



NEWS RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

In the wake of a general election campaign marked by negative advertising, William Eldridge, Chairman of the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC), has renewed his call for measures to limit deliberately false political advertising by candidates.

"The public has grown increasingly disgusted at the type of mudslinging campaigns characterized by this year's elections." said Eldridge. "Throughout the nation, as well as within New Jersey, voters are becoming more and more intolerant of campaigns that engage in deliberately false advertising."

Eldridge said, "New Jersey should lead the way in enacting comprehensive legislation that would encourage healthy debate on the issues and discourage recklessly false political advertising that is dishonest and divisive."

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Last May, as part of the Commission's gubernatorial public financing program recommendations, Eldridge first proposed restrictions on negative advertising.

"This year's elections, during which many candidates across the country as well as in our own State were victimized by often savage attacks against their integrity and record, further convinced me of the rightness of the recommendation made last May," said Eldridge.

"Truly, the bitter tone of many recent campaigns is a plague on our political process," continued Eldridge, "not a Republican or Democratic plague, but a bipartisan plague."

As part of the public financing recommendations, the Commission proposed that the public financing law be amended to regulate advertising that is deliberately false. Eldridge believes that any statutory change should include all candidates.

Eldridge said: "I am aware that fashioning such a statute in a way that would not be violative of the First Amendment will not be an easy task. I am convinced, however, that such an effort not only is possible but in the very best interest of the public and the electoral process."

Eldridge said that "voter apathy and discontent threaten the viability of our democratic way of life and that this extremely vitriolic campaign advertising contributes to this condition."

Eldridge noted that ELEC will take up this issue at a Commission meeting in the near future.

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