

## Office of the Governor

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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **GOVERNOR SIGNS LAW RAISING THE BAR ON AMUSEMENT RIDE SAFETY, CRACKING DOWN ON SAFETY VIOLATORS**

Gov. Christie Whitman today helped ensure the safety of New Jersey thrill seekers, children and vacationers when she signed legislation that raises the bar on amusement ride safety and cracks down on violators of ride safety regulations. The law authorizes the Department of Labor to revoke or suspend the license of ride operators who violate the law.

"This law raises the bar on amusement ride safety and cracks down on violators of our safety rules," said Gov. Whitman. "The law provides for stiffer fines and penalties for ride operators who don't meet our standards. The law will ensure that New Jersey's amusement parks and carnivals put safety first."

"Now everyone who buckles up on a ride will do so trusting that the ride operator has tested the equipment, the ride has met safety standards, and that the operator has put safety first," said the Governor. "As we get ready for the summer tourism rush, we can ensure that everyone will have a perfectly safe summer."

Gov. Whitman signed the legislation during a visit to Six Flags Great Adventure theme park, one of New Jersey's premier tourist destinations. Gov. Whitman took part in safety checks and helped launch the "Batman & Robin: The Chiller" ride. Students from Ocean County were on hand to learn about the importance of abiding by passenger rules for amusement rides and also to ride "The Chiller."

The legislation signed by the Governor strengthens the Carnival Amusement Rides Safety Act, authorizing the revocation or suspension of the license of a ride operator for good cause. The law increases the maximum fine for violations from \$500 to \$5,000 for each violation.

Under the law, all plans for new carnival rides, or for additions or alterations to rides, must be reviewed and certified by a state-licensed engineer.

Additionally, the bill requires individuals who ride carnival or amusement rides to refrain from reckless behavior and comply with written warnings and directions posted by the ride operator. Violators will be charged with a disorderly persons offense and can be subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 and up to six months in jail.

"This legislation passed both houses of the Legislature without one dissenting vote. That kind of support sends a strong message: New Jersey is serious about ride safety - and we intend to back up our concerns with tough penalties for those who put citizens at risk of injury," said the Governor.

The legislation, A-1180, was sponsored by Assembly Member George Geist (R-Camden/Gloucester) and Senators William Gormley (R- Atlantic) and James Cafiero (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland).