



NEWS RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

William H. Eldridge, Chairman of the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, announced today that at its meeting in Somerville next Tuesday, February 14, 1995, the Commission will consider comments from the public made at its two public hearings on the issue of deliberately false political advertising.

Following the November election, Eldridge had renewed his call for measures to be taken by the Legislature to prohibit this type of political advertising.

As a result of the Commission's efforts, three bills have been introduced into the Legislature that would curtail false political advertising by candidates and groups during campaigns. Moreover, the Commission has held two public hearings which effectively heightened public awareness about the issue.

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Eldridge said, "I think that false political advertising is an issue that had to be raised, and the Commission is glad to have been out in front in heightening public concern about its negative effects on the process of elections in New Jersey."

Eldridge added, "I have no particular interest in seeing a law or seeing my name in the paper attached to a law. But, I think it's an important issue to raise, because I do think the entire process is being dragged down. And I think it's continuing to contribute to the ever-growing cynicism about our government. Democracy is a fragile thing and unless once in a while people take steps to protect it, we've seen democratic political systems collapse in other countries."

Eldridge said that he is delighted that the public generally supports his proposal and has shown a desire to reduce false advertising in campaigning.

"As I have said repeatedly, there is no question but that concern must be taken for the First Amendment," commented Eldridge, "however, legislation has been crafted that meets these concerns."

Eldridge said that editorials and public comment appear to support the proposition that the issue of deliberately false political advertising should be dealt with in New Jersey.

The Chairman also announced that a public hearing will be held on Tuesday concerning proposed regulations on contribution reporting and contribution limits.

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