



New Jersey Gasoline, C-Store, Automotive Association (NJGCA)

(Formerly New Jersey Gasoline Retailers Association)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor creates new bureaucracy; lumps honest businesses in with the guilty

Honest NJ small-businesses to be unfairly punished under new law

Governor Corzine blows an opportunity to demonstrate that NJ is “business friendly”

Simple, Business Friendly Solutions Rejected

Governor Corzine today signed the Predatory Towing Prevention Act, creating another burden on small-businesses in New Jersey.

The synopsis of the bill is misleading. The synopsis states that the bill regulates “certain tows” but actually regulates all tows.

“Today’s events are a prime example of government over-reaching,” argued Sal Risalvato, Executive Director of the New Jersey Gasoline, C-Store, and Automotive Association (NJGCA), “This legislation originated with absolute laudable intentions designed to prevent unscrupulous and unethical tow truck operators from preying on motorists, but punishes honest operators instead”.

“The bill has a sexy title and makes the public feel good, but casts a big net over honest small businesses rather than focus on the creeps that caused this legislation to be introduced”, said Risalvato.

NJGCA represents over 1500 small businesses that operate gasoline service stations, convenience stores, and auto repair shops. Many NJGCA members own one or two tow trucks simply to aid their customers in distress. The bill signed today by Governor Corzine unfairly punishes tow truck owners that desire only to help their customers.

NJGCA members are supportive of legislation that will prevent the practice known as Predatory Towing.

A letter from NJGCA Executive Director Sal Risalvato to Governor Corzine was unambiguous about that fact.

“Governor Corzine, I wish to be clear; NJGCA strongly supports legislation that will stop unscrupulous and unethical towmen dead in their tracks! My members urge you to lead the fight to prevent dishonest tow operators from preying on any motorist” wrote Risalvato.

New Jersey consistently is rated among the worst state for business to operate in.

NJGCA and other organizations that represent small businesses proposed simple solutions that would have more effectively prevented Predatory Towing and would not have created an unfair burden to honest small business owners.

“The governor had an opportunity to consider our proposals to solve this problem without creating additional government bureaucracy or punishing honest small businesses. It doesn’t make sense that he would choose this path when small businesses are finding it so difficult to operate in New Jersey” Risalvato complained.

Many legislators that sponsored and voted for the final version of the legislation were not aware of the bill’s burden on honest tow truck operators. The bill was amended and pushed thru the Assembly and the Senate along with 60 other pieces of legislation on the same day as the FY 08 budget.

“Legislators voted for this over-reaching legislation in the heat and rush of a legislative session when all eyes were focused on the budget” said Risalvato. “They thought they were voting for sensible legislation that was protecting consumers and did not have an opportunity to learn of the bills burdensome effects on my members or to consider other simple and more effective options” Risalvato said.

Risalvato continued, “However, Governor Corzine had 3 months to consider the unfair nature of this bill, its burdensome effects on small business, and NJGCA proposals that would have solved the problem more effectively without punishing my members. I am truly disappointed that he didn’t conditionally veto this legislation as we requested”

“We sat down with the Governor’s Counsel to offer simple and logical alternatives by which to achieve the original intent of preventing Predatory Towing. However, the Governor has chosen to ignore the business community. Today Governor Corzine decidedly demonstrated his support of more bureaucracy, fines, and administrative obstacles rather than small-businesses,” stated Risalvato.

Risalvato angrily stated “What really bugs me is that this legislation is the result of a few creeps in the towing business that are as unethical as the devil! My members don’t approve of these practices and they don’t conduct their businesses like these creeps!”

Risalvato’s ire is aimed at several towing operations that acted in an unscrupulous manner. The legislation was drafted as a direct response to a situation in Westwood.

Tow young girls that are constituents of Assemblyman Gordon were victims of Bennet-Kay Towing of Paramus, prompting the assemblyman to draft this legislation.

“These creeps make my members look bad and they should be made the focus of any legislation that punishes towing operators” said Risalvato.

According to a recent Tax Foundation report, the Garden State now finds itself in the unenviable position of being ranked 49th in overall business climate; only Rhode Island was worst.

“I am mad and I am disappointed” said Risalvato. “I am mad at the creeps that caused this, and I am disappointed that Governor Corzine rejected an opportunity to demonstrate that New Jersey desires to be friendlier to small business”. Risalvato ended with, “I guess New Jersey will remain stuck in 49th a bit longer”.

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