



AN AERIAL VIEW OF SPRING FLING...This aerial view of Spring Fling in Westfield was taken from the third floor balcony of Arcanum Hall on the corner of East Broad Street and Elm Street. This year, several new exhibits have been added. Spring Fling is scheduled for Sunday, April 28.

Assemblyman Kean Proposes Changes In Government Dealings With Business

TRENTON — Changing the way government does business with business is the goal of two initiatives sponsored by Assemblyman Thomas H. Kean, Jr. The legislative measures would place greater responsibilities and restrictions on the state in contracting with an outside vendor for a public contract.

The first measure implements the recommendations issued by the State Commission of Investigation (SCI) in March in its report, "N.J. Enhanced Motor Vehicle Inspection Contract." "The crisis involving the state's new vehicle inspection program underscored the need for the state to substantially review and revisit its approach to public contracting. We owe it to the public, who

ultimately pays for the State's decisions, to ensure that the decision-making process is objective and controlled," said Assemblyman Kean, who has announced he will introduce the new measure on Monday, May 6.

The measure targets reform in two areas. First, the proposed legislation seeks to ensure that the bidding process, including requests for proposal, are held to the highest standards, including requiring greater and more detailed technical data and specifications. "The process," said Assemblyman Kean, "should work to ensure that a precise understanding between the State and the bidder is reached as to the service and the level of qualifications that are needed and expected before a contract is awarded." The initiative would also restrict the flow of information between state officers and employees with bidders or prospective bidders.

The proposal also seeks to monitor the activities of legislative agents and lobbyists with respect to their involvement in the development, amendment, negotiation, awarding, signing, rejection or execution of public contracts. Specifically, the bill would require certain disclosures in connection with lobbying related to obtaining State contracts, such as the disclosure of campaign contributions.

The second measure, A-427, would prohibit the awarding of state contracts to companies or individuals whom are major contributors to candidates, parties and government officials. The legislation, known as the "pay to play" bill, comes on the heels of federal campaign finance reform legislation that was recently signed into law by President George W. Bush.

"The growing infusion of funds donated by business entities into the

political process at all levels of government has generated widespread cynicism among the public," Assemblyman Kean said. "The public believes that this amounts to nothing more than special interest groups buying favors from elected officeholders. When a person or business solicits major contributions in order to obtain a state contract, it is a violation of the public's trust and raises legitimate public concerns about whether the contract has been awarded on the basis of merit," said Assemblyman Kean.

The bill would prohibit certain business entities and professional business entities, who contract with the state for services in excess of \$17,500, from making contributions to any candidate or public official who has the ultimate responsibility for the award of the contract. The bill also establishes annual limits on the amounts of money that an entity or principals, partners and officers of those entities can contribute to a candidate for public office or to a political party committee.

For a business entity, the limit would be \$5,000 for contributions to all candidates and public office holders as well as political party committee, including legislative leadership committees.

Common Cause Chairman and Citizens' Army Founder, Harry Pozycki, praised Assemblyman Kean for introducing the pay-to-play legislation in the Assembly.

"Assemblyman Kean's leadership on the critical issue of reforming the public contracting process so that qualifications and cost-effectiveness, not political contributions, are in the drivers' seat provides a great boost. I am pleased to work with Assemblyman Kean to pass this important legislation," Mr. Pozycki stated.

State Assemblyman Munoz Named To Council On Health Disparities

TRENTON — State Assemblyman Eric Munoz, M.D., (R-21) a trauma surgeon and the Medical Staff Chairman at University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, has accepted the invitation of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson to serve on the National Advisory Council on Minority Health and Health Disparities of the National Institutes of Health.

The 14-member Council advises, assists, consults with, and makes recommendations to Secretary Thompson and the Director of the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities. The center was created in January 2001 to eliminate health disparities. The center falls under the auspices of the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Assemblyman Munoz will serve on the advisory council to the center, which, he said, will "provide advice regarding the center's research training activities with respect to minority health issues." "I am delighted to have the opportunity to work to lessen the disparities on health issues as they relate to our minority populations. With the support of our President, Congress and the American people, the center will achieve its goal which is to ultimately eliminate health disparities in our nation," said Assemblyman Munoz.

Secretary Thompson said Dr. Munoz's appointment, which begins immediately, will end on February 28, 2003. The council meets at least three times a year. "I hope you will find it possible to accept this invitation and give us the benefit of your valued counsel," Secretary Thompson said in his letter to Assemblyman Munoz.

The advisory council advises Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Assistant Secretary of Health, Director of National Institutes of Health, the Director of the National Center on

Minority Health and Health Disparities on how to improve "the visibility of minority health and other health disparities research and expanding the role of this research in learning why some groups have disproportionately high rates of disease." Assemblyman Munoz is a member of the Black, Hispanic and Asian Caucus of the State Legislature and is the only current Republican Hispanic member of the Assembly. Dr. Munoz served on the United States delegation to the 45th World Health Organization Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, after being appointed by the senior President Bush.

History of Social Security To Be Topic at Luncheon

WESTFIELD — "An Historical Perspective of Social Security" will be discussed by Robert Vitolo at the First Wednesday Luncheon of the Westfield Historical Society, at noon on May 1 at B.G. Fields Restaurant, located at 560 Springfield Avenue in Westfield.

Mr. Vitolo, a field representative from the Social Security District Office in Elizabeth, will tell the history of Social Security from its introduction by the Social Security Act in 1935.

He will explain its first enrollment of benefits; the growth of the pro-

grams in the 1950s and 1960s; the COLA (Cost Of Living Adjustment) program and its subsequent effect on trust funds and the 1977 and 1983 amendments, along with recent changes and its future outlook.

Regular luncheon attendees will be contacted by the Society's telephone committee to verify their reservations. Space permitting, others may attend.

Interested individuals are asked to call (908) 233-2930 by noon on Tuesday, April 30.

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