
Commission Meeting

of

NEW JERSEY CITIZENS' CLEAN ELECTIONS COMMISSION

“Initial organizational meeting”

LOCATION: Prospect House
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

DATE: March 2, 2005
3:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION PRESENT:

William E. Schluter, Chair
Senator Anthony R. Bucco
Assemblywoman Linda R. Greenstein
Assemblyman Bill Baroni
Victor DeLuca
Steven Lenox
Carol J. Murphy
Curtis Tao



ALSO PRESENT:

Frank J. Parisi
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Secretary

Wendy Chill
Senate Majority
Beth Schroeder
Assembly Majority

Victoria Brogan
Senate Republican
Dana Conrad
Assembly Republican

Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

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MR. PARISI (OLS Commission Aide): May I have your attention, please. This may be the appropriate time to call the meeting to order. I've been asked, in my capacity as the contact person from Legislative Services, to kind of call the meeting to order and to call the roll until a chair has been selected, if that's okay with everyone?

I'd like to begin by calling the roll.

This is very cozy up here (close seating). Good thing everybody knows each other. (laughter)

Okay.

Curtis Tao?

MR. TAO: Present.

MR. PARISI: Senator Schluter?

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Present.

MR. PARISI: Assemblywoman Murphy?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: Yes, here.

MR. PARISI: Steve Lenox?

MR. LENOX: Here.

MR. PARISI: Victor DeLuca?

MR. DeLUCA: Here.

MR. PARISI: Assemblywoman Greenstein?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: Here.

MR. PARISI: Assemblyman Baroni? (no response)

Senator Scutari? (no response)

Senator Bucco?

SENATOR BUCCO: Here.

MR. PARISI: There is a quorum. And with that in mind, I would ask that we can, perhaps, proceed. I will start by introductions.

Senator Bucco, would you like to lead us with the introductions? Just tell everybody who you are -- maybe just a short hello.

SENATOR BUCCO: I'm Senator Bucco from Morris County, 25th District. I've been in the Senate since 1998 and am enjoying my tenure there, and looking forward to working on this Commission.

MR. PARISI: Go ahead.

MR. DeLUCA: I'm Vic DeLuca, and I'm the former mayor of Maplewood, New Jersey. I'm also a founding member and current board member of New Jersey Citizen Action.

MR. LENOX: My name is Steve Lenox. I've been appointed by Assemblyman Sires to sit on this Commission as a public member. I am employed by the New Jersey State AFL-CIO, and I'm also President of the Democrats 2000.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: I am Bill Schluter, and I'm not Senator Schluter. I was Senator Schluter. I don't want to trespass on Senator Bucco and Senator Scutari under false pretenses. But I am semi-retired when I'm not working on other statewide efforts -- Property Tax Convention, and so forth.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: I'm Linda Greenstein from the 14th Legislative District. I've been in the Assembly since January of 2000. I look forward to working on this Commission, because it was formed by the bill that I'm co-sponsoring with Majority Leader Roberts, that I did co-sponsor, and has now been signed into law -- the Clean Elections bill. This is an

outgrowth of it, and I look forward very much to monitoring and seeing how this grand experiment works.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: And I'm Carol Murphy, a former Freeholder, a former Assemblywoman, and former Commissioner at the Board of Public Utilities. So now I am entering a new life as a member of this Commission. I'm very delighted to be here.

Thank you all.

MR. TAO: My name is Curtis Tao from South Amboy. I serve on the Board of Directors for the Center for Civic Responsibility and Common Cause New Jersey. And I, too, am very excited to work on this exciting experiment in democracy.

MR. PARISI: Thank you.

Sorry, Senator Schluter. For so many years of addressing you as Senator Schluter, that it's just ingrained with me.

Frank Parisi. I am a Principal Research Analyst with the New Jersey Office of Legislative Services, and assisting the Commission at this time.

At this point, I would like to turn the proceedings over to Assembly Majority Leader Joseph Roberts.

ASSEMBLYMAN JOSEPH J. ROBERTS JR.: Thank you very much.

Let me note, for the record, that Assemblyman Baroni has joined us, as well.

And I think it is to the great credit of the members of this Commission that I believe we have perfect attendance and full participation. And this is a very distinguished group of Legislators, former Legislators and

reformed-minded citizens. And as someone who cares deeply about this issue and spent an enormous amount of time on it, I want to thank you very much for the commitment that you've made. Because today is really the beginning of the process with respect to implementing clean elections in the State of New Jersey.

It's significant that we're here in Prospect House, because this was the site of our, briefly -- of our nation's post-Revolutionary War government in 1783. And in many ways, this Clean Elections Program represents a new revolution -- certainly the potential for a revolution in terms of how we conduct elections here in the State of New Jersey.

Let me just note that I think we all see that voter participation is waning in confidence, and our electoral process is waning as well. And there's real concern that the influence of special interests in the political process is something that has truly gotten out of hand. We've spent a considerable amount of time in the Legislature dealing with a whole host of reforms. One of them that has received the most visibility is the so-called Pay-to-Play reform. And as important as I think that is, I have said consistently, and believe that even when that is implemented, this commitment to public financing has the ability to really represent the substantial reform. Because if you will, Pay-to-Play has the ability to get some of the money out of the political process. Clean Elections has the ability to get all the money out of the political process.

I need to begin by thanking the groups that came together to form a coalition to allow Clean Elections to be a reality here in the State of New Jersey. They certainly consisted of AARP and a number of other groups that

really worked very, very hard. First and foremost was Citizen Action. Their passionate commitment, and their diligence, and their persistence to making this a reality is part of the reason that it is a reality today.

As was said in Assemblywoman Greenstein's opening comments, she and I played a role in writing this legislation. And I had the honor of joining her when we visited Maine to talk with legislators there. Because as you know, Maine and Arizona are the only two states in the nation that have publicly funded legislative election campaigns. And they are -- in both of those states, it was the result of a voter referendum. Whereas, here in the State of New Jersey, by virtue of legislative action, we have this demonstration project. And what Linda and I saw when we went to Maine was that both major parties have embraced public funding of legislative campaigns.

In 2002, 71 percent of Democrats, 54 percent of Republicans volunteered to abide by the public financing constraints. Overall, 231 out of 372 candidates in Maine's 2002 legislative races -- roughly 61 percent of the candidates -- took part in a voluntary clean election system. Last year's elections in Maine, the participation exceeded 70 percent. When we visited there and spoke with legislative leaders last Summer, they proudly noted to us how 77 percent of the state's senators and 55 percent of its house members were elected by virtue of clean election campaigns.

And they noted that there were a number of benefits. Obviously, taking the influence of money out of the process is one of them. But I know that my legislative colleagues will acknowledge that it's not just taking the money out of the process, it's taking out of the process the time that is involved in raising the money. And they said that it was really a freeing thing

for them, because they had the ability to be involved, and learning about issues, and meeting with their constituents, and being better legislators. Because I think everyone of us can relate to the pain in the neck that is associated with having to conduct fundraisers and be involved in that.

They also helped us understand how important clean elections is in allowing nontraditional candidates to have access to the electoral process. One of the real embarrassments, from my perspective, in the State of New Jersey is the degree to which we don't have enough women in the State Legislature, and we're probably moving in the wrong direction rather than the right direction. But in Maine, by virtue of not having the need to have a big bankroll or have the ability to raise significant amounts of money, candidates who have persuasive messages, who otherwise would have not had the opportunity to be candidates, have found that they have the opportunity to participate in the process.

And they also told us as well, both Democrats and Republicans, that it has gone a long way to reverse some of the voters' cynicism that they had seen, even in a state like Maine, about who is involved in the decision-making process. Because the public knows that their elected officials are accountable only to them.

Let me just conclude with a couple of thoughts. I made this observation when we had the Committee hearing when this bill was being considered, and it's a quote that's worth repeating, because it came from a person who, at the time, was a candidate for the gubernatorial nomination in the state of California -- Arianna Huffington -- who underscored the tremendous upside of clean elections, in 2002, when she said, "Ultimately, the

only way to dramatically diminish the corrupting influence of special interest money is by adopting the clean money, clean elections model, which replaces the nonstop money grab with full public financing of elections.” Think of it: no hard money, no soft money, no endless dialing for dollars, no quid pro quo through deals -- just candidates and elected officials beholden to no one but the voters. And this is no pie-in-the-sky fantasy. Clean money laws in states, I should note, like Maine and Arizona have proven remarkably effective in reducing campaign spending, shrinking the influence of outside money, and encouraging more and better people to run.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is, I think, a unique opportunity for us here in this State of New Jersey. I think, for a variety of reasons, our citizens are focused on the need for fundamental campaign finance reform, and I know that the Senator and the legislative colleagues will tell you that we hear from constituents all the time about the need for reform. And in my judgment, clean elections represents the most fundamental reform that we could achieve.

As you begin your work as members of this task force, I want to say thank you to you. It’s my understanding that the great Bill Schluter has agreed, perhaps reluctantly, to serve as the Chairman of this Commission. Reluctantly only because of the multitude of other challenges that he faces. And I’m gratified that that’s the case. Senator Schluter is someone who has a keen understanding of the legislative process and is probably the leading voice for reform in the State of New Jersey, and someone I’ve been pleased to work with on a variety of issues. And I think his leadership, together with the outstanding participation of the members of this Commission, will allow it to be a success.

And on behalf of all the members of the Legislature, I want to thank you for taking on this assignment. I think, as we go forward over the next number of months and move through the primary and the general election, and clean elections become a reality in New Jersey, you will see how important this task is.

And I thank you very much for making the time to do it. It's a very, very worthwhile endeavor. Thank you very much.

MR. PARISI: Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader.

I've been also asked at this point to talk a little bit about the job of the Commission and, in fact, the job -- with a little more detail about the Clean Elections bill. I would refer you to the packet, which is in front of you, the folders in front of you. They contain a number of items, one of which is a memorandum which I put together for you which kind of looks at the Commission. There's also a copy of the bill, which established the pilot project, P.L. 2004, c.121, and the Committee statement for that bill.

I would just like to begin by looking at or calling your attention to Section 17, which begins on Page 10 of that particular piece of legislation and talks about the Commission. Subsection *a.* really talks about how the members of the Commission are selected. And I think you pretty much know how that worked. It was really done by the Governor, the Senate President, and the Speaker of the General Assembly; and Minority Leader of the Senate and the Minority Leader in the General Assembly as well.

I'd like to call your attention, beginning with Subsection *b.* which says that, "The members of the Commission shall be appointed no later than the 30th day following January 1, 2005, and shall hold their initial

organizational meeting no later than the 30th day following their appointment.” That happens to be today. “The members shall elect one of the members to serve as chair and the chair may appoint a secretary, who need not be a member of the NJCCEC. The members of the NJCCEC shall serve without compensation, but be eligible for reimbursement.”

The meeting shall be “at the call of the chair,” and the Commission “shall elicit testimony from the public at such times and places as the chair shall designate and hold at least three public hearings in different parts of the state following the 2005 election.” It doesn’t say you can’t hold meetings before then, during the election, or so forth. It just provides afterwards. “A meeting of the NJCCEC shall be called at the request of five of the Commission members and five members shall constitute a quorum.”

Subsection *d.* really talks about the duty of the Commission, and I’d just like to read that for everyone’s consideration. It is “the duty of the NJCCEC to:

“(1) examine the experience, both positive and negative, of the New Jersey Fair and Clean Elections Pilot Project with respect to the election of members to the General Assembly in 2005;

“(2) review and recommend criteria for selecting districts to participate in the pilot project in 2007 and provide information to candidates in those districts seeking nomination for election and election to the office of member of the Senate and the office of member of the General Assembly regarding:

“(a) the seed money contribution amount, qualifying contribution amount and the qualifying period for candidates seeking the office of member of the Senate; and

“(b) the amount of money from the fund provided to, and the qualifying period for, candidates in a primary election for the general election, and the criteria for selection of legislative districts to participate in the New Jersey Fair and Clean Elections Pilot Project as candidates seeking the office of member of the Senate and candidates seeking the office of member of the General Assembly.” That, of course, is in 2007.

“(3) determine the feasibility of establishing the New Jersey Fair and Clean Elections Pilot Project as the public financing system for candidates for the offices of member of the Senate and the General Assembly in this state;” -- presumably after 2007, as well.

“Examine the means by which to finance the New Jersey Fair and Clean Elections Pilot Project for candidates in this State; and

“(5) consider such other matters relating to the issue of ‘clean elections’ and campaign finance as the members of the NJCCEC may deem appropriate.”

Subsection *e.* provides that the Commission shall call the assistance of any State, county, or municipal department, bureau, or employee. Mentions how in part, how I got involved with this.

The NJCC -- and this is Subsection *f.*, this has to do with the work of the Commission -- shall (a)-- And I’ll just read -- go through this -- “issue a preliminary report to the Legislature on the pilot project established by this act with respect to the 2005 general election no later than the 90th day

following the day of that election,” which turns out to be February 6, 2005 (*sic*), is when the preliminary report is due.

And “(2) issue a final report to the Legislature on its findings and recommendations relative to the pilot project with respect to the 2005 general election, including, but not limited to, any suggestions for changes in the 2007 primary and general elections, no later than the 180th day following the day of the 2005 general election” -- that date, by the way, is May 7, 2006 -- “and the final report shall contain such legislation as prepared by the NJCCEC and recommend thereby for enactment.”

Okay? Is there any questions on this part of your charge? (no response)

Okay. Hearing none, I'd like to move on then to just a very brief outline of the Clean Elections Act itself. And again I would refer you to the memo that I prepared. It says “Memorandum” to members of the Commission.

I would start by pointing -- at the bottom of the page, which begins with “Fund Raising,” and this, kind of, deals with how the-- Well, I'm sorry. Let me start with the participating districts.

A participating district is a district which has members that are going to be participating in the pilot project. There is going to be two this time around. The legislation provides that the chair of the two largest political parties in the State will select one district, from a group of three, two groups of three, for participation in the project. For the members of the Democratic party, it would be a member from the 6th, 7th, or 15th districts; and for the members of the Republican party, it would be from the 9th, 11th, or 13th

districts. If one of the State chairs refuses to make such a selection, it would be made by a special three-member panel made up of a former governor, one person appointed by the Speaker, and one person appointed by the Minority Leader.

This Committee would have to make its selection no later than the 24th day following the primary election, which is July 1, 2005, if, in fact, nobody comes forward. The parties would need to make their selection of the districts that will participate by June 27, 2005.

Now, let me just point out that once the designation is made, even though it may -- the Democratic member may pick the 6th, the 7th, or the 15th district -- the hope is that the Republicans in the same district would be running, as well, as clean elections candidates.

In regard to fund raising, there are several different criteria which needs to go through, and this can be a little confusing. So if you have questions, please by all means, I can take them at the end; or if you want, you can just look at this and we could discuss it. If you are one of the candidates -- a candidate in one of the districts that is selected -- you are expected to raise money in contributions of greater than -- no more than \$200. These are known as *seed money contributions*. And these have to be from the candidate's family or the candidate himself, or other individuals, but cannot be from any kind of a committee, from a political party, from a legislative leadership party. These \$200 contributions have to be raised up to a limit of \$3,000 in the aggregate.

This money is used by the participating candidates as they go around trying to seek another pile of money called *qualifying contributions*, and

also trying to become what is called *qualified candidates* -- and I'll get into that. All participating candidates must raise qualifying contributions of at least 1,000 contributions of \$5, for \$5,000; and at least 500 contributions of \$30, or at least \$15,000; for a total of \$20,000. A participating candidate, for instance, who may be an incumbent in a particular campaign has to suspend, for the duration of the campaign, all access that candidate has to money they had raised previously. And all the qualifying contributions have to be raised, and the seed money contributions raised, at the same time. This occurs during the qualifying period, the so-called period between the 25th day following the primary, after the candidates have been selected, which is July 2, 2005; and ending on the 62nd day prior to the general election, which is September 7, 2005. Once the money has been raised in the amount of \$20,000, in those amounts, a candidate can become certified as a clean elections candidate, if, in addition, they do certain things. And that's provided for in the next paragraph.

They need to file and sign a declaration of intent to participate in the program. They have to receive the appropriate number of ballot signatures -- nominating signatures. They have to have not accepted contributions while a participating candidate, other than seed money contributions and, of course, qualifying contributions. And both candidates, both Democrats and both Republicans in a district which is selected, have to be certified as fair elections candidates.

A certified candidate can withdraw from being a certified candidate and become a nonparticipating candidate. That's someone who does not participate in the program any day prior to the time of the general election.

But they can only do so with the approval of this Commission. And the Commission would have to consider such requests on a case-by-case basis. Any candidate who withdraws from being a certified candidate must remit to the clean elections fund -- that's the fund set up to -- for money for this project -- any money that they had received.

Under the law, the law provides for certain amounts of money that a clean elections candidate would receive. Each certified candidate -- once a candidate becomes certified -- a few things I outlined -- they would be provided with money equal to 75 percent of the average amount of money expended by candidates who are members of a party seeking election to the General Assembly in those districts during the previous two general elections for that office, but in no event more than \$100,000. It would be up to the Election Law Enforcement Commission to determine how much that amount would actually be.

There are other amounts of money that such candidate can receive, and I'll just go over those. If a certified candidate is opposed by a nonparticipating candidate, the certified candidate would receive an additional amount of money equal to the amount of money that's been issued to the nonparticipating candidate, up to the amount that the candidate receives. So, in other words, if you're in the 9th District and you're a Democrat, but the Republicans decide not to put someone up, you would receive an equal amount of what you receive because that -- the other party is not having a candidate running as a clean elections candidate in that campaign. You would receive your money and you would receive the other candidate's money as well. It would go for both candidates.

There are two other additional things: If, for instance, it's been shown that, in a report of a nonparticipating candidate, that the money that such a candidate has received or has -- yes, has received or has -- is spending is greater than the amount of money which the participating candidate is receiving, the participating candidate can receive an additional amount of money, up to \$50,000. If a nonparticipating candidate at the same time is -- benefits from the fact that there may be independent expenditures -- that is, campaign ads and so forth -- and that's shown to be helping the nonparticipating candidate to the detriment of the participating candidate, the participating candidate can receive another increment of money, up to \$50,000. That's somewhat confusing, and I'll be glad to get into detail with you about that.

The law provides for public information. There has to be a voter guide which lists the candidates, where certified candidates and all candidates have an opportunity to insert a statement of up to 500 words. Certified candidates have to include the fact that they're certified candidates in their television and broadcast advertisements. And the Election Law Enforcement Commission is also required to sponsor debates.

As I have mentioned the responsibilities of Clean Elections Commission, I don't need to go into that again.

The law does contain penalties. Any person found in violation of the law would be liable to a penalty of not more than \$6,000 for the first offense, and not more than \$12,000 for the next and each subsequent offense. Any individual who is found to have knowingly and willfully given an amount of money to another person to, kind of, get around the law would be

considered guilty of a crime in the fourth degree. And there is other -- if there are false statements, intentionally made false, that would be considered a crime of a third degree. If a participating candidate files false statements and is found to be in violation of the law, and is trying to work in a way against the law, such a candidate would be -- if that person is elected to office, they would forfeit such office, and they would need to return the amount of money they had received.

Although P.L. 2004 does not contain an appropriation, I would point out that there is a 2004, 2005 Appropriations Act, the budget acted -- did include \$1.5 million to pay for it. And the costs for the Commission, and so forth, are believed by the Office of Legislative Services to be minimal.

If there are any questions that I can answer right off the bat -- I know I kind of went through that pretty quickly; it is a complicated thing -- I'd be happy to do so.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: In theory, you could have six candidates in each one of the six districts?

MR. PARISI: Well--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: Two assemblymen and a senator, on both sides of the aisle.

MR. PARISI: Well, this is only-- For this go-round, it's only for members of the General Assembly.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: Okay. So it would be two. And would there be three districts, if all three districts choose to be in this 6th, 7th, and 15th, or do they need just select one?

MR. PARISI: Just one. The chair would just select.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: Okay, thank you.

MR. PARISI: So there would be two candidates, two Democratic candidates possibly, two Republican candidates. So actually, the total you may have is as many as four. And unless there are any independent candidates -- and the law does provide for third-party candidates to participate as well. Okay.

Any other questions? (no response)

Okay. Hearing none, I'd like to just move on and move to the part of the program -- the agenda which provides for the selection of a chair. I would open the floor up to nominations for the office of chair for the committee.

SENATOR BUCCO: I move that Senator Schluter be Chair.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: Second.

MR. PARISI: I'm sorry. Who moved? Senator Bucco?
Assemblywoman Murphy?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: Yes.

MR. PARISI: Okay.

Are there any other nominations? (no response)

Okay. Hearing none, I close the nominations.

All in favor of Senator Schluter taking over as Chair of the Commission, say aye? (all say aye)

Opposed? (no response)

Senator Schluter?

SENATOR WILLIAM E. SCHLUTER (Chair): Thank you very much. And thank you, colleagues.

I think we're going to have a very interesting experience. I have a few words to say. And of course, the most important is to reflect on Assembly Majority Leader Roberts's comments, and to praise him for his leadership in bringing this bill about, as well as other components of the ethics reforms which have been going through the Legislature. And with Assembly Majority Leader Roberts, commendations should go to other members of the Legislature who have been instrumental in passing some of these landmark measures, which this is certainly one of them. I think this particular occasion is very interesting.

Assemblyman Roberts talked about Princeton being at the center of the Revolutionary War. I think Pam Hersh is here. She could tell me if this is correct, but I think the first occupant of Prospect was Woodrow Wilson. And she nods, and that is correct. And Woodrow Wilson, as President of Princeton University, lived in this house, and he certainly set a standard for reform, not only in New Jersey, but nationally. So we are in very auspicious circumstances as we start off with this work.

It's interesting to see that Staci Berger, of the Citizen Action, and so many other good people are here today -- people who you would expect to be at this kind of a meeting -- Ingrid Reed and other people here. Sandy Massing was here, I think, from the League of Women Voters. And it's also so good to see that members of the Commission--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: Dena Mottola from PIRG.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Dena Mottola from PIRG, yes. I was going to get to, because we have something in common. She uses the same exercise gym as I do. (laughter)

But it's also -- Curtis Tao is from the-- What is the organization, Curtis, that's the civic responsibility--

MR. TAO: Center for Civic Responsibility and Common Cause in New Jersey.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Common Cause.

MR. TAO: Right.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: And former mayor DeLuca is from Citizen Action. And all of the individuals appointed here have good records for progressive, bipartisan thinking on important issues.

Now, my method of operation in chairing this Commission will be to be totally open and totally receptive of ideas of the Commission members. We want to do our work in a collegial manner. We don't want to miss anything. We want to be very, very thorough. We want to have plenty of discussion, and we want to have plenty of hearings. It might be decided by some of the members that we should have special sessions where we get up on the learning curve farther than maybe some of us, including myself, are at this time, and find out some of the subtleties and nuances that went into the legislation. I think that might be very helpful.

I am willing to go as far as anybody, and as far as the consensus on this Commission wants to go, in holding the number of meetings. And we can also vary the location of the meetings to suit different people and different schedules.

I see that we all have our e-mails and our locations, and we should communicate with each other. We should be free to give our opinions to others on the Commission and to give suggestions to Frank Parisi. We don't

know at this time what the schedule might be. And as described in the remarks by Assemblyman Roberts and by Frank Parisi, this is a Commission which is going to build up gradually. There is not a lot of heavy work to be done in the next few months before this coming election. I think that we will probably do more than some suspect, because I think we will want to know more about what lies ahead of us for late this year and after the 2005 election.

It's been said that this is a demonstration project. Well, yes, it is a demonstration project. It's a pilot project, but it is really a forerunner of a new system. And this -- I would have high hopes that it goes from the demonstration stage into the actual practice of a new method of electing people in New Jersey -- legislative candidates -- one that will be very helpful and will address the problem of excessive money.

And yes, there are going to be some critics and there are going to be some nay-sayers, and they're going to say this is going to cost a lot of money for the public, in taxes, to pay these subsidies to candidates. It's my belief that this is going to save the public money. It's going to save the public money, because you look at all the excess contributions that go into campaigns now from private sources with the expectation that there be rewards and there be contracts, that ups the price of contracts. And the public pays for that. So I think we can help develop a system where, really, there is money that is saved.

The model that has been set forth in the legislation is not a wide-open one where you're going to encourage everybody to run, because there is a hurdle. There's a certain amount that people have to raise before they can qualify. So you're not going to have just an avalanche of candidates run into these campaigns, because they all get free money. That's not going

to happen, because you have this threshold of what has to be raised. These are very wise components of what the system is, so far.

So it is with a great deal of anticipation and expectation of good things. We can do a very thorough job. We can develop a road map for the year 2007. And we can also give a report which can be very extensive, and can be very ambitious, and can reach out and say how this can be developed for other legislative candidates -- and even other candidates such as county executives, such as perhaps some other people who have very large constituencies and where a partially public financed or a publicly financed campaign would be a good thing in the public interest.

I've already talked too long. I did have a note to say here that we will try to make the schedules as accommodating to everybody on the Commission's own schedules as possible. And I would urge, certainly, the legislators who have very busy schedules, if there is a meeting that they cannot make, to have their chief legislative aide come and sit in and take part in our discussions, and that would help in crafting a good report and a good solution.

With that, there are a couple of other things that we have as a matter of housekeeping, and then I would like to open it up for comments from the members. We do have the appointment of a secretary. It would be my recommendation -- I'd like to be sure that it comports with the views of the others here -- that Frank Parisi be designated as a secretary.

Do I hear any objections to that? Is that acceptable? By unanimous consent then, Mr. Parisi, you are the official secretary of this Commission.

MR. PARISI (Commission Secretary): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(laughter)

SENATOR SCHLUTER: With respect -- talking about subsequent meetings, procedures, and dates -- get your comments in to the Secretary about what days -- if you have dates that you can't attend. And of course, legislators' Mondays and Thursdays are pretty much out of the question. But if you have certain days of the week that are very difficult, get those dates in. If you're going to be away for any of the times, get that in to Frank and he will try and pull a juggling act so we can get most of our members present.

And I want to now, before we go on -- I see that we have another distinguished guest, Assemblyman from Camden County.

ASSEMBLYMAN LOUIS D. GREENWALD: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Would you like to say any words? Were you part of this legislation? I know you probably voted for it. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN GREENWALD: I've done more-- I've applied, actually, Senator, to be one of the districts. And I would like, very much, the opportunity to do it. I think with all of today's talk that we've heard in today's papers about the opportunity to clean up government and to take corruption out of the political process, I think this evens the playing field.

And for myself, who -- my greatest role model in my life -- the reason why I'm applying for this -- because my mother, Maria Barnaby Greenwald, who -- a very poor kid, born in the city of Camden and didn't have the privilege of higher education, was able to run for office and live the dream

and become a role model to so many young people. I believe this, in a time when we are taking money out of the system, levels the playing field to give all people an equal opportunity. And in my mother's memory, I'm applying for this, and would like very much the opportunity.

Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Well, Assemblyman Greenwald, thank you very much. And that's very well said, and I know you're going to have a busy Spring with the Budget Committee. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN GREENWALD: Thank you for your prayer, Senator. (laughter)

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Now, before we get into other comments from the Commission, I wonder if we could hear from our Secretary, our newly appointed Secretary, on the Web site and plans for the Web site.

MR. PARISI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In the folders there is a draft of a Web site which I took the liberty of putting together with some of the other members of the Office of Legislative Services. It is a sheet which has -- it's this sheet right here (indicating). It says the New Jersey Legislature, New Jersey Citizens' Clean Election Commission, overview of the Commission and its work. This would be hosted on the Web site of the New Jersey State Legislature. There are a number of different legislative commissions that are hosted at that point, and it would be on the same location.

The site is really open for as much information and material as you would like, Mr. Chairman, or as the members of the Commission would like.

Anything can be included on it, such as meeting dates. If you would like, we can include on there contact information for the Secretary -- any of the documents which you were provided with today -- except maybe things of a personal nature. It's really up to the Commission to put as much information or as little information as you'd like. You can put on, as I say, meeting dates and any of the documents which are provided. It's really up to the Commission.

Just let me know, and I will make sure that that's taken care of.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Well, I think certainly Web sites are a very, very valuable arm of any effort, and I would believe that there's a general consensus that we should go forward with plans to have this Web site developed--

MR. PARISI: Okay.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: --and then at our first official meeting, you can report to it and you can give us some advanced information on what might be questions. And we might have to decide, and we'll be able to proceed.

MR. PARISI: Well, what you see in front of you can be up within the next two weeks, if that's acceptable? Or if we can wait until the next meeting before actually putting that up on the Web? It's really totally up to you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Do any Commission members have comments on this? What are your thoughts?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: If I may, Chairman Schluter, I think it's a wonderful idea to, since we have had this initial meeting,

immediately begin the process of putting this Web site on. And I really think it would be valuable to have Mr. Parisi's précis of the explanation of what this is. Because for so many people, the concept of reading the bill is a little more difficult than--

MR. PARISI: Okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: --always a little more difficult than others would be. I think it's a very good explanation.

MR. PARISI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: And I think contact information as to who they could -- a contact for more information is always good. Clearly, the dates of the next meetings will be established as soon as possible and shown on there. But I think this is a marvelous start.

And I love the Capitol Building, but that's a prejudice. (laughter)

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Any more comments on the Web site?

(no response)

I think you have your marching orders there, Mr. Secretary--

MR. PARISI: Okay.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: --to proceed with the Web site.

MR. PARISI: We'll take care of that, absolutely.

Thank you.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: And I think, as Carol Murphy -- the former Assemblywoman, former Commissioner, and former Freeholder -- said--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: And present grandmother.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: --and present grandmother (laughter), that that masthead might be very, very good to adopt as our logo.

Other business? Is there other business from the Secretary?

MR. PARISI: Well, Mr. Chairman, there are just a few other things, as far as procedure goes, that you may want to consider. You don't necessarily have to make a decision on today. As you probably noticed, we have -- these proceedings are being taped today by the Office of Legislative Services. And my question to you would be whether or not you want all subsequent public meetings taped as well? Once we tape them, my understanding is that we can archive them on the Web site as well. They would be available for somebody to click on. We can do that. You can give that some thought.

Another point I would raise is whether or not you want to have special bylaws for the Commission. There are commissions that sometimes do have bylaws, sometimes they don't. That's really up to the Chair and to the members of the Commission, whether or not to adopt them. And then, of course, it would be what the content of such bylaws would be. It really would be up to you to decide.

That's all I can think of at the present time.

You addressed one of the issues, which is how should everyone keep in touch, and you said by e-mail would be good, and I guess by telephone, since that was the way we did so originally.

The other question would be whether or not you want minutes of all of the meetings, as for me to take minutes as I was doing today, for distribution and circulation and approval by the members of the Commission.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Thank you, Mr. Parisi.

Going down this list, and I invite comments from others as we do, I would be in favor of having minutes of each meeting, which would save us from going to a tape and having to listen to a tape. Unless I hear from members otherwise, if we could be supplied with a reasonably brief, concise, set of minutes -- two pages or whatever it might be -- this would be appropriate.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: Could those be circulated through e-mail to save the cost of postage?

MR. PARISI: Certainly.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Sure.

MR. TAO: I agree, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DeLUCA: This would not be in lieu of being taped, I think?

SENATOR SCHLUTER: This would not be in lieu of the tape.

MR. DeLUCA: Okay.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: I would respectfully suggest that we revisit this matter of taping at a subsequent meeting, to see how much we want transcribed and how much we don't want transcribed, and what the involvement is going to be to archive it. If it all goes into some of our records, is it going to dilute the important parts of the records, and so on? So I think if we -- respectfully, Mr. DeLuca -- if we revisit that at another meeting, we can--

Yes, Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: I actually had a question as to whether this will be the continuing location of our meetings? Because my

request would be maybe a bigger, roomier table. (all agree) It's a little warm back here.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: This will be up to the members. And I think we could-- In the interest of -- even though Pam Hersh is an excellent hostess, it is great. And the refreshments on the back table are very enticing.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: Very enticing.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: They're obscene, as a matter of fact. But I think we could move it around to expose other parts of the state to the work that we're doing. And we want to try and engage the public as much as possible -- get as much input as we can. So it will be up to the people to decide and-- But I think you're right; we could have a little more room.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: That would be my main request.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: This is getting along, definitely getting--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: Definitely.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: I don't know if the Secretary wants to give us any rationale for having bylaws, other than standard procedures. Maybe we could consider that at a subsequent meeting.

MR. PARISI: Just very, very briefly, Mr. Chairman, sometimes bylaws are used by commissions to set out what the responsibilities are for the Commission members. They are not absolutely necessary. I've served on commissions where they've had them.

The one example I could think of is the redistricting commission -- of course, that was a very political arena, in which it was necessary to spell

things out very carefully between the two parties and the independent members. Other commissions do not have bylaws and just use basic parliamentary and legislative procedure. So, really, I've just raised the issue, and it's really up to the members of the Commission.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Well, I certainly would say that we're not a redistricting committee. I would think that the spirit that has been shown today of collegiality and nonpartisanship should prevail, and I hope it will prevail. And this is how we're going to make progress and how we'll be able to impact New Jersey. If you have any suggestions on that, just submit it to us, and we can take it up at our next meeting.

I do have one other request to make of the Secretary, and that is to let the -- certainly the nonlegislative members of this Commission know what our responsibilities, with respect to disclosure or ethics disclosure, might be or might not be, so that we conform--

MR. PARISI: Okay. I can look into that, Senator.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: --to the, I guess the Executive Committee on Ethical Standards. And the Legislature has its own ethics requirements.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: May I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that even those of us who've been there sometimes forget, and I'd like to have a copy of those, too.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Yes. Yes. By all means, we want to be -- certainly cover--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: Yes. Sometimes these things slip.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: With that, I'd like to go -- and we can start with Curtis and come this way. And Curtis, would you like to--

Oh, one other thing. Excuse me.

Mr. Secretary, if you could put a little bio information on the members there, because we all don't know each other. Some of the legislators know the backgrounds of others. But it would be good to get a little bit of material, not only-- We know where they live. We know their e-mail, and we know the people who are legislators. But some of the things that-- For example, Carol Murphy and all the many things she's done and where she lives and how many grandchildren she has, and things like that. It would be helpful for us.

MR. PARISI: Mr. Chairman, do you want this information provided by the next meeting?

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Yes, or when you can. Or if you get it in the mean time, e-mail it to us.

MR. PARISI: Okay.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Curtis.

MR. TAO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me begin by saying, first, that I am so very pleased to be working with my fellow Commission members on this very, very interesting and exciting project. I think, just as a matter of housekeeping, perhaps the most important task that this Commission will undertake is with respect to its recommendations and report back to the Legislature. And I can foresee the possibility that we'll need to have a number of different working sessions. And that being said, though, we don't need to determine that now. There may be

occasions where, since many of us are separated by various counties throughout the state, where some of the Commission members may wish to participate by teleconference. And that's, of course, something that we can determine at that time.

While I think it's important for all Commission members to make every effort to attend the public sessions where we would be soliciting comments from the public; as to the working sessions, I think that flexibility would ensure and encourage maximum participation in that very important task.

Secondly, let me invite all the members of the Commission to please do contact me at home or at work, e-mail or by phone. I think that will be a very important part of the process here for us to continually be free to communicate with each other, and brainstorm, and think about various different ideas and concerns that we might have through the process.

Lastly, I would like to suggest for consideration, my fellow Commission members, that perhaps one of the first information gathering sessions that this Commission undertake is -- involve ELEC. As ELEC will be drafting regulations and guidelines with respect to the implementation of the specifics of the act, I think it would be very beneficial to both this Commission, and also perhaps ELEC, for us to be able to -- to the extent ELEC is prepared -- speak with them, for us to deliberate with them. Obviously, this is a new, exciting pilot project. And I think we can all, perhaps, gain from each other as this process moves along.

But once again, thank you very much, and I'm very excited to work with everyone on this project.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Great.

Carol?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think this is a very exciting project, and is also an extraordinary challenge. Voters and people who don't vote in this state are, quite often, the same people in terms of decrying the amount of money an election costs. It was said many, many years ago that we get the government we deserve. Oftentimes, that means that the government we will work for. In speaking to college classes so often, I find that people who want to work in the public sector, want to work in administrative offices, and in government, don't vote, don't know where their town hall is, have never gone to a local meeting. I have said to a few of them, I really think you ought to find your town hall before you report to work. I mean, you may have to have an interview or something. And it isn't a cynical thing. It's just something that -- it never seems to occur to them. I've asked a number of them why they don't vote. Well, they don't know the people, they don't know anything about them. Have you read the newspapers? "Oh, well, they tell you what they want to tell you." So faith or -- faith in the veracity in the truth of what they hear is sadly lacking.

What this Commission does will give people, I think, a feeling of more confidence about the fact that truth is what we all seek. And truth is what most of the people who come to public service -- who run to win an election, or to serve on a school board -- to be any part of the governmental sector -- are people who come to bring the truth. It's very hard sometimes to do that when nobody will listen, when nobody is listening. So we must, in all of our work here, make sure that we are permitting, expanding, and enlarging

on methods by which what we have done will reach the general public, to once again try to inure in them a feeling of participation in a system that is their system. It's going to be very difficult to overcome. Cynicism has become the kind of cereal of the day, I think, for so many people. And those of us who love public service, who love being in public service, who want people to enjoy and participate, really need to work hard at this. And I congratulate the sponsors for giving us the chance to bring this to the attention of those people who sadly need it the most.

So I thank you very much. I look forward to working with you all.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Well said.

Assemblywoman?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GREENSTEIN: Mr. Chairman, I'm really excited about this effort. I think it's historic. I think that we're really at the cusp of something that could make a big change here in New Jersey. And the exciting part of this is that we really are on the forefront. It is true that Maine has something like this, probably the closest to what we're wanting to do, but it is a smaller state than we are. Arizona has something like this. And there are bits and pieces of it in other places. But ours would definitely be the place that would be doing it with full support of the Legislature, in a way that no other state has done before. So it's always exciting to be in on the ground floor. And it was wonderful to work with Citizen Action on this, and with the Majority Leader.

As much as I enjoyed that trip to Maine, I feel that our real journey is beginning now. I've talked a lot, as I've made speeches about this in various places, about how this could really open up the electoral process.

The problem that we've had is that people are absolutely daunted by the large amounts of money that are required to run these elections, and that's most true of women and minorities. In some sense, because of the large amounts of money, they've had the least access to the system. This would give them a real chance to feel that they are becoming part of the system, that they can raise these realistic amounts of small funds -- \$30 and \$5 donations, and that they can become part of our system.

So it's wonderful to think that we're really opening the process up, and all that we're reading about real corruption in New Jersey, about perceived corruption in New Jersey would go away under this kind of a system. So I think that we have to bring the public along, have them see the advantages that this can bring to the State, and have them, in a sense, buy into what a great project this is. We'll have the privilege of evaluating it, of getting to work on related issues, and I think that we can take this from the ground up and really make a big change in New Jersey.

So I'm very excited about it. I'm excited about districts like Assemblyman Greenwald's that may participate, and looking forward to being a part of this.

Thank you.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Thank you.

MR. LENOX: Thank you, Chairman.

It's an honor and a pleasure to serve on this Commission with these distinguished members up here. I have a great deal of respect for each of the legislators who are on here, as well as the public members. I just want to say that as I talk to the constituency that I represent, the young people out

there, they so often say that they don't have an opportunity to participate in the process, except what they perceive as the corrupting influence of money. I think this program, that we're going to help implement here, gives those young people a voice also. And again, I'm pleased to be a part of that, and I look forward to putting the time into this.

Thank you.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN BARONI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I apologize again for my tardiness today. You may not realize this, today is Dr. Seuss's birthday. (laughter) And I was reading to three straight kindergarten classes who insisted on asking a lot of questions. So I apologize for my tardiness.

I'd like to begin, first of all, by giving credit where it is due -- by the way, which I'm certain will get me a phone call tomorrow from my side of the aisle. (laughter) Often, in the Legislature, we have debates across the political aisle, and we've had some humdingers on ethics issues. But my colleague, Mrs. Greenstein, and certainly the Majority Leader, deserve a great deal of credit for this legislation. This is not something that would have happened in their absence, and they deserve a lot of credit for it. They didn't need to do it. New Jersey is a better place because of it, and they should be given the credit for it.

This project-- You know, I talk a lot in the Legislature -- I'm not going to talk very long -- I talk a lot in the Legislature about a culture of corruption. And New Jersey is in a culture of corruption. This project, however, if we do our jobs right, has the potential to help eliminate New

Jersey's culture of corruption. And that is why this is so important. And it is important in both parties, as we have seen recently. Often, in the Legislature, we talk about an ethic issue in terms of stopping things: We want to ban Pay-to-Play, we want to ban soft money, ban corporate contributions, ban large contributions. Often we talk in ethics of stopping things, and that's very important.

Today we get to talk about ethics in the terms of starting something. And that is a critical difference. We are proposing something in a bipartisan fashion. Up here, you've got Republicans and Democrats, who two of us serve now and three others have served as members of the General Assembly. We see this influence of money, because we have to run every two years. I can tell you, this legislation is going to fundamentally change the way politics in government works in New Jersey. And that's because we're doing something positive.

If it's all right, Mr. Chairman, I have three, sort of, thoughts. One of the problems of being a law professor is I think in terms of questions. These are questions that do not have answers, but things I think -- and Curtis, I think you raised this as well -- that we should be thinking about. If I might throw it out, I think your suggestion that we meet with ELEC is very wise.

One of the sections of this legislation talks of voter guides, and that candidates who are participating as clean elections candidates will be in the voter guides. And they'll have up to 500 words, which is modeled after the gubernatorial system of 500 words. But the legislation is seemingly silent about two things: one, the distribution of the voter guides. We said we're going to have voter guides, but there's no mechanism for -- there's nothing in

the statute at least when it comes to how voters will get them. Now, obviously, there's different options -- go on the Internet, put them at the library. I would suggest we have a conversation with ELEC about the broadest possible way they could, quite frankly, use the sample ballot process, or a separate process. The distribution of voter guides -- I think a candidate who is going to participate in clean elections deserves to have as many people in their district know that.

Second, the legislation covers entities that may spend independent of candidates, speaks to political committees, continued political committees, political party committees. But the legislation is silent on organizations that are often found in their Section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code. So, conceivably, an organization which is not a political committee in New Jersey could be spending independently in a campaign, not necessarily naming a candidate triggering ELEC regulations. I think, working with ELEC, the clear intent of the Legislature is to have candidates who are participating in the clean election system not have endless independent expenditures spent against them without some redress in the statute. I think it's important that we talk to ELEC about these organizations and ask them to, as broadly as possible, define political committee to include these, especially in these clean elections.

And third, an issue that I think calls upon us, especially those of us who are in elective office now. There's no guarantee anyone participates in this system. There's no guarantee that, for example, Assemblyman Greenwald, who has taken the lead and said he'd like to be in this-- And I know two colleagues in the 7th District who have said it as well. It is incumbent on us, the burden is on us, to convince our colleagues -- and quite frankly, especially

on my side and Senator Bucco's side of the political aisle, where there is not huge support for the prospect of clean elections -- it is incumbent on us to convince our fellow political actors that this is a system we must participate in. And I take that as a personal responsibility on my side of the aisle, with my colleagues in the three legislative districts from which the Republicans will choose. I think that is very important.

And in addition to that, the statute is also silent on what happens when one running mate chooses to participate and one running mate-- Let's take, for example, the 11th District -- Sean Kean and Steve Corodemus's -- and I don't know if they're going to be the district that's chosen, not up to me. What if one of them chooses to participate and one of them doesn't choose to participate, and what does that mean? We need to make sure that we use the power of goodwill to make sure everyone participates on both sides of the political aisle. That's our job. In addition to holding these hearings and doing a report, we need to make sure as many candidates as possible participate in this process.

And Mr. Chairman, I can think of no one else better to chair this Commission than the voice of reform in this State for 40 years. I think you worked with Woodrow Wilson, if I remember correctly. (laughter) On the initial reform, I believe, so--

SENATOR SCHLUTER: You're getting to sound like Leonard Lance. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN BARONI: That's right. That's right.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very, very much.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Thank you.

Mr. DeLuca?

MR. DeLUCA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm very happy to be here. I'd be quite honest -- when we talked about this in New Jersey Citizen Action probably five years ago, maybe even longer, Staci, I never thought that the day would be that I'd be sitting here on the Commission. Because I never thought we'd get it this far. And so I want to lift up congratulations to all the legislators in this room for bringing us to this point. I think this clean elections legislation was overshadowed by the Play-to-Pay legislation and debate. But I think this has the clearest path to fundamental change in electing our officials here in this state. And so I hope, and it's appropriate, Assemblyman, that it is Dr. Seuss's birthday, because I think this Commission is going to be the Commission that writes the story about this -- this pilot and this process.

And I think our responsibility is not to sugarcoat it, but to talk about it real, and talk about what works and what doesn't work, and not to be afraid of changing the system -- but lifting up the opportunities and the obstacles, and pursuing those and working through the system, whatever system we have to, to make sure that this works. We are the model.

Right now we are the laughing stock of the nation when it comes to electoral politics, and we need to change that. And this is the change agent -- clean elections. So I'm very happy to be here, and I think that this is a tremendous reward for all the work that the advocates have done in the state, and the leadership that we've found in the last couple of years from our elected officials. So I applaud everyone for getting us to this point, and I really look forward to digging in and going forward.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Thank you.

Senator.

SENATOR BUCCO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I congratulate you on being our Chairman of this Commission. I look forward to working with all of you.

But talk about Dr. Seuss, and I have to be reminded of green eggs and ham. Sam I Am did not want to eat green eggs and ham all through the story, until the end when he tasted it and found out it worked. And I think that's what's happening with a lot of people out there that say it's not good, it's not going to work, this Clean Election Commission, until we can come through with appropriate actions. And I think it will be accepted, and we'll see a great change in the political future of this state.

And I also really think that, with your thoughts on -- even continuing this down into a county freeholder elections would work very, very well. I think it is appropriate, and I think it's needed. So -- but let's work on the first phase of this first and see what we can do.

So I look forward to working with all of my colleagues here.

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Thank you, Senator.

I have a few words to wrap up. And I would be remiss if I didn't recognize Mark Murphy of The Fund for New Jersey, sitting in the front row -- another great leader in reform and good government in the State of New Jersey. When we talked about our minutes of this event, I would hope that the minutes, Mr. Parisi, capture some of the comments that have been made up here. I think they are very valuable, and it would be a good benchmark for using to start off with.

Perhaps the next meeting, if we can-- We'll talk, and I'll get your views. And maybe we can think of a meeting in the not-too-distant future -- maybe several weeks, four weeks, five weeks -- where we have ELEC in to explain some of their operations; but we also get some briefing on some of the background of this so that we're able to understand the rationale for some of these different things. And a lot of thought has gone into this. So if we are provided with materials and we all are conscientious and do our homework and read the bill, we will be then ready to go forward.

I think everything that's been said up here by the Commission is very, very important. One thing that hasn't been said is that -- and I'm not too old to go back this far, Assemblyman Baroni -- but, in 1977, we had the first publicly financed gubernatorial contest in the State of New Jersey. And that worked very well. This was done in the reforms of the mid-70s. The first year it happened they did not include primaries -- a big loophole. They closed up that primary (*sic*). The next time it was done, it worked like a charm. And they had limits on the contributions.

And do you know what? It's been said by some cynics that, well, the corrupt money -- if you will accept that term -- in New Jersey then went from the gubernatorial to the legislative races, because the gubernatorial had limits. But it did work and it made the gubernatorial races much more competitive, much more interesting. And it can work here.

But to key on what has been said by Senator Bucco and Assemblywoman Greenstein and others, is we can become a symbolic beacon for reform in New Jersey in the electoral process. It's not just on publicly financed elections -- but we can go further. We can go into publicly financing

other levels of office. We can get into other types of reform if we do a good job. And I think that maybe the public and the Legislature will say keep this work up; and this Commission, or its successor, can go even farther. And as everybody has said here, give the people of New Jersey hope so that they will be more anxious to vote and they will believe in their government.

I've spoken too much already. Is there anything else to be said to wrap it up? (no response)

Hearing nothing, I will--

MR. DeLUCA: Mr. Chairman, should we invite anyone from the public who'd like to make comments?

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Yes. Yes. We talk about being public. Is there anybody from the public who would like to-- We can talk to the reporters themselves individually afterward, but I meant, is there anybody from the public who would like to comment?

Yes.

MARK M. MURPHY: Well, I will. I was hoping some of the coalition members--

MR. PARISI: If you're going to speak, please sit at the table and identify yourself.

MR. MURPHY: Very good. Thank you, Frank.

I am Mark Murphy, the Executive Director of The Fund for New Jersey, a private grant-making institution in the state dedicated to nonpartisan public policy analysis. I'm very pleased to be here today and to see the Commission underway. We have supported some of the advocacy organizations who have been researching this issue and trying to present it to

interested legislators over the last couple of years. And I want to thank all those who both sponsored the bill and managed its way through the process.

I would underscore what everyone said about having the eyes of the nation upon you. And I would also underscore what the Assemblyman said -- that this turns a fundamental corner, because all of the other reforms that have been talked about are really trying to curtail bad practices. Now you have a chance to really turn the corner on that and say, "This is what a democratic process should look like."

So more power to you. I would just stress that if you are interested in widening the investigation, to look more closely at Maine, or Arizona, or bring in outside experts, for which you do not have sufficient funding, The Fund for New Jersey is available as a source of potential financing to you, according to the way that the Commission proceeds.

So good luck to you. You've got lots of friends out here.

(thank-you's from entire Commission)

SENATOR SCHLUTER: Thank you.

Any other comments? (no response)

Hearing none, I'll call the meeting adjourned.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)