



NEW JERSEY SENATE

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SENATOR, DISTRICT 30
DEPUTY MINORITY LEADER
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MEMBER, COMMERCE
LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT

March 27, 2023

The Honorable Christopher H. Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Smith:

I was very pleased to hear that the Lakewood Study Square (LSS) is seeking funding in the FY2024 Appropriations Process to acquire land in order to build a Senior Center to offer an array of classes and recreation and wellness programs.

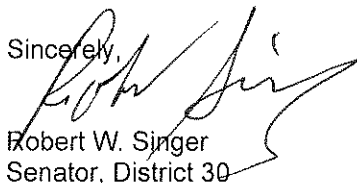
It is difficult to believe that Lakewood, which is now the 4th largest city in New Jersey, until now did not have even one Senior Center to provide programming and congregate opportunities for its older adult population. The need for comprehensive and centralized programming for this population has grown tremendously in recent years, as natural growth of the senior community from those who are aging in place has been turbocharged by an influx of newcomers moving to Lakewood to be with their children and grandchildren who live in the Township.

I am therefore delighted to support and collaborate with the Lakewood Study Square in opening the first Senior Center in Lakewood, which will leverage private philanthropy and Township and County funding opportunities to provide an accessible and welcoming central gathering place for the senior community with a comprehensive array of programming. I urge you to fully support LSS's FY2024 Appropriations funding request to support this effort.

Please give this crucial project your full consideration, and please do your utmost to help it secure funding in the FY2024 Appropriations Process. If I can be of assistance in providing any additional information, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Singer
Senator, District 30

RWS/tab

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March 27, 2023

The Honorable Christopher H. Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Smith:

We were very glad to hear that Lakewood Study Square has submitted a funding request in the FY2024 Appropriations Process for its Connections program in order to purchase land on which to build a much-needed senior center to offer quality programming for Ocean County seniors from Lakewood, Jackson, Toms River and Manchester. As you know, Ocean County treasures our dynamic senior population and endeavors to ensure that their myriad needs are met as they age.

We have a long history of working with the Lakewood Community Services Corporation (LCSC) to offer kosher meals on wheels for Ocean County seniors who are homebound. We are glad to hear that LCSC is providing guidance to this important new initiative, and we look forward to working with Lakewood Study Square and its partners in their efforts to establish a hub to offer comprehensive congregate services to seniors.

Please do your utmost to secure funding in the FY 2024 Appropriations Process for the Lakewood Study Square project. We appreciate your efforts and your advocacy, and we stand ready to assist in any way that is needed.

With warm regards and appreciation,

Joseph H. Vicari
Commissioner Director

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Commissioner
Deputy Director

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Commissioner

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Commissioner

Barbara Jo Crea
Commissioner

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Township of Lakewood

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Raymond G. Coles, *Mayor*
Menashe Miller, *Deputy Mayor*

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March 27, 2023

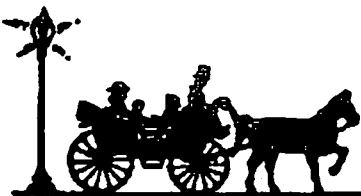
The Honorable Christopher H. Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Smith:

I am pleased to express my strong support for the funding request in the FY2024 Appropriations Process submitted by the Lakewood Study Square (LSS). It is my understanding that LSS is proposing to build a comprehensive senior center to offer services to seniors from Lakewood and the surrounding towns.

LSS' senior Connections program is long overdue, and will close a significant gap in service that currently exists in regards to Lakewood's growing senior population. As you well know, Lakewood experienced an astonishing 46% growth rate between the 2010 and 2020 census, and this growth has now brought Lakewood into the ranks of New Jersey's largest cities (4th largest.) One key contributing factor has been the growth of the senior community, both from long-time residents aging in place, as well as from an influx of seniors who have moved into Lakewood over the past few years. This changing senior population does not want to remain within the gates of Lakewood's senior villages as did Lakewood's seniors in years past. They are seeking community integration and community-based programming.

Most towns of our size would be expected to have numerous Senior Centers to offer programming to enable our seniors to remain healthy and social, and to preserve their community ties and their vitality far into advanced age. Yet Lakewood has no Senior Center and little formal programming for seniors. I therefore commend the Lakewood Study Square/Connections for their efforts to service the senior population, and for initiating this important project.



I urge you to fully support LSS's FY2024 Appropriations funding request. Please give this crucial project your full consideration. If I can be of assistance in providing any additional information, please do not hesitate to call on me. Many thanks in advance for your advocacy for Lakewood's seniors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Coles', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ray Coles
Mayor
Lakewood Township



March 27, 2023

The Honorable Christopher H. Smith
U.S. House of Representatives
2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Smith:

I am writing on behalf of the Lakewood Community Services (LCSC) to express our strong support for the request submitted to you by the Lakewood Study Square (LSS) for funding in the FY2024 Appropriations Process. This funding will be used to enable LSS' Connections program to acquire land to construct a senior center in which to centralize congregate meals, education, health and wellness, exercise and recreation and other programs for seniors.

We at LCSC are well acquainted with the growing needs of the senior population in Lakewood. Our organization has been providing kosher meals on wheels to local seniors with limited mobility for the past 20 years, and we are currently providing some 78,000 meals per year. As such, we have seen how, over the past few years, keeping pace with the phenomenal growth of the Township as a whole, Lakewood's Senior Population has evolved and changed.

Where previously seniors were concentrated in the senior villages and tended to be inward focused for socialization and other services, the new senior population in Lakewood seeks integration into the community. "Young seniors" who have lived all their lives and raised their families in Lakewood are now aging in place and retiring. This natural growth of the senior community from within is bolstered by a large influx of seniors moving in from outside of Lakewood – in order to be with their children who were drawn to Lakewood for educational and/or employment purposes. The diversification of the senior community; its spread into and throughout Lakewood Township; and the large influx of new senior residents who don't yet have strong affiliation in Lakewood – all lead to a need for additional services.

LSS has stepped up to the plate to establish the first, and much needed, Senior Center in Lakewood Township. We therefore urge you to support their funding request to enable LSS to build a full service hub to offer an array of needed services to help seniors preserve their health and vitality, draw them out to community settings to reduce isolation in a post-Covid world, upgrade their computer skills to be able to function in our digital society, and to offer recreational and socialization programming to create a sense of community and encourage positive social interactions.

We encourage you to do your utmost to support and secure funding in the FY2024 Appropriations Process for this important project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Gelbwachs".

Sarah Gelbwachs
Executive Director