



NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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To Members of the Hoboken City Council,

This letter is in response to an inquiry from your colleagues that have asked for an official opinion from the State in regards to Mayor Zimmer's proposed campaign finance reforms.

At my current reading of the State statutes, and after conversations with the State Legislature's Office of Legislative Services (OLS), it is my understanding that the State of New Jersey is the only actor with the legal authority to set campaign contribution limits. The New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission is the state agency dedicated to administering and enforcing campaign finance laws *uniformly* throughout the state.

Anti-nepotism policies, mandated ethics trainings, codes of conducts and even certain pay-to-play reforms are within the City's authority. However, it is my belief that setting local campaign finance rules and contribution limits would set the wrong precedent for municipalities throughout the State. In addition, there are well documented U.S. Supreme Court cases that explicitly claim that limiting or prohibiting the self-funding of one's own campaign is a clear violation of the First Amendment.

I am currently awaiting a formal opinion from the non-partisan Office of Legislative Services that would provide similar information in more concrete terms. This opinion should also clarify the municipality's authority in the context of State law. As soon as I obtain this, I will be sure to follow-up with another letter.

I applaud the efforts of the Mayor to promote better, honest and more transparent government. However, I caution against enacting proposals that simply would not pass constitutional muster and are being pushed simply to score cheap political points in an election year.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruben J. Ramos, Jr." in a cursive style.

Ruben J. Ramos, Jr.
Assemblyman, 33rd District