

May 7, 2019

Dear Council Members,

We, the members of the Ethics Board of the Township of Teaneck, are recommending that the Council terminate the Teaneck Ethics Board and in lieu thereof allow municipal ethics complaints to be handled by the state Local Finance Board.

State of New Jersey lawmakers have been considering abolishing local ethics boards altogether and transferring to the State Ethics Commission the responsibility of handling ethics complaints statewide. A bill sponsored by Sen. Tom Kean Jr. (R., Union) passed the Senate with bipartisan support and has been pending in the Assembly. It is also worth noting that only 5% of NJ municipalities have such boards.

The Teaneck Ethics Board was established with good intentions but provides little to no benefit to the Township. Among the reasons we believe the board need not exist are:

- local ethics boards should not investigate complaints about conflicts of interest that might involve the same township officials who appointed them or fellow colleagues/co-workers;
- the ethics board is inefficient, as we are required to meet annually, regardless of there being any issues to address. While this places an unnecessary burden on the board members, it is also a waste of the Township's assets; and
- the fact that the board has thankfully addressed only 2-3 issues over the last 15 or so years illustrates that the board is underutilized and/or unnecessary.

We would appreciate your addressing this matter at your earliest convenience and I am available to discuss it with you each individually or while you are in session.

On behalf of the Ethics Board,



Leonard Fuld

Chairperson