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SMITH - IMPORTANT FIRST STEP TAKEN ON CONSOLIDATION PROPOSALS

TRENTON - Senator Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, co-Chair of the Joint Legislative Committee on Government Consolidation and Shared Services, issued the following statement today on the panel's public hearing on specific legislation crafted from the Committee's recommendations:

"Today's hearing demonstrated that, while we received some pushback on different consolidation and shared services proposals from special interests, the major players are willing to come to the table and recognize the need to stabilize property taxes by cutting the costs of government in New Jersey.

"In fact, many of the proposals discussed at today's hearing garnered bipartisan praise from the members of the Committee, which bodes well for their prospects before the full Legislature. If a varied panel, espousing beliefs ranging across the political spectrum, can come together and agree on a majority of the reforms we've drafted, then I believe the rest of our Legislative colleagues will follow suit.

"The public hearing held today provided a chance for thoughtful consideration on some very far-reaching proposals. At the end of the day, the people of New Jersey will be well-served by the careful vetting process of these revolutionary property tax reforms."