



New Jersey State Council Knights of Columbus



Re: Report of the State Advocate for the Columbian year 2020-2021

Worthy State Deputy,
Worthy State Officers,
Worthy Convention Delegates,

Welcome to NJ State Knights of Columbus 125th Annual Convention, and our State's 2nd Virtual Convention!

It is very hard to compare this year with years past as the duties of the Advocate grow in response to the times we live in. This year we are faced the second Columbian Year with a pandemic that has turned our world upside down and the NJ State Knights of Columbus have responded. As this year's convention Chairman, my team and I were asked to respond to world of social distancing and protecting the most vulnerable by hosting this year's virtual convention. Once again, our team went from planning a full up convention, to Supreme mandated virtual convention. With all that change, it is our hope that all goes well and you will enjoy the results.

The Advocate is also responsible for the Safe Environment Program, fraternal issues, and Council & Home Association relationships.

In reference to fraternal Issues, this year was not that much different from prior year statistics. As Knights of Columbus, we should always participate in fraternal activities as Catholic Gentlemen. We need to address the membership in a two way, spirit of charity, conversation. In the gospel of Mathew our Lord himself advised us how to address interpersonal conflict and wrongful behavior . in a private meeting where each speaks his truth and for us as Knights, in an approach that honors our principles of charity, unity, and fraternity.

When diplomacy fails to properly manage an issue, I would refer you to the *Primer on Bringing Charges against Fellow Council Members*, prepared by our Counsel to the New Jersey State Council, Gil Scutti ESQ. This is an outstanding reference we can rely on. Gil's experience and insight on all matters is priceless and we are blessed to have such and outstanding member ready to assist us.

In reference to youth issues, Supreme, the State Council, and the State of New Jersey are committed to keeping our youth safe and protecting the innocent children in our care . hence the Safe Environment Program.+It is up to us as Catholic Gentlemen, to keep societies evil and perversion out of our events and away from the children. We need to conduct our events with Catholic Morales. Safe Environment is Compliance, Awareness and CREDIBILITY that protects

our good name as an Order, a Council, and a member Knight. I urge all my Brother Knights to take advantage of that training and to share that knowledge with all in their council.

We are not yet 100% compliant and we should continue to strive to get all required officers fully trained. Below are the compliance statistics for CY 2019-2020 for the NJ State Councils as of 3/23/21:

Required Safe Environment Program Roles:

| Role | Councils | Filled | Compliant |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| Grand Knights | 330 | 316 | 255 |
| Program Directors | 330 | 190 | 177 |
| Community Directors | 330 | 167 | 154 |
| Family Directors | 330 | 166 | 153 |

- This information does not include the 42 suspended/non-active councils as of 3/23/21

With continued training, I feel we will reach 100% within the next two years.

To protect against litigation, each Council should get liability insurance in place to protect the Council, officers and members. If a Council has not acquired Insurance, I urge them to do so as soon as possible. Please consider the words of Supreme Director Dan Rossi spoken at the Grand Knights midterm meetings. Councils should take full advantage of materials given them and expertise and wisdom shared with them. New Jersey is full of opportunists and lawyers . a law suit is not an ~~%if+~~ but a ~~%when+~~. The cost of insurance is minimal in comparison to litigation.

My final recommendation is that every Grand Knight refers to the OfficersqDesk Reference on the Supreme website. It is the compiled knowledge of our Order since its conception. It has answers to every question from protocol, to member management and more. Take advantage of this valuable resource.

I would like to thank Brother Gil Scutti, Counsel to the State Council, for all of his time, dedication, and sharing of his vast expertise.

Also, thanks to my Brother State Officers, who have provided the guidance and support on these State Advocate issues within their Diocese. I would be remiss if I did not mention the support and kindness shown me by our late State Deputy Vinnie Tavormina, whose friendship and leadership I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Finally, thank you to my Brother Knights in the State of NJ, for having the confidence in me to carry out the duties of the State Advocate.

Respectfully submitted this date May 15, 2021,

Keep the Faith,
Jim Sweeney
New Jersey State Advocate & Convention Chairman