



New Jersey School Boards Association

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POSITION STATEMENT

Opposing A-3902 (Wimberley, Coughlin, Armato, Scharfenberger)

Permits extension of certain deadlines applicable to local government units
under emergency circumstances

The New Jersey School Boards Association opposes A-3902, which would authorize the Department of Community Affairs to permit municipalities to delay the transmission of property tax revenues to school districts during gubernatorial-declared emergencies.

NJSBA recognizes the impact of the current public health emergency on the state and local governments, as well as local school districts. This legislation, however, would only worsen the situation for our communities.

New Jersey's public schools are highly dependent on property tax revenue to support education programs. On average, local property taxes constitute 60% of public school revenue, with the percentage even greater in a significant number of districts. A delay in payments from municipalities will result in a financial crisis for school districts, seriously disrupting the educational process—and bringing it to a halt.

Although public school buildings are closed during the current health emergency, the education of our students is taking place through remote learning and home instruction. Continued timely transmission of school property taxes is critical for the education process to continue without interruption.

Under our state's current structure, municipalities are designated as the authorities to *collect* property taxes. But those taxes are levied for specific purposes—e.g., municipal, school, county, fire district—and these obligations must continue to be met.

As currently written, A-3902, which is designed to ease a financial burden on municipalities, would place a severe strain on school districts and the students and families that they serve.

NJSBA is committed to working with our state's lawmakers during this unprecedented crisis. However, we urge the Senate not to consider this legislation.

March 26, 2020