## SENATE BILL NO. 2364 (Second Reprint)

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 2364 (Second Reprint) without my approval.

New Jersey voters have been able to vote early in person in every election since 2009. This early voting method, known as "Vote by Mail," conveniently and securely allows voters to request, obtain, and cast a "mail-in ballot" by mail or in person beginning 45 days before the primary and general election. With nearly 300,000 mail-in ballots cast last November, Vote by Mail has proven to be effective and reliable with minimal cost borne by the State.

Conversely, Senate Bill No. 2364 (Second Reprint) creates another early voting process in New Jersey that would cost the State at least \$25 million this year and millions more every year thereafter. The bill allows voting at designated polling places during a shortened 14-day period inside of the current 45-day early voting period. Voting would be conducted using paper ballots instead of the customary electronic voting machines used on election day. These paper ballots, in both blank and voted forms, must be secured and physically transferred between each polling place and the county board of elections twice daily during that two-week period. Finally, the sponsors insist that this new voting process be hastily established and ready in less than two months.

I support responsible and cost-efficient election reform that increases voter participation because democracy works best

when the most people vote. But this bill risks the integrity and orderly administration of our elections by introducing a new voting method and process. Taxpayers should not have to foot a more than \$25 million bill to pay for a hasty, counterproductive, and less reliable system, especially when New Jersey's current early voting process is reliable and cost effective. Rather, election officials should continue to promote the availability of the existing early voting method wherever practicable.

Accordingly, I herewith return Senate Bill No. 2364 (Second Reprint) without my approval.

Respectfully,
/s/ Chris Christie
Governor

[seal]

Attest:

/s/ Charles B. McKenna
Chief Counsel to the Governor