



**County of Bucks**  
**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS**  
55 East Court Street, Doylestown, PA 18901  
215-348-6000

*County Commissioners*  
CHARLES H. MARTIN, *Chairman*  
JAMES F. CAWLEY, ESQ., *Vice Chairman*  
DIANE M. ELLIS-MARSEGLIA, LCSW

Honorable Pedro Cortés  
Secretary of the Commonwealth  
302 North Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

August 18, 2009

Dear Secretary Cortés:

We are writing to you in our capacity as the Bucks County Board of Commissioners, and one of 4 counties responsible for conducting a special election for State Senator in the 24<sup>th</sup> Senate District. Upon the resignation of Senator Rob Wonderling, a writ of Special election was issued by Lt. Governor Joe Scarnati. We do not dispute the duty and role of the Lt Governor, who has the statutory authority to set the date of the Special Election as did his predecessors. Likewise, we do not dispute that there is no statutory authority to rescind a writ of Special Election once issued. While we dispute the closeness of the Special Election to a regularly scheduled election, we note that this Special Election is only 7 days closer to the regular election than the Special Election called in 2005 by Lt. Governor Catherine Baker Knoll in the neighboring Lehigh Valley area. But, these are unusual times.

Counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania face difficult challenges as a result of the budget stalemate in Harrisburg. We are struggling to honor our financial commitments and demands for human services, bridge repairs, and a host of other mandates during some of the darkest economic days of our history.

Each County faces its own unique challenges in preparing for this special election. For example, here in Bucks County, we will need to lease an additional 25 voting machines, at a cost of \$11,000 because both programming requirements and the need to retain cartridges for possible post-election challenges require us to supplement our existing machines to avoid duplication and to insure the maximum integrity for the electoral process. Some of our school districts are seeking additional costs associated with closure suggested by your office several years ago relative to security. Lehigh, Northampton and Montgomery Counties have similar expenses and have also sought relief from this burden.

Your office has set the estimated cost for this special election to be in excess of \$300,000. While counties would be fully reimbursed for our expenses by the Commonwealth, we are also keenly aware of alternative ways this money could be better spent to assist the citizens of Pennsylvania. Some of this money can be saved by combining the Special Election with the already scheduled general election for November 3, 2009.

Please join us in recognizing this as a time to conserve every dollar and every resource available and discontinue plans to expend time and funds, in favor of waiting a mere 34 days for the November 3 General Election. We ask that you REJECT the Writ of Special Election in the 24<sup>th</sup> Senate District as you did in late 2004 upon the departure of Representative Kelly Lewis from the State House. Upon rejection of the Writ, we are hopeful that a new Writ could be issued to coincide with the General Election on November 3, 2009.

Sincerely,

*Charles H. Martin*

Charles H. Martin  
Chairman

*James F. Cawley*

James F. Cawley, Esq.

*Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia*

Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia, LCSW

Cc: Governor Edward Rendell, Lt. Governor Joseph Scarnati, Bucks County Delegation to the General Assembly