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March 4, 2015

New Jersey State League of Municipalities
222 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08608

Dear New Jersey State League of Municipalities:

I write to congratulate the New Jersey State League of Municipalities as it marks its centennial anniversary. One hundred years ago, your mayoral forefathers recognized the need of municipalities to cooperate in order to achieve better results for local communities. This started with Passaic's Mayor George N. Seger in 1911 trying to lower gas rates for communities in northern New Jersey. His efforts led him to believe that a stronger and more formal organization was necessary to advocate for New Jersey communities. By 1915, after careful study of several national conventions of municipal officials, momentum was present and a bill was introduced and passed in the New Jersey state legislature. That bill authorized municipalities to join or form an organization of municipalities in order to advocate for joint action and led to the creation of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities. Once authorized, the League selected Trenton Mayor Frederick W. Donnelly as its first president and set out to work.

Beginning with just fifty-one charter member municipalities in 1915, the New Jersey State League of Municipalities has grown exponentially over the past hundred years. Membership is now at an astounding 565, which is actually a comprehensive list of every municipality in the state of New Jersey. The fact that every municipality in the state of New Jersey belongs to the League is clearly a testament to the success of this historic body. The cooperation and leadership the League espouses and demonstrates in its actions are ideals that every New Jersey community seeks to implement.

Over the past hundred years, the leadership of the League has led to a number of notable achievements that have led to better local governance, more local autonomy and happier local communities. The first achievement of the League came in 1917 with the Home Rule Act, which granted municipalities the power to enact ordinances and regulations governing those same communities. This, for the first time, gave local communities a real say in their governance instead of deferring to the state government in Trenton. In 1947, the League was able to sustain these gains and then build upon them with the revision of New Jersey's state Constitution. That year, the League reaffirmed Home Rule and was able to ensure the "proper drafting of a tax clause" and oppose a constitutional provision to dedicate highway funds. A

more recent achievement came in 1995 when a "State Pay for State Mandates" amendment was placed on the ballot and overwhelmingly passed. The amendment prevented the state government from imposing unfunded mandates on local communities. This was a longtime goal of the League and its success is a demonstration to the League's focus and drive to serve local communities.

As the former mayor of Union City, I know firsthand the good deeds that the League does on behalf of local communities. In my role in the United States Senate, the New Jersey State League of Municipalities has also been a critical advocate of connecting the impact of federal policy on our local governments.

That is why I am honored to be able to congratulate the League on one hundred very successful years as an advocate for New Jersey's citizens and communities. I am positive the next one hundred years will prove to be even more successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail.

ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator