

# New Jersey Senate

## SENATE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

NEW JERSEY STATE HOUSE

P.O. BOX 099

TRENTON, NJ 08625



SENATENJ.COM

NJSENREPS@NJLEG.ORG

P: (609) 847-3600

F: (609) 984-8148

October 14, 2020

The Honorable Philip D. Murphy  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy,

I write to you today on behalf of thousands of New Jersey residents who struggle daily with addiction to alcohol or narcotics. As you are aware, the on-going stress of the current pandemic weighs heavy on the shoulders of many New Jerseyans in these tumultuous times.

As 12-step support organizations prepare to resume in-person group sessions, it has come to my attention that current restrictions cap these gatherings at 25 participants. While capacity limits have been eased for many functions – including weddings and religious services – meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and similar organizations remain limited by hard caps.

The importance of these meetings cannot be over-stated. Increases in depression, anxiety, and substance abuse during the pandemic have been well-documented, and I think you will agree that now is not the time to turn away individuals who know they need help from meetings due to an arbitrary capacity limit.

In discussions with a substance abuse counselor in Morris County who is involved with the reopening of meetings in our area, he related the frustrations of many hundreds of local men and women desperately seeking the help provided by in-person meetings and his fear of having them turned away at the door because of the 25-person ceiling.

The support available at these groups have been life saving for many individuals, and the valuable connections and productive breakthroughs that occur in person cannot be duplicated on a Zoom session. I ask you to please consider lifting the capacity limits for 12-step meetings.

Thank you for your consideration of this important, low-risk/high-reward request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony M. Bucco".

Senator Anthony M. Bucco  
25<sup>th</sup> Legislative District