



NEW JERSEY LEGISLATURE

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July 17, 2019

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Mr. George Helmy, Chief of Staff
Mr. Mathew J. Platkin, Chief Counsel
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Mssrs. Helmy and Platkin:

Now that the governor has confirmed the existence of the so-called Inside/Outside conference calls between the Governor, his staff and a group of private consultants, there are issues that must be addressed in order to maintain the integrity of the office. As you both know, statutes and codes of conduct make crucial distinctions between government and private interest consultants, groups or organizations.

Executive Order 2A, Code of Conduct for the Governor, states: "Consistent with the other provisions of this Code, the Governor shall not use or disclose information not generally available to members of the public, which information he or she obtains during the course of his or her official duties, other than such use or disclosure connected with the Governor's official duties."

Additionally, the State of New Jersey's Uniform Ethics Code, states: "No State officer or employee or special State officer or employee, shall willfully disclose to any person, whether or not for pecuniary gain, any information not generally available to members of the public which he/she receives or acquires in the course of and by reason of his/her official duties. No State officer or employee or special State officer or employee shall use for the purpose of pecuniary gain, whether directly or indirectly, any information not generally available to members of the public which he/she receives or acquires in the course of and by reason of his/her official duties."

Professional lobbyists and consulting firms often have a range of clients with an array of policy objectives. Maintaining a clear line between special interests and government is vital and New Jersey residents know all too well what happens when that line is blurred.

Due to the fact that the outside consultants on the calls represent clients with business before the State, the State of New Jersey deserves to know:

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- 1) Has the administration vetted the outside consultants and if they did, please detail the process.
- 2) Are outside political advisors with professional allegiances to private clients being provided with exclusive information about policies that are being considered or will be enacted?
- 3) Are outside political advisors shaping or determining policy decisions that will favor their clients?
- 4) Has the administration constructed a firewall between the information discussed on their joint phone calls and any clients' business interests the consultants might be representing?
- 5) If a firewall has been constructed, how does the administration effectively maintain and implement this firewall?

As state representatives and state employees, our allegiance must first be with the people of our State. Our very institution relies upon us to maintain and strengthen the integrity of our offices and therefore we must make abiding by our own statutes the highest priority. I hope you both share my grave concern for the integrity of our codes of conduct, and respond shortly to my requests of transparency in this process.

Sincerely,



Loretta Weinberg
Senate Majority Leader

c. Stephen M. Sweeney, Senate President
Kevin Drennan, Executive Director, Senate Majority Office