

July 18, 2005

Teri Quirk
45 Hampton Place
Nutley, NJ 07110

Acting Governor Richard J. Codey
The State House
P.O. Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Codey,

I am writing this letter to share my concerns in regards to a situation that has occurred within my town. I am a mother of three and a spokesperson for a newly formed group called the Nutley Parent Advocacy Network (see enclosed pamphlet). We formed a little over a year ago to help parents advocate for the needs of their children within the school system.

It has been a busy, but successful year for us as we have helped to open up lines of communication between parents, school officials and Board of Education members. However just recently we learned new information that greatly concerns us. Several months ago (without our knowledge) our local Department of Public Safety ordered a traffic study from a private engineering firm. The purpose of this study was to examine the amount of school-aged children and vehicles within 20 intersections during the time frames of 7am-9am and 2pm-4-pm. The 20 intersections had been previously selected by the local traffic coordinator. The one-day study that was completed, concluded that 16 out of 20 intersections were considered "flatliners" or not requiring a guard post (see enclosed map). When the public was finally informed by the Department of Public Safety several months later, they were told that the decision to remove these posts was a "done deal". They were also told that all elementary school-aged children would be shown a safety video in school and receive a map on the safest routes home. The department then made the study available to the public for a fee. When the public finally did get the opportunity to review the study, one concerned mother pointed out that the children are only present in the intersections during the time frames of 8am-8:45am and 3:00pm to 3:45pm. This prompted a group of concerned parents to reexamine 4 of the intersections during those time frames. The results of their informal study were increased which led us to question the validity of the town study.

Members of our organization, along with other concerned parents have

held both private and public meetings with the Department of Public Safety to state that the removal of these 16 guard posts (which includes 20 crossing guards) is a public hazard. Our biggest fear is that a child in our community may be injured or killed because of a decision that is based upon incorrect or insufficient information. We can't help but feel that this exhibits negligence on the part of this department.

The Nutley Parent Advocacy Network at this time has created a committee of concerned parents known as the "Save the Guards" committee. We have decided that we will inform the public of the traffic study and the effects that it will have on our children. At this time we have started a petition drive where approximately 30 of us are collecting signatures from our neighbors. Our goal is to get 5,000 signatures. I have been collecting signatures for 2 weeks and I have approximately 100 (see enclosed copies). When our group does make our quota we will forward you the rest.

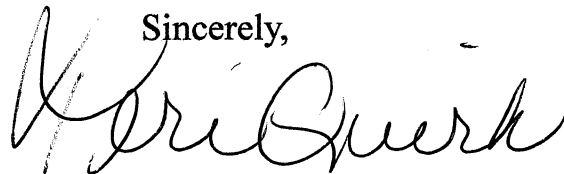
Since we feel that the present traffic study is invalid, we would also like to request the State Department of Transportation conduct their own study on those intersections (during the appropriate time frames) so that they can see the actual number of children that will be effected by the elimination of these guard posts.

We understand that as Governor you are faced with many different problems everyday, some much more serious than ours. However we as the public are faced with the possibility of losing one of our children. Several years ago, one of our crossing guards was killed by a drunk driver. At the time she was crossing several children and saw that the car was not going to stop. She then pushed the children out of the way and was hit. If it was not for her, those children would also be dead. As a community, you don't forget something like that.

We hope that you can find a way to help us, so that our children will not be the victim of a poor governmental decision that may cost them their life.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mari Querk".

Nutley Parent Advocacy Network