

MIRZA M. BULUR, in his official capacity as the Acting Public Safety Director for the City of Paterson and Appropriate Authority, City of Paterson Police Department, and ENGELBERT RIBEIRO, in his official capacity as the Police Chief of the City of Paterson Police Department,

Plaintiffs-Appellants,

v.

THE NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MATTHEW J. PLATKIN in his official capacity as Attorney General of the State of New Jersey, JOHN DOES 1-10, MARY DOES 1-10, and XYZ CORPORATIONS 1-10,

Defendants-Respondents.

ANDRE SAYEGH, in his official capacity as the Mayor of the City of Paterson, and ENGELBERT RIBEIRO, in his official capacity as the Police Chief of the City of Paterson Police Department,

Plaintiffs-Appellants,

v.

ISA M. ABBASSI, in his official capacity as Officer-in-Charge of the Paterson Police Department, THE NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, and MATTHEW J. PLATKIN, in his official capacity as Attorney General of the State of New Jersey,

Defendants-Respondents.

**SUPREME COURT
OF NEW JERSEY**

DOCKET NO. 090126

CIVIL ACTION

On Petition for Certification
of a Final Judgment of the
Superior Court of New Jersey,
Appellate Division

Docket Nos. A-629-23,
A-1209-23 (Consolidated)

Sat Below:

Hon. Morris G. Smith, J.A.D.

Hon. Mark K. Chase, J.A.D.

Hon. Christine M. Vanek, J.A.D.

**BRIEF OF PROPOSED *AMICI CURIAE* CHIEF J. SCOTT THOMSON,
WARREN FAULK, ESQ., AND JOHN SHJARBACK, PH.D.**

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PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

The State's supersession of the Camden Police Department (CPD) in 2003 establishes a clear precedent for the Attorney General's supersession of the Paterson Police Department twenty years later. And the Appellate Division's conclusion that the Office of the Attorney General lacks power to supersede a municipal police department is impossible to reconcile with the historical fact that it has done so before in Camden.¹ *Amici curiae* are three individuals intimately familiar with how policing in Camden was transformed by the supersession of its police department by the Attorney General: J. Scott Thomson began his career at the CPD years before the supersession began, and he was selected in 2008 by then-Attorney General Anne Milgram to serve as its Chief of Police, a role he held until 2019; Warren Faulk served as Camden County Prosecutor from 2008 to 2014; and John Shjarback, Ph.D. has authored a thorough and carefully researched book on the transformation of policing in Camden which will be published later this year by Temple University Press.²

¹ *Amici* agree with Defendants that there were other errors in the Court's reasoning and analysis of the applicable law, but address here only the Camden history in which they have expertise.

² J. A. SHJARBACK, CHASING CHANGE IN CAMDEN: POLICE REFORM IN ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST VIOLENT CITIES (forthcoming, 2025). An unpublished manuscript of Professor Shjarback's book, which was relied upon in drafting this brief along with the firsthand knowledge of other *Amici*, can be made available to the Court upon request.

Amici seek to provide the Court with accurate historical information about the Attorney General’s supersession of the Camden Police Department. *Amici* urge this Court to consider this important precedent, which was ignored by the Appellate Division, for two reasons. *First*, the historical practice of the Attorney General’s Office must be considered when addressing the central legal question before this Court—whether the Attorney General’s supersession of the Paterson Police Department was *ultra vires* of the Attorney General’s authority. *Second*, the Camden story vividly illustrates why it is essential that the Attorney General has this power, and must continue to have it, if he is to effectively serve New Jerseyans as this State’s chief law enforcement officer. If the Attorney General had not superseded the Camden Police Department, the nationally recognized, extraordinarily positive transformation that occurred there would never have taken place.

INTERESTS OF *AMICI CURIAE*

As described in the Certification attached to this Motion, *Amici* are three individuals of different professional backgrounds, described above, who have in common an extensive knowledge of how the Attorney General’s supersession of the Camden Police Department occurred and why this supersession was critical to transforming Camden into a national model for police reform. *Amici* seek to participate in this matter to provide the Court with important information

about this prior supersession by the Attorney General of a municipal police department.

STATEMENT OF FACTS AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Amici adopt the statements of facts and procedural history contained in Defendant-Petitioners' Brief in Support of Petition for Certification and Motion for Stay Pending Final Judgment, and state here only a few key facts and aspects of the procedural history that are relevant to the arguments below.

On April 27, 2021, then-Attorney General Gurbir Grewal directed the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office to supersede the Paterson Police Department's Internal Affairs Division. (Ra63.)³ On March 27, 2023, Attorney General Matthew Platkin determined that greater intervention was needed and, for reasons detailed in letters to and meetings with the affected parties, he initiated a supersession of the Paterson Police Department by his office, putting new leadership in place to effect urgently needed reforms. (*See* Pa 21–24, 227–28.) More than six months later, Plaintiffs initiated the lawsuits now before this Court, sounding false alarms that there had been an “*unprecedented* takeover of the daily operations of an entire municipal police department” by the Attorney General. (Pb 1.) (emphasis added).

³ References to the record are made as follows: Sca = State's Appendix in the Appellate Division; Pa = Plaintiffs' Appendix in the Appellate Division; Ra = State's Appendix in the Appellate Division; Pb = Plaintiffs' Brief in the Appellate Division; Rb = State's Brief in the Appellate Division; Pr = Plaintiffs' Reply in the Appellate Division.

In their brief, Defendants provided the Appellate Division with 26 examples of supersessions, including one that is a particularly powerful precedent here: the 2003 supersession by the Attorney General of the Camden Police Department which led to reforms that continue to be lauded as a national model, and would not have been possible without this supersession by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). (Rb 30–31.) In reply, Plaintiffs sought to differentiate the Camden supersession by stating that the municipality in that case had consented to the supersession and that the OAG had “worked collaboratively with [Camden] and did not oust its police chief.” (Pr 9.)

In its December 18, 2024 opinion, the Appellate Division appears to have accepted Plaintiffs’ facile effort to distinguish the Camden supersession, making no mention of what occurred in Camden in its opinion and limiting its inquiry to whether or not the Attorney General has authority to supersede a municipal police department “without the consent of the municipality.” (Sca 3.) Thus, the Appellate Division held that the New Jersey Attorney General lacks the authority to supersede municipal police departments without the consent of the municipality, and ordered an abrupt end to the supersession of the Paterson Police Department that has been in place for nearly two years. On December 19, Chief Justice Rabner granted Defendants’ request to seek emergent relief and temporarily stayed the Appellate Division’s order pending further order of the Court.

ARGUMENT

The Appellate Division’s conclusion that the Attorney General lacks power to supersede a municipal police department cannot be reconciled with the historical fact that the Attorney General did exactly this before in Camden, to tremendous positive effect. And without the Attorney General’s supersession, Camden would never have transformed its police force into a national model,⁴ lauded by President Obama in 2015 as “a symbol of promise for the nation.”⁵

⁴ See, e.g., Katherine Landergan, *The City that Really Did Abolish the Police*, Politico Magazine (June 12, 2020), <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/06/12/camden-policing-reforms-313750>; Joseph Goldstein & Kevin Armstrong, *Could this city hold the key to the future of policing in America?*, The New York Times (Jul. 12, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/12/nyregion/camden-police.html>; Sonia Tsuruoka, *Camden’s Turn: A Story of Police Reform in Progress: A Guide for Law Enforcement and Community Screenings*, Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (2018), <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/content.ashx/cops-p366-pub.pdf> (discussing related documentary film).

⁵ President Barack Obama, *Remarks by the President on Community Policing*, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary (May 18, 2015), <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/05/18/remarks-president-community-policing>; Jeff Brady, *Obama: Camden, N.J., Police A Model For Improving Community Relations*, N.P.R. (May 22, 2015), <https://www.npr.org/2015/05/22/408824877/obama-camden-n-j-police-a-model-for-improving-community-relations>.

I. The Attorney General’s Supersession of the Camden Police Department is Relevant Historical Precedent.

The Camden supersession story must be taken into account in deciding this case because, as Defendants have noted, the historical practice of a government agency and its longstanding interpretation of its own powers must be considered when a court analyzes what powers the agency has—in part because that history demonstrates what the Legislature understood those powers to be when it passed subsequent legislation in the field. (Rb30–31.) *See NLRB v. Noel Canning*, 573 U.S. 513, 525 (2014); *Cedar Cove, Inc. v. Stanzone*, 122 N.J. 202, 212 (1991).

In Camden, as in Paterson, the supersession of the municipal police department by the Attorney General was not the first step taken, nor was it a step that was taken lightly. It was a last resort called for in a situation where other attempts at reform had repeatedly failed.⁶ And Plaintiffs’ simplistic summary to the Appellate Division of how it occurred—“collaboratively,” with consent, and without ousting a police chief—was inaccurate. (Pr 9.) In fact, the State takeover of Camden was so extensive that, even before the full supersession of the police department occurred in 2003, the State had stripped powers away from municipal leadership

⁶ *See* Pa 21–24, 227–28; N.J. Office of the Attorney General, *Final Report: Attorney General’s Advisory Commission on Camden’s Public Safety* (Sept. 2006), available at <https://dspace.njstatelib.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a9823a6b-2d94-4827-b5f2-b523ba8fef0a/content>.

across the board, including the mayor, as it took control of a city that was failing to provide basic services for its residents.

Beginning in the 1980s, the State provided financial aid to Camden with requirements of increased oversight, which gradually led to a complete state takeover of the municipal government and its functions in 2002, even prior to the Attorney General's supersession of the police department in 2003. While stakeholders worked throughout the 1990s to drive reinvestment in the city, particularly concentrating on the waterfront, Camden was unable to provide basic services for its residents, an extremely disadvantaged population.⁷ Many media reports and features exposed citizens' anger and frustration with uncollected trash,

⁷ Data from the 1990s and early 2000s detailed the grim reality of life in Camden, particularly when compared to neighboring suburbs. In 2000, 20% of the city was unemployed with per capita income of just \$9,815 compared to the US average of \$21,587. Jeffrey Gettleman, *Camden's streets go from mean to meanest*, N.Y. Times (Dec. 29, 2004), <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/29/nyregion/camdens-streets-go-from-mean-to-meanest.html>. Only 51% of Camden residents finished high school in 2000 in relation to the national average of 80%. *Id.* Nearly one-half of the city's population received public assistance and approximately one-half of children lived in poverty through most of the 1990s and into 2000 compared to the national childhood poverty rate of 16.1% at this time. *Id.*; Melanie Burney, *Hope on the Waterfront*, The Washington Post (Mar. 14, 1992), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/realstate/1992/03/14/hope-on-the-waterfront/dedb7b7c-1873-4c69-acf2-a5f3a3441f22/>. In 2002, 80% of children in Camden were born to single mothers, and in 1996, 27 out of 1,000 children born in Camden did not survive to their first birthday, which was three times the rate of Camden's neighboring suburbs. *See* Gettleman, *Camden's streets go from mean to meanest*.

backed up sewers, and streets that had not been paved in years.⁸ Relatedly, three mayors of Camden were indicted on corruption-related charges from 1980 to 2000, including the two who held that office from 1993–2000.⁹

The relationship between Camden’s municipal government and the State in the years leading up to the 2003 supersession was an adversarial power struggle defined by a lack of trust.¹⁰ For example, in 1999, Camden Mayor Milton Milan, who held that office from 1997 to 2000, refused to agree to conditions on State aid under the Distressed Cities Act that would have required state audits of city finances, and instead filed for bankruptcy, accusing the State of having “singled Camden out” and declaring that Camden was “not going to take it anymore.”¹¹ The State only learned about the city’s bankruptcy filing from news reporters, and the then-Commissioner of the Division of Consumer Affairs accused Camden of

⁸ See, e.g., Iver Peterson, *Stricken Camden is to Become a Ward of the State*, N.Y. Times (Jul. 17, 2000), <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/07/17/nyregion/stricken-camden-is-to-become-a-ward-of-the-state.html>; The Economist, *Ungovernable? Camden’s crisis* (Nov. 28, 2009), <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2009/11/26/ungovernable>.

⁹ See Iver Peterson, *In Camden, Another Mayor Is Indicted on Corruption Charges*, N.Y. Times (Mar. 31, 2000), <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/03/31/nyregion/in-camden-another-mayor-is-indicted-on-corruption-charges.html>.

¹⁰ Ronald Smothers, *Camden Seeks Bankruptcy Protection, Angering State Officials*, N.Y. Times (Jul. 20, 1999), <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/07/20/nyregion/camden-seeks-bankruptcy-protection-angering-state-officials.html>.

¹¹ *Id.*

preferring to “manufacture their own crisis [rather] than deal with the process that the state has set up to help.”¹²

Camden’s municipal government fell under complete state control in 2002, one year before the Attorney General’s supersession of its police department; this takeover remained in effect until 2010. At the time, it was biggest city takeover in the United States since the Great Depression and the first city takeover in New Jersey history. The Municipal Rehabilitation and Economic Revitalization Act, signed that year by Governor McGreevey, created a Chief Operating Officer for Camden, appointed by the State, who would be in charge of all city functions, including implementing a \$175 million bailout plan.¹³ The Chief Operating Officer had power to veto acts of the mayor and city council, relegating those elected officials to mere figureheads, and in the first two years of this arrangement, he took the city council to court three times for failing to carry out his directives.¹⁴

All the while, Camden was engulfed in a tide of crime,¹⁵ and the Office of the Attorney General intervened in various ways over the years in an effort to stem this

¹² *Id.*

¹³ See Gettleman, *Camden’s streets go from mean to meanest*; Peterson, *Stricken Camden is to Become a Ward of the State*.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Police officials reported more than 200 open-air drug markets were located throughout the city during this era, and there were only 80 city police officers on duty at a time. See Peterson, *Stricken Camden is to Become a Ward of the State*. And Camden set city records for its number of murders year after year: in 1990, it

tide before concluding in 2003 that a full supersession of the CPD was needed.¹⁶ Thus, in 1986–87, the State’s Division of Criminal Justice reviewed the CPD’s management and operations, and made more than 150 recommendations designed to improve the quality and delivery of police services. In 1992 and 1993, the State and County law enforcement agencies lent personnel and other support to the CPD, taking on specified non-patrol tasks from CPD officers. In 1996, the Attorney General conducted a second review and again made numerous recommendations. And in 1998, after determining that the CPD had failed to make progress in implementing those recommendations, the Attorney General directed then-Camden County Prosecutor Lee Solomon to serve as monitor of the CPD.

In 2002, the Attorney General undertook a third review of police operations in Camden and determined, once again, that the CPD was failing to provide adequate

was a record high of 44, followed by 51 in 1992 and 58 in 1995, which was nearly twice the murder rate of Newark in that year. *See Camden Murder Toll Reaches a Record* 49, N.Y. Times (Dec. 22, 1992), <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/12/22/nyregion/camden-murder-toll-reaches-a-record-49.html>; Jon Nordheimer, *Murder a Growth Industry in Poor, Reeling Camden*, N.Y. Times (Oct. 29, 1995), <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/10/29/nyregion/murder-a-growth-industry-in-poor-reeling-camden.html>.

¹⁶ The summary that follows is derived from the following report: N.J. Office of the Attorney General, *Final Report: Attorney General’s Advisory Commission on Camden’s Public Safety* (Sept. 2006), available at <https://dSPACE.njstatelib.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a9823a6b-2d94-4827-b5f2-b523ba8fef0a/content>.

policing services to the people of Camden. The Governor ordered the New Jersey State Police to provide direct support to the CPD, and other state and federal law enforcement agencies joined the effort as well, increasing their presence in the city. But these extraordinary measures were not enough, and when police effectiveness in Camden reached an all-time low in 2003, leading to the city being designated America's most dangerous city in 2004,¹⁷ then-Attorney General Peter Harvey ordered the supersession of the CPD by the State on March 17, 2003. This action cleared a path for change.

I. Without the Supersession That Took Place, Policing in Camden Would Never Have Reformed.

The Attorney General's supersession of the Camden Police Department was essential to the reforms in that city's policing methods which continue to garner national attention and improve the lives of Camden residents.¹⁸ Put simply, nothing would have changed in the CPD if the Attorney General had not superseded it.¹⁹ But

¹⁷ *Id.*; see Reuters/Washington Post, *Camden, N.J. Ranked Most Dangerous City in U.S.*, (Nov. 21, 2005), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2005/11/22/camden-nj-ranked-most-dangerous-city-in-us/b8ba87d6-0ae3-4b66-81b0-f292393f92f5/>.

Camden's murder rate in 2004 was 61.2 per 100,000—nearly double that of Newark (31.0 per 100,000) and nearly triple that of Trenton (21.1 per 100,000) that year. Comparatively, Camden's murder rate in 2024 was 23.7 per 100,000.

¹⁸ See *supra* n. 4.

¹⁹ As former Attorney General Milgram stated in an interview, it was a “fight to reform” and “local political leaders were not in favor of the work that we were trying to do.” David Kurlander, *The Camden Policing Model (with Anne Milgram & Scott Thomson)* (June 18, 2020) (transcript of podcast episode).

the Attorney General did step in, making systemic changes to the Department and, eventually, completely transforming it into a new law enforcement agency featuring policing methods that keep civilians and police officers in Camden safer than ever before. Those reforms were urgently needed: Camden was ranked America's most dangerous city in both 2004 and 2005, and a commission tasked with studying and making recommendations regarding public safety in Camden found in 2006 that the Camden Police Department was "in a state of crisis, unable to meet the substantial policing challenges of the Camden community."²⁰ But crime has been steadily been falling since the Department was dismantled and rebuilt in 2013, with 2024 seeing the lowest number of homicides in Camden since 1985, and other data showing that crime is at a 55-year low.²¹

In the first five years after the 2003 supersession, a number of leadership changes were made. Initially, Attorney General Harvey appointed then-County Prosecutor Vincent Sarubbi as the managing authority and final decision-maker for all administrative and management changes in the department. Later, other leaders were brought in from the outside: for six months in 2006, the department was headed

²⁰ N.J. Office of the Attorney General, *Final Report: Attorney General's Advisory Commission on Camden's Public Safety* (Sept. 2006).

²¹ See Leah Uko, *Crime continues to steadily drop in Camden, NJ, according to the data*, NBC Philadelphia (Jan. 7, 2025), <https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/crime-rates-down-quality-of-life-camden-county-new-jersey-police-department/4071340/>.

by the former police chief of Ormond Beach, Florida, and he was followed by the former police chief of Sacramento, California.²² When Attorney General Anne Milgram took over in 2007, she determined to change that model and moved to find leadership from within the CPD.²³ But her first choice was not long on the job—she sought and obtained his resignation after she found a gross misallocation of resources, a circumstance that she could address precisely because the State had superseded.²⁴

As AG Milgram has written and spoken about widely, the Attorney General’s supersession of the CPD meant that she could be extremely flexible and innovative in her approach to reform.²⁵ After asking for the prior chief’s resignation in 2008, she promoted then-36-year-old Thomson to police chief, an extraordinary step given that historically, chiefs had only been promoted at the end of their careers, when reform-mindedness was not likely.²⁶ AG Milgram and Chief Thomson, with help

²² See The Associated Press/N.Y. Times, *Camden: Yet Another Police Chief Named* (Aug. 2, 2006), <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/02/nyregion/camden-yet-another-police-chief-named.html>.

²³ Kurlander, *The Camden Policing Model*.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ See *id.*; Anne Milgram, *How a new kind of policing saved America’s most dangerous city*, CNN (June 13, 2020), <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/13/opinions/police-camden-minneapolis-george-floyd-milgram/index.html>; Anne Milgram, *Why smart statistics are the key to fighting crime* (TED Talk delivered Oct. 2013), https://www.ted.com/talks/anne_milgram_why_smart_statistics_are_the_key_to_fighting_crime/transcript?subtitle=en.

²⁶ Kurlander, *The Camden Policing Model*.

from many others, were able to disrupt the *status quo*, precisely because they could not be fired by local officials, who were decidedly unhappy with the steps they were taking. As Chief Thomson recounted with AG Milgram in a 2020 joint interview,

We were disrupting the *status quo*. I mean, look, everybody was up in arms over it. When you're talking about Camden, it's gift is it's curse. . . . Everybody's related to each other, everybody knows each other. When you're starting to hold people accountable, that's not welcomed with open arms. . . . If they could have just, with one council meeting, got rid of me, they would have. There's not a shadow of a doubt in my mind that would have occurred. But they couldn't because the state, the governor was providing 85% of the budget and you were the Attorney General and you had the say. . . . Again, the progress that was made, and we made some really good progress, it was in spite of the institutions at the time. Really when 2013 occurred and the opportunity presented itself to build culture as opposed to change it, I literally could do in three days what would have taken me three years.²⁷

With the freedom to innovate and overcome roadblocks to reform that the supersession allowed them—and with Camden continuing to face a public safety crisis rivaling the worst in the nation—AG Milgram and Chief Thomson made bold changes to the CPD.²⁸ They dismantled specialty units that wasted resources and were designed to allow a small number of officers to make money from after-hours jobs at the expense of the public's safety; demoted and fired officers who did not

²⁷ Kurlander, *The Camden Policing Model*.

²⁸ See generally Leadership for a Networked World, “We Want Guardians, Not Warriors”: *The Transformation of the City of the Camden Police Department* (2019), available at <https://lnwprogram.org/sites/default/files/Guardians-Not-Warriors.pdf>

show sufficient dedication to the job and the community; moved as many officers as they could from desk jobs to the streets; and drastically improved data collection methods that allowed the department to be understand crime patterns and ensure accountability for supervisors and officers.²⁹ At one of his first public meetings, Chief Thomson gave out his personal cell phone number so that people in the community could contact him directly if they were mistreated by an officer.³⁰ In overhauling the way the Department had been operating and taking bold steps to root out corruption, they “made many enemies and made very few friends.”³¹ Indeed, in Thomson’s first six months as chief, his colleagues in the CPD filed some 100 grievances and six lawsuits against him.³² He would have undoubtedly been replaced as Chief had it not been for the supersession.

While these reforms resulted in accountability and began to pay dividends for public safety, they were just scratching the surface of the reform that was needed. As a result, the State, through Chief Thomson, ultimately dissolved the entire CPD in 2013, which meant eliminating its union contracts, and rebuilt in its place the new department that operates today, the Camden County Police Department (CCPD). Every single CPD employee, even Chief Thomson, was fired, and those who wanted

²⁹ See Milgram, *Why smart statistics are the key to fighting crime*.

³⁰ See Leadership for a Networked World, “*We Want Guardians, Not Warriors*.”

³¹ Milgram, *How a new kind of policing saved America’s most dangerous city*.

³² See Leadership for a Networked World, “*We Want Guardians, Not Warriors*.”

to apply to the new force had to fill out a 50-page application and go through an interview process. Chief Thomson and his team asked community members what they were looking for in a police force, and they looked for these qualities in hiring a new police force. To get hired by the new CCPD, applicants had to demonstrate that their vision of policing was in line with Chief Thomson's: a police force of "guardians, not warriors," who were totally committed to serving the community.³³

The result was truly transformative: as reported nationally throughout the past two decades, and lauded by President Obama during a visit in 2015, Camden's police department has steadily reduced crime rates and regained the community's trust. Its crime rates today are at a 55-year low, and a comparison of data from January 2012 and November 2024 demonstrates that the rate of violent crime was reduced by 50%, homicide was reduced by 75%, and robbery was reduced by 76% in little more than a decade. And the city's demonstrable improvements in public safety have, in turn, played an essential role in Camden's profound and still ongoing urban renaissance, driven by sustained investments in its police department and other formerly dysfunctional government institutions, as well as its schools, and businesses.³⁴

³³ J. Scott Thomson, *As Camden's police chief, I scrapped the force and started over. It worked.*, Washington Post (Jun. 18, 2020), https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/camden-police-chief-old-new-department/2020/06/18/37407536-b0b8-11ea-856d-5054296735e5_story.html.

³⁴ See Paul G. Vallas, *Police Reform Wasn't the Only Big Change in Camden*, Wall Street Journal (July 17, 2020),

The Camden supersession story, as lived through and studied by *Amici*, illustrates why it is essential for the Attorney General to continue to have supersession power if he is to effectively serve New Jerseyans as our State's chief law enforcement officer. In 2003, Camden desperately needed outside help to root out corruption, mismanagement, and deeply entrenched but ineffective policing methods that were allowing the city to grow continually more dangerous until it was ranked America's most dangerous city two years in a row. Thankfully, the State had the power step in and make Camden what it is today: a place that is safer than it has been in two generations, where the police department is finally accountable to the Camden residents it serves and where the future is bright.³⁵

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/01/nyregion/camden-turns-around-with-new-police-force.html>; Deanna Paul, '*Police must first do no harm*': How one of the nation's roughest cities is reshaping use-of-force tactics, Washington Post (Aug. 21, 2019), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/08/21/police-must-first-do-no-harm-how-one-nations-roughest-cities-is-reshaping-force-tactics/>.

³⁵ Although not at issue in this case, *Amici* note the Appellate Division's mention of the possibility of an Attorney General's "supersession of an entire municipal police department by directing and working through the county prosecutor's office" as opposed to a direct supersession. (Sca 36 n.20.) Such an arrangement would be both inefficient, adding an unnecessary middle layer of bureaucracy, and far less effective. As *Amici* Mr. Faulk and Chief Thomson experienced in Camden, the Attorney General came with many more financial and law enforcement resources, was insulated from local attempts to influence the reform process, and carried a bigger "stick" as compared to the County Prosecutor, one that could overcome resistance to change.

CONCLUSION

The Appellate Division erred by not taking into account recent historical precedent for the Attorney General's supersession of the Paterson Police Department. This Court should consider this precedent and the lessons learned from it and, accordingly, grant certification, continue the current stay pending its review on the merits, and ultimately reverse the Appellate Division's ruling.

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Respectfully submitted,

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