

Governor Chris Christie Takes Action on Pending Legislation, Securing Employment and Housing Opportunities for New Jersey Veterans

Monday, January 28, 2013

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Trenton, NJ - To better ensure that veterans continue to play a key role in all aspects of New Jersey's economic growth and expansion and have broader access to affordable housing options, Governor Christie today signed into law two bills aimed at supporting businesses owned by or that employ veterans and helping secure affordable housing opportunities for veterans. S-527/A-1133 authorizes local governments to establish a local public contract set-aside program for business enterprises with majority ownership or control by veterans, or that agree to hire veterans for said contract work. S-829/ACS helps secure affordable housing opportunities for veterans by allowing veterans to be given preference in accordance with an agreement between a developer and municipality.

Separately, Governor Christie also recommended improvements to Senate Bill 1415, legislation establishing a Helmets to Hardhats pilot program within the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, to strengthen the bill and provide meaningful construction sector employment opportunities for New Jersey veterans. The Christie Administration has successfully supported the State Helmets to Hardhats Program with a \$190,000 grant through the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Since its inception, the program has placed military veterans into accredited apprenticeship programs within the building trades throughout New Jersey.

Governor Christie recommends that the bill require actual benchmarks for veteran hiring and retention by all contractors working with the Turnpike Authority, as well as attainable targets for veteran Helmets to Hardhats participant labor hours for each highway project during the pilot program. As written, the bill would only require that for each highway project constructed by the Authority during the pilot program, not less than five percent or more than 20 percent of the projected labor hours per project be awarded to the contractors registered with the Helmets to Hardhats Program.

With his conditional veto and signing into law of these bills today, Governor Christie continues his commitment to New Jersey's military veterans, citizen soldiers and their families. Governor Christie has signed critical pieces of legislation to assist veterans, including bills to strengthen the support network for military families after the death of a service member; establish a program that awards high school diplomas to veterans who dropped out to serve in World War II, Korea and Vietnam; honor Gold Star Families with a special license plate for families of members of the military killed in action for their sacrifice; establish the New Jersey National Guard State Family Readiness Council Fund; ensure funding for the Veteran to Veteran Peer Support Program telephone helpline; and expanded the highly effective Veterans Haven program to serve veterans in the northern part of the state at the site of Hagedorn Psychiatric Hospital.

Governor Christie also took action on the following legislation:

BILL SIGNINGS:

S-527/A-1133 (Norcross, C.J. Connors/Fuentes, Wilson, Conaway, Tucker) - Authorizes local public contract set-aside program for business enterprises that are owned by or that employ veterans

S-829/ACS for A-1744/2490 (Smith, Beach/ Chivukula, Prieto, C. A. Brown) - Permits affordable housing occupancy preferences for veterans through municipal agreements with developer

SCS for S-1051/ACS for A-2164/634 (C. J. Connors, Beach/Conaway, Gove, Singleton, Rumpf) - Concerns child custody and parenting time arrangements related to certain military service absences

S-2246/A-3369 (Whelan, Beck/Eustace, Wagner, Watson Coleman, Gusciora, Wilson, Fuentes, Ramos, S. Connors, Bramnick, Wisniewski) - Appropriates \$55 million from "2009 Green Acres Fund" for local government open space acquisition and park development projects, and approves \$2,400,800 from 1995 bond act for coastal blue acres projects

S-2247/A-3370 (Greenstein, Oroho/Albano, Benson, DeAngelo, Schaer, Caride, Coutinho, Bramnick, Peterson, Wisniewski) - Appropriates \$8,930,975 from "2009 Green Acres Fund" for grants to certain nonprofit entities to acquire or develop lands for recreation and conservation purposes

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S-2248/A-3368 (Smith, C. J. Connors/Spencer, Riley, Conaway, Singleton, Prieto, Jimenez, Tucker, Caputo, Amodeo, C. A. Brown, Bramnick, Rumpf, Gove, Peterson, McKeon, Wisniewski) - Appropriates \$45 million for "2009 Green Acres Fund" and \$12 million from "2009 Blue Acres Fund" for State acquisition of lands for recreation and conservation purposes, including Blue Acres projects

SJR-37/AJR-58 (A. R. Bucco/A. M. Bucco) - Designates U.S. Route 46 bridge in the Town of Dover as "Officer Thomas E. DeShazo Memorial Bridge"

SJR-39/AJR-62 (Allen/Casagrande, Lampitt, Singleton) - Designates May of each year as "Displaced Homemakers Awareness Month"

A-1753/S-440 (Prieto, Mainor, Quijano/Sacco, Pennacchio) - Exempts certain Office of Emergency Management members from federal commercial driver's licensing requirements

A-2610/S-2236 (Dancer, Burzichelli, Wagner, Eustace/Gordon, Beck) - Authorizes placement of horse racing wagers using mobile gaming devices at in-State racetracks subject to commission rules and regulations

BILLS VETOED:

S-1415/A-2014 (Whelan, Gordon/Singleton, Giblin, Benson, Amodeo, Quijano) - **CONDITIONAL** - Establishes Helmets to Hardhats pilot program in New Jersey Turnpike Authority

S-2157/A-3413 (Lesniak/Green, Jasey, Coutinho) - **CONDITIONAL** - Establishes the "New Jersey Residential Foreclosure Transformation Act"

S-2202/A-3372 (Lesniak, Greenstein/Benson, Quijano, DeAngelo, Wagner, Eustace) - **CONDITIONAL** - Requires HMFA to expand participation in the NJ HomeKeeper Program

A-3028/ S-2198 (Greenwald, Benson, Spencer, Gusciora, Ramos/Smith, Greenstein) - **CONDITIONAL** - Establishes Clean Car Commission

Copies of the Governor's veto messages can be found attached to the release.

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