

# Porzio Signs on for Pro Bono Work with Courage to Connect New Jersey

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Porzio Signs on for Pro Bono Work with Courage to Connect New Jersey Porzio, Bromberg & Newman is proud to announce it will be assisting Courage to Connect New Jersey in efforts to educate New Jersey's 565 municipalities about the impact of "Home Rule" and the benefits of connecting local administrative structures.

Porzio, a leading firm in the area of Employment and Education Law, will provide pro bono advice through Courage to Connect New Jersey to municipalities that are starting out on the path of consolidation, providing perspective as to what the process will entail.

Gina Genovese, executive director of Courage to Connect New Jersey, said she is honored that Porzio has come on board, noting there is plenty of legal work required in the consolidation of government and the regionalization of schools.

"To have such a highly-respected law firm as part of our team will help us become an even stronger organization and advocate for taxpayers," Genovese said. "I've had the opportunity to have plenty of discussions with the Porzio team. We are like-minded and share in a passion to make New Jersey affordable again."

"Many community leaders at the municipal level have a general idea of what government consolidation could achieve for their community but not how to get started," added Vito A. Gagliardi, Jr., a principal of Porzio, and Chair of the firm's Employment Law and Education Law Teams. "Porzio is pleased to support Courage to Connect New Jersey, which offers its services in a way that makes the challenging process easier for people to conquer."

Gagliardi represents school districts and regularly counsels clients on reduction in force and on employment issues related to restructuring and consolidation. He has been involved in precedent setting policies and cases including the recent vote in South Hunterdon that will dissolve its limited purpose regional school district, and replace the four districts serving three towns with a unified K-12 regional district.

Warren J. Martin Jr., a principal of Porzio and Co-Chair of the firm's Bankruptcy & Financial Restructuring Department, will also be a key team member in facilitating the new partnership with Courage to Connect New Jersey. He practices in the areas of bankruptcy, workouts, financial restructurings and debt relief.

"Municipalities are plagued by high labor and retirement costs," Martin said. "Consolidating municipalities has the potential not only to reduce redundancy and waste, but to drastically increase efficiencies in government services. Our goal is to offer support to those seeking to consolidate services if not administrations to better serve our citizens."

Porzio will also dedicate the services of Kerri Wright, who serves as Counsel of Porzio and is a member of the Chester Board of Education in Morris County. Now serving her second term, she currently serves as the Vice President of the Board, the Chair of the Board's Personnel Committee and the Chair of the Board's negotiation team. Wright brings a unique perspective as a member of a school board with a long history of examining consolidation in the West Morris Regional School District.

Porzio encourages its attorneys to participate in pro bono legal work and other civic activities. By supporting Courage to Connect NJ, New Jersey's municipalities, and the individuals behind them, Porzio brings its vision of putting people first into the communities it serves.

