



NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

December 20, 2011

Dear Colleague in the New Jersey State Legislature:

In recent weeks, there has been significant concern raised by our state's Irish Catholic community regarding the inclusion of Mr. Thomas Nast on this list of nominees for induction into this year's New Jersey Hall of Fame. While many of the names on the nominee list are quite laudable, Mr. Nast's inclusion once again has caused frustration within leading groups across the state that strive to preserve Irish-American culture and heritage while combating the very stereotypes that his work perpetuated. As a result, we ask that you join us in a bi-partisan fashion to call for the removal of Mr. Thomas Nast from the list of nominees for the New Jersey Hall of Fame.

The range of Mr. Nast's notable works is quite varied. However, his portfolio includes pieces that are widely known for spreading inflammatory, anti-Irish Catholic sentiment. For instance, infamous works such as – The American River Ganges, The Usual Irish Way of Doing Things, and St. Patrick's Day 1867 – all depict Irish Catholics in a demeaning light. We, along with organizations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians, believe that the artist who created these infamously disturbing depictions should not be a part of New Jersey Hall of Fame.

We have a responsibility to respect New Jerseyans from all cultural backgrounds in an appropriate and civil manner. As such, we should not be honoring an individual who contributed to the popularization of bigotry and prejudice in our country.

We ask you to consider joining in our bi-partisan call for the removal of Mr. Thomas Nast from the list of nominees for the 2012 class of New Jersey Hall of Fame inductees at the earliest possible availability. The continuation of Mr. Nast's name on the nomination slate will cast a negative shadow on the selection of this year's honorees and is not a proper representation of the people of New Jersey.

If you would like to be included as a signatory on the letter to the New Jersey Hall of Fame to follow, please contact one of our offices by Wednesday, December 28, 2011. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne P. DeAngelo".

Assemblyman Wayne P. DeAngelo
14th Legislative District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Rumana".

Assemblyman Scott Rumana
40th Legislative District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Rible".

Assemblyman David Rible
11th Legislative District



NEW JERSEY STATE LEGISLATURE

December 29, 2011

Board of Commissioners
New Jersey Hall of Fame
c/o The Charles Edison Fund
1037 Raymond Boulevard
Suite 340
Newark, NJ 07102

Dear Commissioners:

We are deeply troubled by the inclusion of Mr. Thomas Nast on the list of nominees for the New Jersey Hall of Fame given the strong concerns regarding his infamous works that popularized slanderous depictions of Irish Catholic-Americans. Mr. Nast's nomination for the Hall of Fame once again has created significant angst within the large Irish community that calls our state home. While we are aware of Mr. Nast's vast work, we find that many of his pieces are inflammatory and promoted offensive stereotypes of Irish Catholic-Americans.

We, the undersigned members of the New Jersey State Legislature, call upon the New Jersey Hall of Fame to remove the name of Mr. Thomas Nast from the list of nominees for the 2012 class of inductees. We do not believe that Mr. Nast is an appropriate representative to be honored by a prominent state institution such as the New Jersey Hall of Fame.

Thank you in advance for your swift response and action in this matter.

Sincerely,

Assemblyman Wayne P. DeAngelo, 14th Legislative District
Assemblyman Scott Rumana, 40th Legislative District
Assemblyman Dave Rible, 11th Legislative District

(additional signatories)
