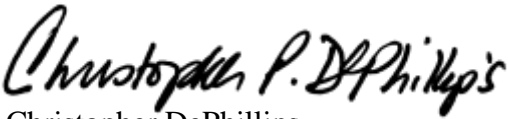


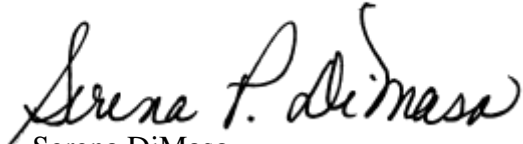
Robert Clifton
Assemblyman, 12th Legislative District


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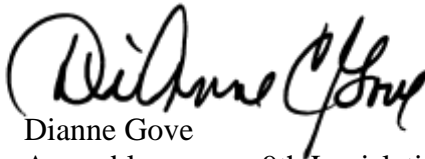

Ron Dancer
Assemblyman, 12th Legislative District

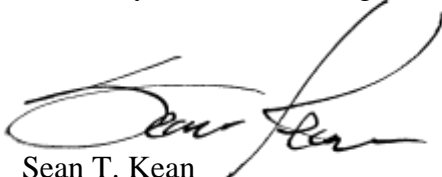

BettyLou DeCroce
Assemblywoman, 26th Legislative District

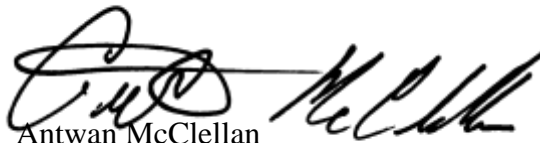

Christopher DePhillips
Assemblyman, 40th Legislative District

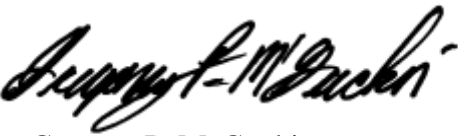

Serena DiMaso
Assemblywoman, 13th Legislative District



Aura Dunn
Assemblywoman, 25th Legislative District



Dianne Gove
Assemblywoman, 9th Legislative District

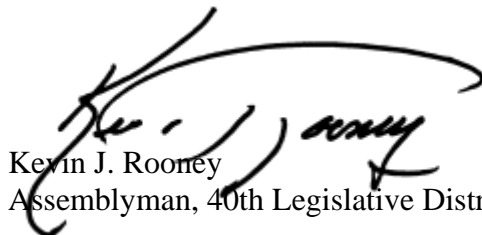

Sean T. Kean
Assemblyman, 30th Legislative District

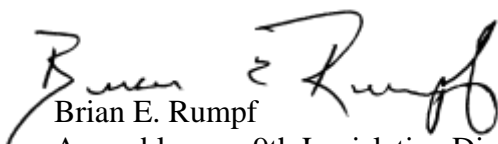

Antwan McClellan
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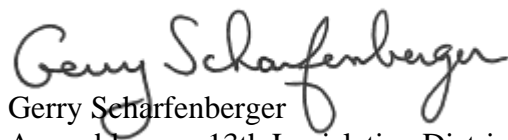

Gregory P. McGuckin
Assemblyman, 10th Legislative District


Ryan Peters
Assemblyman, 8th Legislative District


Erik Peterson
Assemblyman, 23rd Legislative District


Kevin J. Rooney
Assemblyman, 40th Legislative District

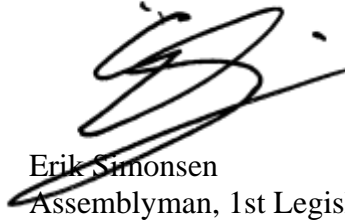

Brian E. Rumpf
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Gerry Scharfenberger
Assemblyman, 13th Legislative District

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Holly Schepisi
Assemblywoman, 39th Legislative District



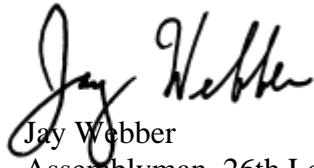
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Assemblyman, 1st Legislative District



Parker Space
Assemblyman, 24th Legislative District



Jean Stanfield
Assemblywoman, 8th Legislative District



Jay Webber
Assemblyman, 26th Legislative District



Hal Wirth
Assemblyman, 24th Legislative District