

August 27, 2018

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 4181**

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Committee Substitute for Assembly Bill No. 4181 with my recommendations for reconsideration.

Renaissance schools were made possible through the Urban Hope Act of 2012 to address significant failings in certain school districts and to provide improved options to parents in those school districts. These schools have played a critical role in supporting the revitalization of Camden's educational system and I applaud the sponsors' commitment to improving the educational opportunities afforded to the city's children.

Renaissance schools were originally conceptualized in the Urban Hope Act to operate as neighborhood schools in order to provide high quality education options in some of our most distressed neighborhoods. This concept was achieved in two ways: first, through the closure of district schools and the construction of new schools operated by renaissance school projects; and second, through the takeover of existing district schools by renaissance school projects. Renaissance schools have operated successfully as neighborhood schools, guaranteeing enrollment for any student living in the neighborhood surrounding the school.

This bill would make significant revisions to the Urban Hope Act by requiring a renaissance school district to establish a common enrollment system and expanding the definition of an urban campus area. I am concerned about the impact these changes may have on the students and schools in Camden's district schools, particularly before an independent review of the renaissance school program is complete. The Urban Hope Act appropriately directs the Commissioner of Education to recommend revisions to the law based on the results of a mandatory independent review. I believe any significant changes

to the law should be informed by this review. For these reasons, I cannot support an expansion of the law at this time.

I do, however, commend the sponsors for clarifying the intent to apply the same rules of eligibility for State-administered retirement systems to teaching staff of renaissance schools as are applied to teaching staff at district and charter schools. Our Departments have been working meticulously with the federal government to achieve this result since enactment of the Urban Hope Act, and this bill will help clarify applicability of Internal Revenue Service rules to teaching staff of renaissance schools.

Therefore, I herewith return Assembly Committee Substitute for Assembly Bill No. 4181 and recommend that it be amended as follows:

<u>Page 2, Title, Line 1:</u>	Delete "supplementing"
<u>Page 2, Title, Line 2:</u>	Delete "chapter 36C of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes,"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Lines 8-27:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Lines 29-45:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 3, Section 2, Lines 1-38:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 3, Section 3, Line 40:</u>	Delete "3." and insert "1."
<u>Page 12, Section 4, Line 25:</u>	Delete "4." and insert "2."
<u>Page 15, Section 5, Line 46:</u>	Delete "5." and insert "3."

Respectfully,

[seal]

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Matthew J. Platkin

Chief Counsel to the Governor