

## STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF S781 (WEINBERG)

The New Jersey Press Association (“NJPA”) is a non-profit organization incorporated in 1857 under the laws of the State of New Jersey. It has a membership of 20 daily newspapers, over 160 weekly newspapers, over 50 digital news websites, as well as over 60 corporate and non-profit associate members. NJPA submits this position paper in support of S781.

Transparency in government is central to our democracy. NJPA is committed to advancing the interests of citizens of this State in insuring that transparency. New Jersey’s Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. (“OPMA”) recognizes and furthers the goal of transparency in government:

The Legislature finds and declares that the right of the public to be present at all meetings of public bodies, and to witness in full detail all phases of the deliberation, policy formulation, and decision making of public bodies, is vital to the enhancement and proper functioning of the democratic process; that secrecy in public affairs undermines the faith of the public in government and the public's effectiveness in fulfilling its role in a democratic society, and hereby declares it to be the public policy of this State to insure the right of its citizens to have adequate advance notice of and the right to attend all meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting the public is discussed or acted upon in any way except only in those circumstances where otherwise the public interest would be clearly endangered or the personal privacy or guaranteed rights of individuals would be clearly in danger of unwarranted invasion.

See N.J.S.A. 10:4-7. S781 amends various provisions of OPMA which have been in effect since 1975. NJPA believes that the Bill makes significant strides in effectuating OPMA’s express recognition and furtherance of the right of the public to be present at all meetings of public bodies and to witness in full detail all phases of the deliberation, policy formation, and decision making of those bodies.

NJPA appreciates Senator Weinberg’s shared commitment to advancing transparency in government and applauds her effort to amend OPMA so as to maximize public access to meetings of public bodies in this State.

For those reasons, NJPA strongly supports S781.

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**New Jersey Press Association**

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