

State of New Jersey

Governor Phil Murphy

Statement by Governor Murphy on Report by Former State Supreme Court Justice Peter Verniero on Vetting and Hiring Practices of the Governor-Elect's Transition Office and Related Issues

02/6/2019

"When this matter was first brought to my attention in October, I ordered a full investigation to determine what happened and to strengthen the system for survivors of sexual assault moving forward. Sexual misconduct in any form is intolerable and must be treated by this Administration and every organization with the utmost gravity.

"With former Supreme Court Justice Verniero's report, we now have more information about how decisions were made and the role current policy and procedures played in those decisions. The report contains hard truths that my Administration must fully accept and also highlights structural issues with gubernatorial transitions that merit reform. I agree with all the corrective actions Justice Verniero recommends, and I will work collaboratively with the Legislature and others to ensure their adoption.

"Knowing what I know now, I wish I was informed earlier by my team about Ms. Brennan's allegations. As members of my staff have previously testified, they regret not telling me sooner as well. I fully respect the determinations made by two separate law enforcement entities regarding Mr. Alvarez, but once the decision was made to separate him from state government, it should have had been handled more swiftly and decisively.

"From the beginning, my Administration has cooperated fully in every conceivable way, both with Justice Verniero and the New Jersey Legislature's Joint Legislative Select Oversight Committee. We have openly facilitated access to our senior staff and team and voluntarily shared internal communications and documents in response to every request made by the Legislature. There have been seven full days of hearings, including 13 witnesses and over 40 hours of fact witness testimony.

"We must now all commit to the recommendations outlined by Justice Verniero, Attorney General Grewal, and Director Patel. I also look forward to reviewing the recommendations set forth by the Legislature's Joint Oversight Committee. Although we cannot turn back the clock, we must endeavor to make New Jersey a better place for survivors of sexual assault, and do everything we can to ensure their voices are heard as they seek justice."

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