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NEWS RELEASE

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Whitman to Bar Association - Live up to the Compact Let the County Bar Speak

NJ Gov. Christie Whitman today called upon the NJ State Bar Association to live up to the provisions of the 30-year old compact between the association and the governor and disclose to her the findings of the Hunterdon County Bar Association with regard to the qualifications of Peter Verniero to sit on the New Jersey Supreme Court.

"The provisions of our compact clearly state that if the county bar association makes a finding that differs from the state bar, that the state bar will make that finding known to the Governor," Gov. Whitman said.

"There is speculation that the Hunterdon County Bar Association found Attorney General Verniero qualified, but no one would know because of the state association's failure to provide me with the findings of the county bar association," she said.

"It is inexcusable that there have been repeated leaks from the State Bar Association with respect to the proceedings of the review committee. It is outrageous that while the committee seems incapable of controlling some leaks, it has kept secret the findings of the county bar association," she said.

"The Bar Association's irregular approach of invoking confidentiality when it is expedient, and rejecting it with caprice and whimsy when it is convenient, is offensive," she said.

"While the State Bar Association has already been associated with breaks in certain aspects of the compact, their absolute refusal to allow the opinion of the Hunterdon County bar Association to be known is an affront to the compact," she said.

"It really makes you wonder what the motivations of the Association are when the very people who agreed to the compact are denied the opportunity to live up to it," she said.