

PUBLIC STATEMENT

VOTING AND NEW I.D. REQUIREMENTS GARDEN STATE BAR ASSOCIATION C. REGAN ALMONOR, ESQ. (GSBA REP.) OCTOBER 27, 2008

Good morning. Since its inception in the 1960's, the members of the Garden State Bar Association have demanded and, then, vigorously defended the right to vote. Over the past 40 years, New Jersey's African-American lawyers and the Garden State Bar Association have ensured that the right to vote remains inviolate. It is, as President Lyndon Baines Johnson declared, "the most powerful instrument ever devised by [humans] for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison [some people] because they are different from others..."

Today, we stand with our colleagues from New Jersey's other Specialty Bar Associations and the Black Ministers Council to ensure, once again, that every registered voter in New Jersey understands and exercises their right to vote. In 1957, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. decried the tactics being used to deny African-Americans the right to vote, ranging from, what he called, the "crippling economic reprisals to the tragic reign of violence and terror." While the days of "violence and terror" may be behind us, we are concerned that the reign of misinformation and distortion may have the same effect – keeping our registered voters from exercising their most fundamental, democratic right. We appreciate that Governor Jon Corzine, Secretary of State Nina Mitchell Wells and Public Advocate Ronald Chen are standing with us to send a clear signal to those who would intimidate – whether through ignorance or deception – that such tactics will not be tolerated.

The standard is clear. On November 4, 2008, every New Jersey resident can vote, if:

1. You are a U.S. Citizen,
2. You are at least 18 years old,
3. You have been a New Jersey resident at least since October 4, 2008, and
4. You registered to vote by or before October 14, 2008.

Contrary to what you may be hearing, your right to vote is not dependent upon your economic condition. You can vote even if you have lost your job, received a notice of foreclosure, or a notice of eviction. In New Jersey, you also have the right to vote even if you are an ex-felon, if you are not in prison or you have completed your term of probation or parole.

You should also know that you cannot be asked to show identification at the polling place, unless you are a first time registrant who did not provide ID before going to the

polls; or you receive a proper challenge and the challenger signs an affidavit supporting his challenge. If you are required to provide identification in order to vote, you should provide a current and valid photo identification or any document with your name and current address. Examples of a current and valid photo ID are a NJ driver's license, a US passport, military or other government ID, student or job ID, store membership ID such as a Sam's Club, BJ's or Costco card. Examples of a document with your name and current address are a bank statement, car registration, government check or document, rent receipt, utility bill or any other official document.

On November 4th, America will hold a historic election. We have asked all of our members around the State to make themselves available through Election Day at churches, community organizations and in other volunteer efforts of their choice. Our objective is to ensure that history's call is not muted.