



An Open Letter from the Hunterdon, Somerset  
and Warren County Bar Associations

Governor Phil Murphy  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0001

Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari  
67 Walnut Avenue  
Clark, New Jersey 07066

Senator Brian P. Stack  
Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee  
411 Palisade Avenue  
Jersey City, New Jersey 07307

Dear Governor Murphy, Senate President Scutari, and Senator Stack,

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner, due to the high number of judicial vacancies, suspended all Matrimonial and Civil Trials in Vicinage 13 (Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren Counties) as of February 21, 2023. As a result, citizens of Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren Counties are being denied justice.

Specifically, the citizens are prevented from obtaining divorces, resolving custody disputes, child support issues, and civil disputes greatly affecting individuals in personal injury actions and those involving commercial entities. In short, the citizens of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren Counties are being denied justice and the equal protection of the law as a direct result of the failure to fill judicial vacancies.

This situation is unacceptable and unnecessary, as it is easily remedied with your help.

When this crisis began, Vicinage 13 was down approximately 29% of the judges required to run an efficient court system. Without your intervention by June 30<sup>th</sup>, Vicinage 13 will remain down 29%, and by the end of the year, Vicinage 13 will be down 33%.

We have been in communication with our Senators and understand that there are many qualified candidates ready, willing, and able to serve as Judges in our Vicinage. If no action is taken by June to resolve this crisis, the citizens of Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren Counties will continue to be denied justice and equal protection under the law until at least late fall. This is unfair to our citizens.

Justice should not, and does not, depend on where you live.

We strongly urge you to work with our Senators on this vital issue. We implore the Governor, to nominate qualified candidates and for the Senate to work with our Senators and the Governor to immediately confirm the nominees.

Our Associations stand ready, willing, and able to assist you in any way possible in promptly resolving the present crisis.

Steven K. Warner, Esq.  
*President*  
*Somerset County*  
*Bar Association*

Patrick Heller, Esq.  
*President*  
*Hunterdon County*  
*Bar Association*

Kelly Shelton, Esq.  
*President*  
*Warren County*  
*Bar Association*