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Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

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REPORTS:

No

HEARINGS:

No

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:

Yes

"New Jersey abolishes 'county freeholder' title amid national reckoning with racism." The Trentonian (Trenton, NJ), August 21, 2020.

"Murphy signs bill ending 'freeholder' title Commissioners." The Star-Ledger, (Newark, NJ), August 22, 2020: 001.

"Age of 'freeholder' to end Murphy signs bill changing county 'freeholder' title to 'commissioner'." The Press of Atlantic City (NJ), August 23, 2020: 7A.

"MOUNT HOLLY — The Burlington County Freeholders are now, off." Burlington County Times (Willingboro, NJ), August 24, 2020: A2.

RWH/CL

P.L. 2020, CHAPTER 67, *approved August 21, 2020*
Senate, No. 855 (*First Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning boards of chosen freeholders and amending
2 R.S.1:1-2 ¹**[and]**,¹ R.S.40:20-1 ¹, and P.L.1972, c.154¹.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6
7 1. R.S.1:1-2 is amended to read as follows:

8 1:1-2. Unless it be otherwise expressly provided or there is
9 something in the subject or context repugnant to such construction,
10 the following words and phrases, when used in any statute and in
11 the Revised Statutes, shall have the meaning herein given to them.

12 Affirmation; affirmed. See "Oath; sworn," *infra*, this section.

13 Assessor. The word "assessor," when used in relation to the
14 assessment of taxes or water rents or other public assessments,
15 includes all officers, boards or commissions charged with the duty
16 of making such assessments, unless a particular officer, board or
17 commission is specified.

18 Census. When used with reference to the population of this
19 State, or of any subdivision thereof, the word "census" means the
20 latest Federal census effective within this State.

21 Certified mail. The words "certified mail" include private
22 express carrier service, provided that the private express carrier
23 service provides confirmation of mailing. For purposes of this
24 definition, confirmation of mailing may be by electronic means, and
25 shall include, at a minimum, confirmation of fact of mail, time of
26 mailing, date and time of delivery, attempted delivery, signature, or
27 other similar information for confirmation or proof associated with
28 the delivery service.

29 Collector. The word "collector," when used in relation to the
30 collection of taxes or water rents or other public assessments,
31 includes all officers charged with the duty of collecting such taxes,
32 water rents or assessments, unless a particular officer is specified.

33 Folio; sheet. A sheet or folio shall consist of 100 words, and in
34 all cases where an entry of any writing or copy is to be paid for, the
35 sheet or folio shall consist of 100 words.

36 Freeholder; chosen freeholder. The words "freeholder" and
37 "chosen freeholder," when used in relation to county government,
38 mean a member of the board which manages, controls, and governs
39 the property, finances, and affairs of a county, and in which the
40 executive and legislative powers of the county ¹or solely the

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined **thus** is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SCU committee amendments adopted July 16, 2020.

1 legislative powers of the county¹ are vested, and designated as a
2 “county commissioner.”

3 Gender. See "Number; gender," infra, this section.

4 General election. The words "general election" shall be taken to
5 mean the annual election to be held on the first Tuesday after the
6 first Monday in November and in any statute in which it is provided
7 that any public officer shall be elected, or any public question shall
8 be voted upon, at an election at which members of the General
9 Assembly are to be voted for or elected, or words to that effect,
10 shall be taken to mean, and shall be construed to be the equivalent
11 of a provision, that said public officers shall be elected, or that said
12 public question shall be voted upon, "at a general election."

13 He. "Number; gender," infra, this section.

14 Inhabitants. See "Population; inhabitants," infra, this section.

15 It. See "Number; gender," infra, this section.

16 Magistrate. The word "magistrate" includes any judge, municipal
17 magistrate or officer or other person having the powers of a
18 committing magistrate.

19 Masculine. See "Number; gender," infra, this section.

20 Month; year. The word "month" means a calendar month, and
21 the word "year" means a calendar year.

22 Municipality; municipal corporation. The words "municipality"
23 and "municipal corporation" include cities, towns, townships,
24 villages and boroughs, and any municipality governed by a board of
25 commissioners or an improvement commission.

26 Neuter. See "Number; gender," infra, this section.

27 Number; gender. Whenever, in describing or referring to any
28 person, party, matter or thing, any word importing the singular
29 number or masculine gender is used, the same shall be understood
30 to include and to apply to several persons or parties as well as to
31 one person or party and to females as well as males, and to bodies
32 corporate as well as individuals, and to several matters and things as
33 well as one matter or thing.

34 Oath; sworn. The word "oath" includes "affirmation;" and the
35 word "sworn" includes "affirmed."

36 Other property. See "Property; other property," infra, this
37 section.

38 Person. The word "person" includes corporations, companies,
39 associations, societies, firms, partnerships and joint stock
40 companies as well as individuals, unless restricted by the context to
41 an individual as distinguished from a corporate entity or specifically
42 restricted to one or some of the above enumerated synonyms and,
43 when used to designate the owner of property which may be the
44 subject of an offense, includes this State, the United States, any
45 other State of the United States as defined infra and any foreign
46 country or government lawfully owning or possessing property
47 within this State.

1 Personal property. "Personal property" includes goods and
2 chattels, rights and credits, moneys and effects, evidences of debt,
3 choses in action and all written instruments by which any right to,
4 interest in, or lien or encumbrance upon, property or any debt or
5 financial obligation is created, acknowledged, evidenced,
6 transferred, discharged or defeated, in whole or in part, and
7 everything except real property as herein defined which may be the
8 subject of ownership.

9 Plural. See "Number; gender," supra, this section.

10 Population; inhabitants. The word "population," when used in
11 any statute, shall be taken to mean the population as shown by the
12 latest Federal census effective within this State, and shall be
13 construed as synonymous with "inhabitants."

14 Property; other property. The words "property" and "other
15 property," unless restricted or limited by the context to either real or
16 personal property, includes both real and personal property.

17 Real estate; real property. The words "real estate" and "real
18 property," include lands, tenements and hereditaments and all rights
19 thereto and interests therein.

20 Registered mail. The words "registered mail" include "certified
21 mail".

22 Revised Statutes. The words "Revised Statutes" mean the
23 Revised Statutes of 1937, unless some other revision is expressly
24 indicated or referred to.

25 Revision law. The words "Revision law" mean any statute which
26 is expressed in its title or body to be a revision of any part of the
27 statutory law.

28 She. See "Number; gender," supra, this section.

29 Sheet. See "Folio," supra, this section.

30 Ship. The word "Ship" includes vessels, steamers, canal boats
31 and every boat or structure adapted to navigation or movement from
32 place to place, upon the ocean, lakes, rivers or artificial waterways,
33 either by its own power or otherwise.

34 Singular. See "Number; gender," supra, this section.

35 State. The word "State" extends to and includes any State,
36 territory or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia
37 and the Canal Zone.

38 Sworn. See "Oath; sworn," supra, this section.

39 Taxing district. The words "taxing district," when used in a law
40 relating to the assessment or collection of taxes, assessments or
41 water rates or water rents, include every political division of the
42 State, less than a county, whose inhabitants, governing body or
43 officers have the power to levy taxes, assessments or rates.

44 Territory. The word "territory" extends to and includes any
45 territory or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia
46 and the Canal Zone.

1 United States. The words "United States" extend to and include
2 every State, territory and possession of the United States, the
3 District of Columbia and the Canal Zone.

4 Year. See "Month; year," supra, this section.
5 (cf: P.L.2015, c.251, s.1)

6
7 2. R.S.40:20-1 is amended to read as follows:

8 40:20-1. The property, finances, and affairs of every county
9 shall be managed, controlled, and governed by a board elected
10 therein, to be known as "the board of **chosen freeholders** county
11 commissioners of the county of (specifying name of
12 county)", and the executive and legislative powers of the county
13 shall be vested in that board of **chosen freeholders** county
14 commissioners, except where by law any specific powers or duties
15 are imposed or vested in a Constitutional officer.

16 The board of **chosen freeholders** county commissioners of any
17 county which has created the office of county administrator,
18 pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.40A:9-42, may, by resolution,
19 delegate to that office such executive and administrative powers,
20 duties, functions, and responsibilities as the board may deem
21 appropriate.

22 ¹Within one year of After¹ the effective date of P.L. _____,
23 c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill), ¹all the¹ county
24 letterheads, stationary, and other writings, ¹and once exhausted,
25 shall be replaced with new letterheads, stationary, and other
26 writings with the title of board of county commissioners. No later
27 than one year following the effective date of P.L. _____c. (pending
28 before the Legislature as this bill),¹ the Internet website of a county,
29 shall bear the title of board of county commissioners ¹; provided,
30 however, that any¹ . Any¹ county signs or other writings bearing
31 the former title of board of chosen freeholders, which would require
32 the expenditure of county funds to update or replace, shall be
33 changed to bear the title of board of county commissioners upon the
34 next update or replacement made in the ordinary course of business.
35 (cf: P.L.1987, c.236, s.1)

36
37 ¹3. Section 1 of P.L.1972, c.154 (C.40:41A-1) is amended to
38 read as follows:

39 1. a. Whenever authorized by resolution of the board of
40 freeholders or on petition of the registered voters of any county, an
41 election shall be held in the county upon the question, "Shall a
42 charter study commission be created to study the present
43 governmental structure of . . . county, to consider and make
44 findings concerning the form of county government and to make
45 recommendations thereon?" A petition calling for such an election
46 shall bear the signatures of a number of persons registered to vote in
47 the county equal to or exceeding in number **10%** ten percent of

1 the persons registered to vote in the county on the ~~fortieth~~ 40th
 2 day preceding the most recent previous primary or general election.
 3 Whenever such resolution or petition shall be filed with him, the
 4 county clerk shall provide for submission of the question at the next
 5 general election occurring not less than 60 days after the date of
 6 such filing. At the election, the question shall be submitted in the
 7 same manner as other public questions.

8 When a resolution or petition for the creation of a charter study
 9 commission has been duly filed with the county clerk, no other such
 10 resolution or petition and no other proceedings for the adoption of
 11 any other charter or form of government available to the county
 12 may be filed unless the voters shall decide the aforesaid question in
 13 the negative or until the charter study commission created by the
 14 voters shall have been discharged.

15 b. On and after the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.)
 16 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), for the purposes of
 17 P.L.1972, c.154 (C.40:41A-1 et seq.), the term "board of chosen
 18 freeholders" shall be replaced by the term "board of county
 19 commissioners" and the terms "freeholder" and "chosen freeholder"
 20 shall be replaced by the term "county commissioner." After the
 21 effective date of P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this
 22 bill), the county letterheads, stationary, and other writings, once
 23 exhausted, shall be replaced with new letterheads, stationary, and
 24 other writings with the title of board of county commissioners. No
 25 later than one year following the effective date of
 26 P.L. ,c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the Internet
 27 website of a county, shall bear the title of board of county
 28 commissioners. Any county signs or other writings bearing the
 29 former title of board of chosen freeholders, which would require the
 30 expenditure of county funds to update or replace, shall be changed
 31 to bear the title of board of county commissioners upon the next
 32 update or replacement made in the ordinary course of business.¹

33 (cf: P.L.1975, c.84, s.1)

34

35 ¹~~[3.]~~ 4.¹ This act shall take effect on January 1, ¹~~[2019]~~
 36 2021¹.

37

38

39

40

41 Renames "board of chosen freeholders" to "board of county
 42 commissioners" and "freeholder" and "chosen freeholder" to
 43 "county commissioner"; requires counties to update materials to
 44 reflect this title change.

SENATE, No. 855

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator STEPHEN M. SWEENEY

District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)

Senator JOSEPH PENNACCHIO

District 26 (Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Senator VIN GOPAL

District 11 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Renames “board of chosen freeholders” to “board of county commissioners” and “freeholder” and “chosen freeholder” to “county commissioner”; requires counties to update materials to reflect this title change.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 7/14/2020)

1 AN ACT concerning boards of chosen freeholders and amending
2 R.S.1:1-2 and R.S.40:20-1.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. R.S.1:1-2 is amended to read as follows:

8 1:1-2. Unless it be otherwise expressly provided or there is
9 something in the subject or context repugnant to such construction,
10 the following words and phrases, when used in any statute and in
11 the Revised Statutes, shall have the meaning herein given to them.

12 Affirmation; affirmed. See "Oath; sworn," infra, this section.

13 Assessor. The word "assessor," when used in relation to the
14 assessment of taxes or water rents or other public assessments,
15 includes all officers, boards or commissions charged with the duty
16 of making such assessments, unless a particular officer, board or
17 commission is specified.

18 Census. When used with reference to the population of this
19 State, or of any subdivision thereof, the word "census" means the
20 latest Federal census effective within this State.

21 Certified mail. The words "certified mail" include private
22 express carrier service, provided that the private express carrier
23 service provides confirmation of mailing. For purposes of this
24 definition, confirmation of mailing may be by electronic means, and
25 shall include, at a minimum, confirmation of fact of mail, time of
26 mailing, date and time of delivery, attempted delivery, signature, or
27 other similar information for confirmation or proof associated with
28 the delivery service.

29 Collector. The word "collector," when used in relation to the
30 collection of taxes or water rents or other public assessments,
31 includes all officers charged with the duty of collecting such taxes,
32 water rents or assessments, unless a particular officer is specified.

33 Folio; sheet. A sheet or folio shall consist of 100 words, and in
34 all cases where an entry of any writing or copy is to be paid for, the
35 sheet or folio shall consist of 100 words.

36 Freeholder; chosen freeholder. The words "freeholder" and
37 "chosen freeholder," when used in relation to county government,
38 mean a member of the board which manages, controls, and governs
39 the property, finances, and affairs of a county, and in which the
40 executive and legislative powers of the county are vested, and
41 designated as a "county commissioner."

42 Gender. See "Number; gender," infra, this section.

43 General election. The words "general election" shall be taken to
44 mean the annual election to be held on the first Tuesday after the
45 first Monday in November and in any statute in which it is provided

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 that any public officer shall be elected, or any public question shall
2 be voted upon, at an election at which members of the General
3 Assembly are to be voted for or elected, or words to that effect,
4 shall be taken to mean, and shall be construed to be the equivalent
5 of a provision, that said public officers shall be elected, or that said
6 public question shall be voted upon, "at a general election."

7 He. "Number; gender," infra, this section.

8 Inhabitants. See "Population; inhabitants," infra, this section.

9 It. See "Number; gender," infra, this section.

10 Magistrate. The word "magistrate" includes any judge, municipal
11 magistrate or officer or other person having the powers of a
12 committing magistrate.

13 Masculine. See "Number; gender," infra, this section.

14 Month; year. The word "month" means a calendar month, and
15 the word "year" means a calendar year.

16 Municipality; municipal corporation. The words "municipality"
17 and "municipal corporation" include cities, towns, townships,
18 villages and boroughs, and any municipality governed by a board of
19 commissioners or an improvement commission.

20 Neuter. See "Number; gender," infra, this section.

21 Number; gender. Whenever, in describing or referring to any
22 person, party, matter or thing, any word importing the singular
23 number or masculine gender is used, the same shall be understood
24 to include and to apply to several persons or parties as well as to
25 one person or party and to females as well as males, and to bodies
26 corporate as well as individuals, and to several matters and things as
27 well as one matter or thing.

28 Oath; sworn. The word "oath" includes "affirmation;" and the
29 word "sworn" includes "affirmed."

30 Other property. See "Property; other property," infra, this
31 section.

32 Person. The word "person" includes corporations, companies,
33 associations, societies, firms, partnerships and joint stock
34 companies as well as individuals, unless restricted by the context to
35 an individual as distinguished from a corporate entity or specifically
36 restricted to one or some of the above enumerated synonyms and,
37 when used to designate the owner of property which may be the
38 subject of an offense, includes this State, the United States, any
39 other State of the United States as defined infra and any foreign
40 country or government lawfully owning or possessing property
41 within this State.

42 Personal property. "Personal property" includes goods and
43 chattels, rights and credits, moneys and effects, evidences of debt,
44 choses in action and all written instruments by which any right to,
45 interest in, or lien or encumbrance upon, property or any debt or
46 financial obligation is created, acknowledged, evidenced,
47 transferred, discharged or defeated, in whole or in part, and

1 everything except real property as herein defined which may be the
2 subject of ownership.

3 Plural. See "Number; gender," supra, this section.

4 Population; inhabitants. The word "population," when used in
5 any statute, shall be taken to mean the population as shown by the
6 latest Federal census effective within this State, and shall be
7 construed as synonymous with "inhabitants."

8 Property; other property. The words "property" and "other
9 property," unless restricted or limited by the context to either real or
10 personal property, includes both real and personal property.

11 Real estate; real property. The words "real estate" and "real
12 property," include lands, tenements and hereditaments and all rights
13 thereto and interests therein.

14 Registered mail. The words "registered mail" include "certified
15 mail".

16 Revised Statutes. The words "Revised Statutes" mean the
17 Revised Statutes of 1937, unless some other revision is expressly
18 indicated or referred to.

19 Revision law. The words "Revision law" mean any statute which
20 is expressed in its title or body to be a revision of any part of the
21 statutory law.

22 She. See "Number; gender," supra, this section.

23 Sheet. See "Folio," supra, this section.

24 Ship. The word "Ship" includes vessels, steamers, canal boats
25 and every boat or structure adapted to navigation or movement from
26 place to place, upon the ocean, lakes, rivers or artificial waterways,
27 either by its own power or otherwise.

28 Singular. See "Number; gender," supra, this section.

29 State. The word "State" extends to and includes any State,
30 territory or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia
31 and the Canal Zone.

32 Sworn. See "Oath; sworn," supra, this section.

33 Taxing district. The words "taxing district," when used in a law
34 relating to the assessment or collection of taxes, assessments or
35 water rates or water rents, include every political division of the
36 State, less than a county, whose inhabitants, governing body or
37 officers have the power to levy taxes, assessments or rates.

38 Territory. The word "territory" extends to and includes any
39 territory or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia
40 and the Canal Zone.

41 United States. The words "United States" extend to and include
42 every State, territory and possession of the United States, the
43 District of Columbia and the Canal Zone.

44 Year. See "Month; year," supra, this section.

45 (cf: P.L.2015, c.251, s.1)

46

47 2. R.S.40:20-1 is amended to read as follows:

1 40:20-1. The property, finances, and affairs of every county
2 shall be managed, controlled, and governed by a board elected
3 therein, to be known as "the board of **chosen freeholders** county
4 commissioners of the county of (specifying name of
5 county)", and the executive and legislative powers of the county
6 shall be vested in that board of **chosen freeholders** county
7 commissioners, except where by law any specific powers or duties
8 are imposed or vested in a Constitutional officer.

9 The board of **chosen freeholders** county commissioners of any
10 county which has created the office of county administrator,
11 pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.40A:9-42, may, by resolution,
12 delegate to that office such executive and administrative powers,
13 duties, functions, and responsibilities as the board may deem
14 appropriate.

15 Within one year of the effective date of P.L. , c. (pending
16 before the Legislature as this bill), all county letterheads, stationary,
17 and other writings, and the Internet website of a county, shall bear
18 the title of board of county commissioners; provided, however, that
19 any county signs or other writings bearing the former title of board
20 of chosen freeholders, which would require the expenditure of
21 county funds to update or replace, shall be changed to bear the title
22 of board of county commissioners upon the next update or
23 replacement made in the ordinary course of business.

24 (cf: P.L.1987, c.236, s.1)

25
26 3. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2019.

27
28 STATEMENT

29
30 This bill would require that the title of "chosen freeholder" be
31 changed to "county commissioner." Accordingly, all "boards of
32 chosen freeholders" would be known as "boards of county
33 commissioners" and all individual "freeholders" and "chosen
34 freeholders" would be known as "county commissioners." The bill
35 creates a definition for freeholder to clarify that any reference in the
36 statutes to a "freeholder" or "chosen freeholder" means a "county
37 commissioner."

38 The bill would also require counties to update their letterheads,
39 stationary, and other writings, as well as their Internet websites, to
40 bear the title of county commissioners in place of freeholders or
41 chosen freeholders within one year of the bill's effective date. The
42 bill would not require counties to update or replace signs or other
43 writings to reflect this title change within this timeframe if doing so
44 would require the expenditure of county funds. In such a case, the
45 title would have to be changed whenever the writing is next updated
46 or replaced in the ordinary course of business.

47 The bill would take effect on January 1, 2019.

SENATE COMMUNITY AND URBAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 855

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JULY 16, 2020

The Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 855.

As amended, this bill would require that the title of “chosen freeholder” be changed to “county commissioner.” Accordingly, all “boards of chosen freeholders” would be known as “boards of county commissioners” and all individual “freeholders” and “chosen freeholders” would be known as “county commissioners.” The bill creates a definition for freeholder to clarify that any reference in the statutes to a “freeholder” or “chosen freeholder” means a “county commissioner.”

The bill would also require counties to update their letterheads, stationary, and other writings, once exhausted, to bear the title of county commissioners in place of freeholders or chosen freeholders upon replacement. The bill would also require counties to update their Internet websites, to bear the title of county commissioners in place of freeholders or chosen freeholders within one year of the bill’s effective date. The bill would not require counties to update or replace signs or other writings to reflect this title change within this timeframe if doing so would require the expenditure of county funds. In such a case, the title would have to be changed whenever the writing is next updated or replaced in the ordinary course of business.

The bill would take effect on January 1, 2021.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments would require counties to replace their letterheads, stationary, and other writings, or chosen freeholders so that they bear the title of county commissioners in place of freeholders or chosen freeholders once the existing stock is exhausted instead of within one year of the bill’s effective date. The amendments also clarify that the bill applies to counties governed by P.L.1972, c.154 (C.40:41A-1 et seq.). The amendments also would revise the effective date of the bill to January 1, 2021.

ASSEMBLY, No. 3594

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 5, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman ANDREW ZWICKER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Assemblywoman BETTYLOU DECROCE

District 26 (Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

Co-Sponsored by:

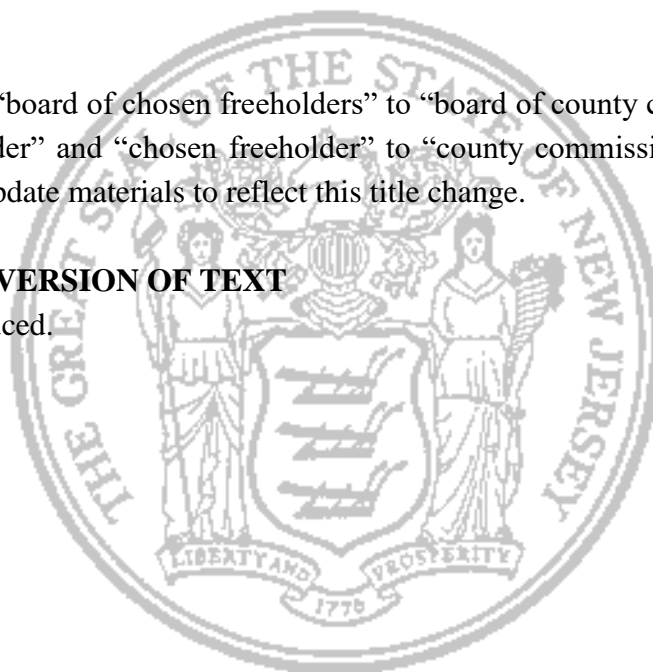
**Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle, Assemblyman Conaway,
Assemblywoman Quijano, Assemblyman Giblin, Assemblywoman Speight,
Assemblyman Chiaravalloti, Assemblywomen Timberlake, Carter,
Assemblymen Johnson, Moen, Danielsen, Assemblywomen Jasey, Lopez,
Jimenez and Assemblyman Freiman**

SYNOPSIS

Renames “board of chosen freeholders” to “board of county commissioners” and “freeholder” and “chosen freeholder” to “county commissioner”; requires counties to update materials to reflect this title change.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 7/30/2020)

1 AN ACT concerning boards of chosen freeholders and amending
2 R.S.1:1-2 and R.S.40:20-1.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
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26 mailing, date and time of delivery, attempted delivery, signature, or
27 other similar information for confirmation or proof associated with
28 the delivery service.

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35 sheet or folio shall consist of 100 words.

36 Freeholder; chosen freeholder. The words "freeholder" and
37 "chosen freeholder," when used in relation to county government,
38 mean a member of the board which manages, controls, and governs
39 the property, finances, and affairs of a county, and in which the
40 executive and legislative powers of the county are vested, and
41 designated as a "county commissioner."

42 Gender. See "Number; gender," infra, this section.

43 General election. The words "general election" shall be taken to
44 mean the annual election to be held on the first Tuesday after the
45 first Monday in November and in any statute in which it is provided

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 that any public officer shall be elected, or any public question shall
2 be voted upon, at an election at which members of the General
3 Assembly are to be voted for or elected, or words to that effect,
4 shall be taken to mean, and shall be construed to be the equivalent
5 of a provision, that said public officers shall be elected, or that said
6 public question shall be voted upon, "at a general election."

7 He. "Number; gender," *infra*, this section.

8 Inhabitants. See "Population; inhabitants," *infra*, this section.

9 It. See "Number; gender," *infra*, this section.

10 Magistrate. The word "magistrate" includes any judge, municipal
11 magistrate or officer or other person having the powers of a
12 committing magistrate.

13 Masculine. See "Number; gender," *infra*, this section.

14 Month; year. The word "month" means a calendar month, and
15 the word "year" means a calendar year.

16 Municipality; municipal corporation. The words "municipality"
17 and "municipal corporation" include cities, towns, townships,
18 villages and boroughs, and any municipality governed by a board of
19 commissioners or an improvement commission.

20 Neuter. See "Number; gender," *infra*, this section.

21 Number; gender. Whenever, in describing or referring to any
22 person, party, matter or thing, any word importing the singular
23 number or masculine gender is used, the same shall be understood
24 to include and to apply to several persons or parties as well as to
25 one person or party and to females as well as males, and to bodies
26 corporate as well as individuals, and to several matters and things as
27 well as one matter or thing.

28 Oath; sworn. The word "oath" includes "affirmation;" and the
29 word "sworn" includes "affirmed."

30 Other property. See "Property; other property," *infra*, this
31 section.

32 Person. The word "person" includes corporations, companies,
33 associations, societies, firms, partnerships and joint stock
34 companies as well as individuals, unless restricted by the context to
35 an individual as distinguished from a corporate entity or specifically
36 restricted to one or some of the above enumerated synonyms and,
37 when used to designate the owner of property which may be the
38 subject of an offense, includes this State, the United States, any
39 other State of the United States as defined *infra* and any foreign
40 country or government lawfully owning or possessing property
41 within this State.

42 Personal property. "Personal property" includes goods and
43 chattels, rights and credits, moneys and effects, evidences of debt,
44 choses in action and all written instruments by which any right to,
45 interest in, or lien or encumbrance upon, property or any debt or
46 financial obligation is created, acknowledged, evidenced,
47 transferred, discharged or defeated, in whole or in part, and
48 everything except real property as herein defined which may be the
49 subject of ownership.

1 Plural. See "Number; gender," supra, this section.

2 Population; inhabitants. The word "population," when used in
3 any statute, shall be taken to mean the population as shown by the
4 latest Federal census effective within this State, and shall be
5 construed as synonymous with "inhabitants."

6 Property; other property. The words "property" and "other
7 property," unless restricted or limited by the context to either real or
8 personal property, includes both real and personal property.

9 Real estate; real property. The words "real estate" and "real
10 property," include lands, tenements and hereditaments and all rights
11 thereto and interests therein.

12 Registered mail. The words "registered mail" include "certified
13 mail".

14 Revised Statutes. The words "Revised Statutes" mean the
15 Revised Statutes of 1937, unless some other revision is expressly
16 indicated or referred to.

17 Revision law. The words "Revision law" mean any statute which
18 is expressed in its title or body to be a revision of any part of the
19 statutory law.

20 She. See "Number; gender," supra, this section.

21 Sheet. See "Folio," supra, this section.

22 Ship. The word "Ship" includes vessels, steamers, canal boats
23 and every boat or structure adapted to navigation or movement from
24 place to place, upon the ocean, lakes, rivers or artificial waterways,
25 either by its own power or otherwise.

26 Singular. See "Number; gender," supra, this section.

27 State. The word "State" extends to and includes any State,
28 territory or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia
29 and the Canal Zone.

30 Sworn. See "Oath; sworn," supra, this section.

31 Taxing district. The words "taxing district," when used in a law
32 relating to the assessment or collection of taxes, assessments or
33 water rates or water rents, include every political division of the
34 State, less than a county, whose inhabitants, governing body or
35 officers have the power to levy taxes, assessments or rates.

36 Territory. The word "territory" extends to and includes any
37 territory or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia
38 and the Canal Zone.

39 United States. The words "United States" extend to and include
40 every State, territory and possession of the United States, the
41 District of Columbia and the Canal Zone.

42 Year. See "Month; year," supra, this section.

43 (cf: P.L.2015, c.251, s.1)

44

45 2. R.S.40:20-1 is amended to read as follows:

46 40:20-1. The property, finances, and affairs of every county
47 shall be managed, controlled, and governed by a board elected
48 therein, to be known as "the board of **chosen freeholders** county
49 commissioners of the county of (specifying name of

1 county)", and the executive and legislative powers of the county
2 shall be vested in that board of **【chosen freeholders】** county
3 commissioners, except where by law any specific powers or duties
4 are imposed or vested in a Constitutional officer.

5 The board of **【chosen freeholders】** county commissioners of any
6 county which has created the office of county administrator,
7 pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.40A:9-42, may, by resolution,
8 delegate to that office such executive and administrative powers,
9 duties, functions, and responsibilities as the board may deem
10 appropriate.

11 Within one year of the effective date of P.L. , c. (pending
12 before the Legislature as this bill), all county letterheads, stationary,
13 and other writings, and the Internet website of a county, shall bear
14 the title of board of county commissioners; provided, however, that
15 any county signs or other writings bearing the former title of board
16 of chosen freeholders, which would require the expenditure of
17 county funds to update or replace, shall be changed to bear the title
18 of board of county commissioners upon the next update or
19 replacement made in the ordinary course of business.

20 (cf: P.L.1987, c.236, s.1)

21

22 3. This act shall take effect on January 1 next following the
23 date of enactment.

24

25

26

STATEMENT

27

28 This bill would require that the title of "chosen freeholder" be
29 changed to "county commissioner." Accordingly, all "boards of
30 chosen freeholders" would be known as "boards of county
31 commissioners" and all individual "freeholders" and "chosen
32 freeholders" would be known as "county commissioners." The bill
33 creates a definition for "freeholder" to clarify that any reference in
34 the statutes to a "freeholder" or "chosen freeholder" means a
35 "county commissioner."

36 The bill would also require counties to update their letterheads,
37 stationary, and other writings, as well as their Internet websites, to
38 bear the title of county commissioners in place of freeholders or
39 chosen freeholders, within one year of the bill's effective date. The
40 bill would not require counties to update or replace signs or other
41 writings to reflect this title change within this timeframe if doing so
42 would require the expenditure of county funds. In such a case, the
43 title would have to be changed whenever the writing is next updated
44 or replaced in the ordinary course of business.

45 The bill would take effect on January 1 next following the date
46 of enactment.

ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3594

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JULY 20, 2020

The Assembly Judiciary Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3594.

This bill would require that the title of “chosen freeholder” be changed to “county commissioner.” Accordingly, all “boards of chosen freeholders” would be known as “boards of county commissioners” and all individual “freeholders” and “chosen freeholders” would be known as “county commissioners.” The bill creates a definition for “freeholder” to clarify that any reference in the statutes to a “freeholder” or “chosen freeholder” means a “county commissioner.”

The bill would also require counties to update their letterheads, stationary, and other writings, as well as their Internet websites, to bear the title of county commissioners in place of freeholders or chosen freeholders, within one year of the bill’s effective date. The bill would not require counties to update or replace signs or other writings to reflect this title change within this timeframe if doing so would require the expenditure of county funds. In such a case, the title would have to be changed whenever the writing is next updated or replaced in the ordinary course of business.

The bill would take effect on January 1 next following the date of enactment.

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Eliminate the Title of "Freeholder" from Public Office

08/21/2020

County Governments will replace "Chosen Freeholder" with "County Commissioner"

TRENTON — Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation (S855), which requires the title of "chosen freeholder" to be changed to "county commissioner" and all "boards of chosen freeholders" to be known as "boards of county commissioners." The bill also requires counties to update their letterheads, stationary, and other writings, as well as their websites, to bear the title of county commissioners in place of freeholders or chosen freeholders within one year of the bill's effective date, January 1, 2021.

The bill would not require counties to update or replace signs or other writings to reflect this title change within this timeframe if doing so would require the expenditure of county funds. In these cases, the title would be changed whenever the writing is next updated or replaced in the ordinary course of business.

"We have an obligation to ensure that governance in New Jersey is inclusive and representative of the tremendous diversity of our great state," **said Governor Murphy**. "Amid a national reckoning to reexamine vestiges rooted in structural racism, this action will eliminate the use of the term 'Freeholder' in county government— a title that is an outgrowth of a time when people of color and women were excluded from public office."

"Changing the title of 'Freeholder' is long overdue. People know the term is offensive and refers to a time when only white male landowners could hold public office," **said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs**. "As a former Freeholder, I was fully aware that this title was not inclusive of African American woman such as myself. History is constantly evolving, and our terminology needs to keep up with it to be more reflective of where we are as a society."

"Proudly, New Jersey is no longer the only state with this title," **said Union County Freeholder Angela R. Garretson**. "Although we may be the last state to end this vile categorization of county officeholders, we are the first to pass legislation and sign it into law, with overwhelming bipartisan support from State leaders with integrity and vision. I am also happy, so many county level officials joined the movement to update and embrace the universally understood and inclusive title of county commissioner."

"As we work to bring justice and equality to all Americans we must recognize that symbolism matters," **said Senate President Steve Sweeney**. "The public job title of 'freeholder' perpetuates a legacy of bigotry that disenfranchised groups of Americans and denied them full rights and equal opportunities. We should be diligent in erasing all remnants of oppression that are unjust and divisive."

"The term freeholder is outdated and it's offensive to women and minorities," **said Speaker Craig Coughlin**. "The term dates back to a time before the Revolutionary War when only white male owners of debt-free land were allowed to hold public office. New Jersey is the only state in the country that still uses the term freeholder. It is long past time that we right this wrong and change the title to commissioner."

"As a former freeholder, I believe it is important that the public knows the substance of what a freeholder does rather than what the term freeholder is," **said Senator Joe Pennacchio**. "Today's action was nine years in the making from when I initially proposed the abolishment of the antiquated term. The title 'county commissioner' will lend itself to transparency. This revamp will ensure more Garden State residents better understanding the function of this important position in county government."

"Today's decision to change the word freeholder to county commissioner is long awaited," **said Senator Vin Gopal**. "In Monmouth County, where we have towns like Freehold Borough, Freeholder Township and Upper Freehold - not only will changing this tile avoid confusion and increase voter participation, it will tell women and our communities of color that the State of New Jersey does not associate itself in any way with these archaic values of the past. This is a proud day in our history."

"It is beyond time we change the title of 'Freeholder,'" **said Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker**. "As a term dating back to before the Revolutionary War, whose meaning was historically intended to keep county-level office restricted to white, male, debt-free property owners it is not only outdated and archaic, but it is offensive to people of color and women. Our racist and sexist laws and conditions historically kept people from voting, owning land, and much. Removing from New Jersey's political titles this exclusionary term, while only a small and symbolic part of the work that lies ahead of us to break down the walls of systemic racism and sexism, is a step in the right direction."

"This has always been about encouraging more residents to participate in their local government for me," **said Assemblywoman BettyLou DeCroce**. "Most people don't know what the term freeholder means. This change will increase public awareness and update county government into the 21st century."

"Removing vestiges of racism and sexism found in names or titles that have no place in our society today is an important step among many needed to bring an end to systemic bias," **said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson**. "'Freeholder' was never an effective title for the county public office holder. For persons of color, it was more of a reminder of the sordid and oppressive ideals of its colonial-era origins. It's time to end the confusing and hurtful conversation surrounding the term 'freeholder' and rename the position."

"New Jersey is the only state in America that still uses the outdated and offensive title 'freeholder' for its elected county officials," **said Assemblywoman Angela McKnight**. "The title dates back to pre-Revolutionary War in an era when county-level office holders had to be debt-free property owners, which, at that time included only white men. It is long overdue that we change the title to 'county commissioner' and forever eliminate the archaic and hurtful term of 'freeholder.'"

"This is not about the people who serve as Freeholders, but rather the title," **said Dr. Jonathan Holloway, President of Rutgers University**. "The title Freeholder has a legacy that grows out of denying people access and the right to have a voice. Our present day should simply not look like that."

This Week In New Jersey: August 21, 2020

08/21/2020



Governor Murphy Announces \$37 Million In Funding For Counties To Combat Covid-19

Acting on a commitment to deliver relief to communities who were not eligible for federal funding allocated through the CARES Act and with the assistance of U.S. Senator Bob Menendez, U.S. Senator Cory Booker, Congressman Josh Gottheimer, Congressman Tom Malinowski, Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, Congressman Andy Kim, Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman, and county leaders, Governor Phil Murphy announced \$37 million in support for 12 additional counties to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding will be made available to counties in three separate tranches under one Memorandum of Agreement. The 12 counties include: Atlantic; Burlington; Cape May; Cumberland; Gloucester; Hunterdon; Mercer; Morris; Salem; Somerset; Sussex; and Warren. These counties were ineligible for Coronavirus Relief Funding because their populations are below 500,000.

“There is no denying that COVID-19 has placed an incredible amount of strain on resources across all levels of government,” said **Governor Murphy**. “I’ve been clear from day one of this crisis that we’ll spare no expense to protect the health and safety of New Jerseyans, and that requires us to provide our communities with the support they need. Together, this funding will help us save lives and emerge stronger as one New Jersey family.”

The first portion of funding, approximately \$15 million in total, provides counties with a reimbursement for COVID-19 related expenses to date. This money represents 25 percent of the county cost share with FEMA paying the remaining 75 percent, along with other eligible Coronavirus Relief Fund expenses. These funds will be made available to all 12

counties upon signing the MOU and upon proper documentation of the expenditures. were made available to all 12 counties upon signing the MOU.

The second portion of funding will help counties stand up and maintain testing sites. All 12 counties will receive \$357,500 for this purpose.

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Governor Murphy Announces Financial Assistance to Protect Residential and Commercial Utility Customers

Governor Phil Murphy announced that the State's public water, gas, and electric utility companies regulated by BPU have all agreed to extend their voluntary moratorium preventing shutoffs to both residential and commercial customers during the COVID-19

pandemic until October 15th. Additionally, the utilities will offer residential and commercial customers a flexible and extended Deferred Payment Agreement (DPA) of at least 12 months and up to 24 months. No down payments will be required for this assistance.

"Utility services are critical and must continue uninterrupted during this unprecedented time," **said Governor Murphy.** "No one should have to make a decision on whether to put food on the table or pay for basic necessities. With today's announcement, in partnership with our public gas, electric and water utilities, we are continuing our commitment to extend strong financial relief to residents and businesses as they navigate their way toward stability."

"Governor Murphy and I remain committed to helping people stay in their homes with full access to basic utilities as we weather this storm," **said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).** "In addition to this extended moratorium on shutoffs and flexible deferred repayment plans, the State has also responded by expanding our energy and rental assistance programs to help residents get through this crisis. We encourage people to visit: [nj.gov/dca/dcaid](https://www.nj.gov/dca/dcaid) to find out if they are eligible for one of our assistance programs."

"This has been an extraordinarily difficult time for New Jerseyans who have been unable to pay their utility bills during the COVID-19 Pandemic," **said NJBPU President Joseph L. Fiordaliso.** "With the cooperation of our state's utilities, we have been able to provide an important helping hand to those who need it. That assistance will continue with payment flexibility and an array of assistance programs to help protect those who are struggling."



First Lady Tammy Murphy, New Jersey Department of Health Convenes New Maternal Mortality Review Committee

First Lady Tammy Murphy and New Jersey Health Commissioner Judith M. Persichilli held the first meeting of the new, broader Maternal Mortality Review Committee comprised of 24 members representing diverse disciplines across the health field.



“Today marks a new chapter in our multipronged approach to combat the maternal and infant health crisis in New Jersey,” **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. “The revamped Maternal Mortality Review Committee will support our ongoing efforts to identify and understand various factors that lead to unacceptable maternal deaths due to pregnancy related complications. This committee is instrumental to our goal of making New Jersey the safest and most equitable place in the nation to give birth.”

“New Jersey is thankful to have such a broad array of experts serving on this vital committee,” **said Health Commissioner Judith M. Persichilli**. “The committee’s examination of these deaths will ensure accurate counting and inform initiatives to prevent these tragic losses going forward.”

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Unemployment Payments to NJ Workers Top \$14B

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development has distributed \$14.1 billion in unemployment benefits and received 1.5 million applications for benefits since COVID-19 forced businesses and organizations throughout the state to curtail operations five months ago.

“We’re moving claims forward for workers whose income has dried up due to COVID or who cannot return to their place of work because of the virus,” **said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo**. “We are currently paying benefits to as many as 300,000 people who do not qualify for traditional unemployment -- this is an entirely new population of people who are receiving benefits in addition to the record numbers of ‘regular’ claimants who are in need, often for an extended period, during the pandemic.”

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