



NEW JERSEY SENATE

LINDA R. GREENSTEIN
SENATOR, 14TH DISTRICT
7 CENTRE DRIVE, SUITE 2
MONROE TOWNSHIP, NJ 08831
TEL (609) 395-9911
FAX (609) 395-9032
SENGREENSTEIN@NJLEG.ORG

COMMITTEES:
SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

December 20, 2011

Dear Senate Colleague:

You may have heard that political cartoonist Thomas Nast has been nominated to become a 2012 inductee into the New Jersey Hall of Fame. This nomination has raised significant concern from many members of the Irish Catholic community as well as the statewide Ancient Order of Hibernians.

I feel that they are correct in their concerns, and I am writing to you today to ask that you join me in calling for the removal of Mr. Nast's name from the list of nominees.

While Mr. Nast is undeniably an important historical figure, he was also a proponent of the bigotry of his time. His method of publicizing and opposing the corruption of political machines, such as Tammany Hall, involved portraying Irish-Americans in an offensive, demeaning light. His political cartoons spurred offensive stereotyping of the Irish.

The process used by the New Jersey Hall of Fame is to have a panel of prominent people suggest a large number of names to start the process—Nast's name has been on this list for the last few years. The Voting Academy reviews the master lists and narrows it down. Then the voting continues with the 15 board members eventually voting on a shorter list that is put out to the public, and the public can vote online until December 31, 2011. The winner in each category will be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

These lists are obviously subjective in nature. Removing a name from the list because a large group of New Jerseyans feels that the person's record popularized bigotry and prejudice is a valid exercise of our civic responsibility. Clinging to the need to keep every name on the list reminds me that "foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds."

I have heard of at least one case where a name was removed prior to voting because information was received about the nominee that concerned the board members.

Page Two

Please contact me as soon as possible if you would like to join this effort. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Greenstein".

Linda Greenstein,
Senator D-14