

Proposed letter-to-the-editor:

September 14, 2016

As author of the New Jersey Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting Act which created the 4-member Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC), I join others who are distressed that ELEC has become partially dysfunctional because it has only one commissioner and three vacancies. Governor Christie and legislative leaders cannot agree on filling these vacancies, one Republican and two Democrats. And this deadlock is happening behind closed doors.

There is a solution. The Governor should pick nominees with impeccable credentials for these vacancies, and then make a full-blown public announcement of his choices. If legislators, exercising their role of advice and consent, disapprove of the nominees, they can present arguments challenging their qualifications before the Senate Judiciary Committee, the body which must approve such appointments. Or the legislators could block them by doing nothing – except hiding behind the secret blackball system of “senatorial courtesy”.

If the vacancies remained unfilled, New Jersey citizens would at least be aware of what is happening and who to blame as the obstructionist.

Besides, this process would reflect the intent of the appointment process as contained in the original law – and in the state constitution.

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