



**UNION COUNTY
WATCHDOG ASSOCIATION**

*Shining a Light
on Government*

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December 15, 2011

The Honorable Christopher Christie
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: Union County Prosecutor's Office involvement in county government investigations

Dear Governor Christie:

On August 13, 2011 the Union County Prosecutor released a scathing report on the management of the 2010 Union County Musicfest with 28 recommendations but concluding that "there is insufficient evidence which warrants the filing of criminal charges in this matter."

We believe there is indeed insufficient evidence as the management of the county has covered up obvious thefts, including money intended to ease the suffering of cancer patients. Based on circumstantial evidence, it appears that hundreds of thousands of dollars raised on behalf of a cancer charity, Union County Love Hope Strength Foundation (UCLHS), was unaccounted for in 2010 and likely misappropriated by former county manager George Devanney and/or his underlings.

Yet not one county employee has been held responsible for MusicFest 2010. Freeholder Chairwoman Debra Scanlon went on the record by stating the freeholders had nothing to apologize for. Further, the freeholders allowed Devanney to be very much involved with the running of MusicFest 2011, and refuse to answer the public's questions as to what capacity he did that in since he had resigned his position as county manager just prior to the Prosecutor releasing his report. The County Prosecutor and his First Assistant were still publicly socializing with the Devanney family just weeks after they released their Musicfest 2010 report.

Our Mission

The Union County Watchdog Association, Inc. is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization working on behalf of residents and taxpayers to monitor Union County government and advocate for the elimination of waste, corruption and incompetence. We believe that good government can only be achieved through a system of checks and balance - a system that includes the watchful eye of the people.

The Union County Watchdog Association has been trying to follow the dollar on this publicly funded annual event since 2005. The numbers never add up and there are always questions left unanswered by the freeholders. Despite the prosecutor making a show of "investigating" Musicfest 2010 and implementing "recommendations" for future events, after an extensive review of the Musicfest 2011 costs with only the Open Public Records Act for use in obtaining information, the vendors that were paid, the employees and characters involved, the UCWA has concluded that this event isn't much more transparent than past years.

It's scandalous. Union County Prosecutor Theodore Romankow should be made to resign immediately.

The UCWA asked the State Attorney General's office to investigate the obviously missing cash from Musicfest 2010. The State AG then allowed the county to conduct the investigation. We do not believe the Union County Prosecutor can conduct an independent criminal investigation involving the Lesniak family. Theodore Romankow's ties to the freeholder board and Senator Raymond Lesniak, County Manager George Devanney's uncle, show that he was clearly conflicted.

The Prosecutor's Report cited negligence when it concluded that "the use of public monies demands much more than it received" yet no one was held accountable. The UCWA has documented that there is enough that is not cited in the Union County Prosecutor's report that calls for an independent criminal investigation. The county courts are filled with defendants having to answer for much less. The fact that 2011 Musicfest costs are still a mystery is a symptom of a corrupted law enforcement system. Union County government is lawless.

The UCWA is respectfully requesting your office to review the recent past actions of the Union County Prosecutor's Office in regards to their relationships and investigations into Union County government and take immediate action to restore the integrity of this office and the public trust.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tina Renna", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tina Renna
President

cc:

Paula Dow, Attorney General
Stephen Taylor, Criminal Justice Director
Hester Agudosi, Deputy Attorney General

Enclosed:

UC Prosecutor Report on Musicfest 2010
UCWA report on Union County Prosecutor Musicfest 2010 Report
UCWA Report on Musicfest 2011