

Borough of Longport Mayor Nick Russo and Police Chief Frank Culmone Send a Letter to Governor Murphy Regarding the Juvenile Justice Reform Act

Here are several excerpts from a letter recently mailed to Governor Phil Murphy signed by Mayor Russo and Chief Culmone:

Dear Governor Murphy:

The Borough of Longport and our police department, urgently request that you rethink your approach to handling juvenile violations in our coastal communities. As you are aware, Memorial Day weekend saw a massive influx of visitors to our shore communities and a massive spike in police activity. In 2023, Longport police officers enforced 156 curbside warnings to juveniles with another 90 curbside warnings in 2024, and to be honest, these warnings have had little to no effect on the poor behavior that is taking place in our town and many others.

In addition, Longport recently experienced yet another event on August 30, 2024, when a couple of hundred juveniles were engaged in a pop-up party on 11th Avenue, placing our officers at a severe disadvantage. The current measures are insufficient to address the escalating issues of juvenile violations in our community.

This lack of discretion allowed for law enforcement within their jurisdictional authority, where juveniles are concerned, has become untenable, and something needs to change. Not only have I been the Mayor of Longport for 16 years, but I am also a retired Supervising State Investigator with the NJ Division of Criminal Justice, Office of the Attorney General, and given my criminal justice experience, my unequivocal opinion is that the NJ Criminal Justice System is acutely broken. Speaking for Longport, the residents and visitors are frustrated, and it is affecting the peaceful enjoyment of their properties and everyday lives. We appreciate your consideration and would be very happy to meet with you or your staff to discuss this further should you warrant some discussion.