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Photo attached

**UPGRADE OUR INFRASTRUCTURE BEFORE A MASS-SCALE TRAGEDY SAYS
MATTHEW KOPKO CANDIDATE FOR NJ 31 LD ASSEMBLY**

Jersey City – Matthew Kopko, candidate for New Jersey Assembly’s 31 Legislative District, which covers Bayonne and Jersey City, issued a statement today galvanizing public sentiment regarding the most recent infrastructure tragedy in America, the Amtrak derailment outside Philadelphia.

Kopko said: “The American Society of Civil Engineers has consistently graded America near the bottom of developed nations in terms of the quality of our infrastructure. This is not news. If we were in school we’d be getting straight D’s, and that is simply unacceptable. From bridge collapses in Missouri to train derailments all over the North East, this is not just an economic issue or one of comfort; it is about human lives, public safety and our collective future.”

“This train, going just over 100 miles per hour, did not derail because it was going too fast. It derailed because we have not invested in the proper technology and equipment to keep our trains going at the speed we need to power our economy. Trains in Europe and Asia routinely go faster and we are simply neglecting our collective duty by not investing in our infrastructure. This has gone on too long.”

Reports out of the New York Times are confirming that the stretch of track where the derailment took place should have had “positive train control” technology in place, but it did not. As a result at least 8 people have needlessly and tragically died.

“It is simply no longer acceptable for our public officials to express concern over these tragic events, and then go about their lives after the reporters and cameras leave. This is a monumental, multi-billion dollar problem affecting our entire nation, and we need people in positions of power that see the great problem facing us, so that we are not spurred into action after a massive tragedy that could cost hundreds of lives, or

god forbid more. We need to act now to prevent those tragedies, and by working with private enterprise and our best-in-the-world research facilities and engineering schools, there is no excuse that this can't be done expeditiously and profitably."

"Infrastructure development creates economic growth that easily pays for itself after a few years," said Kopko, who wrote his thesis while at Princeton on the benefits of infrastructure development. "Infrastructure is the great equalizer. It lifts people out of poverty, reduces the gap between rich and poor, and truly is the rising tide that lifts all boats."

"Unfortunately our nation's railway systems are from the 1800s, and it shows. We do not have roadways that have kept with the growth in usage, and we are not doing enough to maintain and build the world class sea ports we once had. Bayonne, once a proud port city, is not even considered one in today's economy. That will change under my watch." He went on to say, "We need to look at viable, reasonable solutions to these desperate problems. I am proposing to work with federal, state and local groups to bring about the best of the best for New Jersey's infrastructure. I know government cannot be the solution to all our problems, that's why I am already laying the groundwork for innovative public-private partnerships that work, not in the mode of the NY/NJ Port Authority, but in a way that saw Chile go from a third rate economy in Latin America to one of the leading economies there. Chile did it by creating public-private partnerships to develop, maintain and generate revenues from infrastructure in a sustainable way. Roads once impassable became passable. Bridges were built that connected communities, while waterways and railways were developed to offset the need for the usage of solely roads. The successes speak for themselves. What's holding us back is the lack of courage and vision from our current leaders."

New Jersey's infrastructure is among the worst in the nation. It ranks near the bottom, at 42nd of fifty states. New Jersey's railway system carries over 86 million people a year, but it's on time record is among the worst due to breakdowns in the antiquated system. New Jersey's roads are no better; they are some of the worst roads in the nation, considered by leading authorities as one of the least cost-effective systems, even as it's also one of the costliest to maintain.

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About Matthew Kopko candidate for New Jersey Assembly LD 31:

Matt Kopko was raised in New Jersey's Hudson Valley, and went on to attend Princeton, and later to the University of Chicago. At Princeton, he studied economics and wrote his thesis on the benefits of infrastructure development, a topic he believes is critical to the future of Hudson County. At the University of Chicago, Matt received his law degree and MBA.

Currently Matt practices law as a real estate attorney for one of the nation's most prestigious law firms. Matthew represents institutions undertaking infrastructure development projects, industrial developments, hotels and other real-property transactions. Matthew also has an extensive pro bono practice where he counsels small business men and women, and protects at-risk, underprivileged women and families. Before practicing law, he worked for several startups in the education and technology industries. Matt lives with his fiancée Michelle and their puppy Jack in Bayonne.

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