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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***Press Statement on Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello’s Settlement of the Primary Ballot Design cases***

**TRENTON-** Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello today settled two lawsuits against the Mercer County Clerk, filed by Andy Kim and Christine Conforti. These cases, *Kim v. Hanlon, et al* and *Conforti v. Hanlon, et. al*, challenged the use of the County Party line on Primary Election ballots and in settling, the County Clerk has agreed to commit to the use of block balloting in future Primary Ballot design and layout.

Ms. Sollami Covello further agreed within the settlement document that she would draw for all ballot positions and the order of the same, unless compliance becomes impossible due to the passage of new legislation.

Sollami Covello stated, “It was clear from the Federal Court, Third Circuit, that it would rule to abolish the party line. This settlement precludes future litigation and costs incurred by Mercer County and ultimately, the taxpayers.”

She further stated that, “County Clerks, as election officials, must be umpires and not players, and that this matter now rightly can be resolved by the political parties, lawmakers, and those seeking reform. It should never have been something that County Clerks were expected to spend taxpayer monies defending.”