



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

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Reasonable and Fair Edition IV

*Governor Murphy correct about RESPONSIBILITY
Should small employers be blamed for essential employees with COVID-19?
Small Business community offers compromise that **SCREAMS**
Fair and Reasonable for both employers and essential employees
Governor Murphy keeps making our case with his own words*

Sal Risalvato, Executive Director of the New Jersey Gasoline, Convenience, Automotive Association (**NJGCA**), released the following statement in response to legislation that was sent to the governor's desk:

On July 30th, the Legislature passed S-2380, a bill which presumes that if an employee at an essential business gets sick with COVID-19, they are assumed to have been infected at work and therefore are eligible for workers compensation payments. The governor has still not made a decision whether to sign, veto, or conditionally veto the bill.

On Monday, Governor Murphy again mentioned the crowded Jersey Shore bar lines that risk spreading the virus. The governor said "Once again we are seeing documented news reports of bars that have been trying to do the right thing once patrons got in; but lines were filled with young people who were neither keeping socially distanced nor wearing masks. . . By the time these patrons would have even gotten in, the virus could have already spread just through the line. . .If we have to shut places down to protect public health we will." The governor also mentioned other indoor crowded house parties that were broken up over the weekend, remarking

“this can’t go on.”

Risalvato responded, “Governor Murphy is definitely right that these large indoor gatherings must stop and that we must take responsibility for our actions. Asking him to conditionally veto S-2380 does just that. Gas stations, auto repair shops, and convenience stores are certainly agreeable to accepting a presumption of culpability as their responsibility when it is appropriate. But should others who act irresponsibly by waiting in crowded bar lines and attending indoor house parties be permitted to then place culpability on their employers?”

In another remark Risalvato said, “I emphasize that NJGCA members who operate the gas stations, auto repair shops, and convenience stores in NJ answered the call of duty at great risk from the beginning of this crisis. It is not fair or reasonable to pass a law that automatically assumes blame and responsibility on them when an employee may have contracted this crazy virus outside of the workplace. I reiterate what I have said previously – our request to Governor Murphy for a conditional veto of this legislation SCREAMS fair and reasonable.”

Risalvato concluded with a few questions, “So what happens if S-2380 is passed, and one of those irresponsible knuckleheads as Governor Murphy likes to describe them catches COVID-19? Is that knucklehead's employer going to be presumed to be culpable? What is fair? What is reasonable?”

NJGCA has banded together with other Small Business Associations to form a coalition that has asked Governor Murphy to conditionally veto the legislation that was sent to his desk. The coalition has reasonably offered to accept automatic presumption of culpability during the period of time when it was much less likely that an essential employee contracted COVID-19 outside of the workplace, even though it was still possible for that to have happened.

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