

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

January 26, 2021

The Honorable Steve Sweeney
Senate Democratic Office
P.O. Box 099
Trenton, NJ, 08625

Dear Senate President Sweeney,

After months of delay and inaction, it is time for you to formally constitute the investigative body that was promised to help us understand how the executive branch's response to COVID-19 has contributed to the massive loss of life in New Jersey's long-term care (LTC) facilities, with the goal of saving lives in the future.

Our caucus has written to you a number of times to express the critical importance of this effort. For reference, our prior correspondence can be found on our website at the following links:

- May 13, 2020: <https://www.senatenj.com/uploads/select-committee-ltr-sweeney.pdf>
- May 20, 2020: <https://www.senatenj.com/uploads/sweeney-ltr-5-20-2020.pdf>
- May 29, 2020: <https://www.senatenj.com/uploads/sweeney-ltr-5-29-2020.pdf>
- June 2, 2020: <https://www.senatenj.com/uploads/sweeney-preservation-ltr-6-2-2020.pdf>
- July 21, 2020: <https://www.senatenj.com/uploads/sweeney-ltr-7-21-2020.pdf>

Unfortunately, despite the determination of Senate Republicans to move this process forward, no substantive action has been taken by the Senate Democratic Majority to understand how the flawed policies of the Murphy administration could be improved to better protect the tens of thousands of seniors, veterans, and residents with disabilities who live in LTC facilities across New Jersey.

To date, nearly 8,000 residents and staff of our nursing homes and veterans homes have died, with the loss of life still rising at a tragic rate. In fact, deaths in our nursing homes tripled in December from the prior month as the Murphy administration bungled paperwork delaying the start of the vaccination process in these facilities.

Despite the consequences of Governor Murphy's policy requiring LTC facilities to accept COVID-positive patients, which led to thousands of unnecessary deaths in the initial months of the pandemic, we have heard repeated concerns from constituents that infected patients continue to be admitted into the LTC facilities where their parents and loved ones reside.

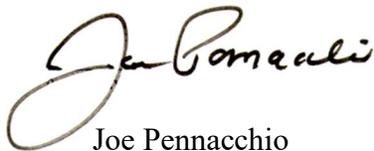
Additionally, the administration continues to deny both the media and legislators access to

documents and emails that would help us to understand how some of the tragic decisions were made or why they have been allowed to persist.

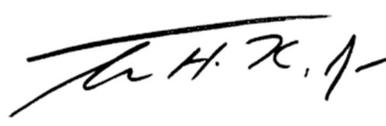
Without a substantial legislative oversight effort to hold them accountable for the preventable deaths in our nursing homes, veterans homes, and LTC facilities, it's clear the Murphy Administration has had little motivation to improve protections for New Jersey's seniors, veterans, and disabled residents from the devastating impact of COVID-19.

We continue to believe the Legislature must utilize the full range of its oversight powers as a co-equal branch of government to demand accountability and improve transparency from the administration on all aspects of its COVID-19 response. We again urge you to allow the formation of a bipartisan select committee with subpoena power to help us to uncover the truth and develop and implement life-saving reforms.

Sincerely,



Joe Pennacchio
Whip

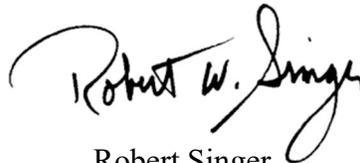


Thomas Kean
Leader

Kristin Corrado
Conference Leader



Kip Bateman
Deputy Whip



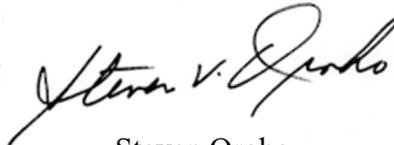
Robert Singer
Deputy Leader



Chris Brown
Deputy Conference Leader



Anthony M. Bucco
Senator – District 25



Steven Oroho
Budget Officer



Gerald Cardinale
Senator – District 39



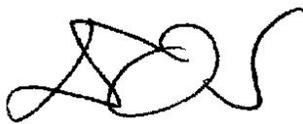
Christopher Connors
Senator – District 9



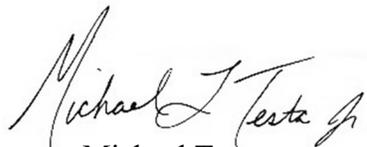
Michael Doherty
Senator – District 23



James Holzapfel
Senator – District 10



Declan O'Scanlon
Senator – District 13



Michael Testa
Senator – District 1



Samuel Thompson
Senator – District 12

cc: Governor Philip D. Murphy
Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin