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NEWS RELEASE

Governor Signed Legislation A-725 and S-232

A-725, which amends the state's Right to Know Law to prohibit inmate access to public records containing personal identifying information about a victim or the victim's family. The law upgrades the crimes of stalking and harassment under certain circumstances.

The bill defines personal identifying information as information that includes items such as the victim's home address, home telephone number and work or school address. In certain instances, the court may allow an inmate or the inmate's representative to obtain the information if it is necessary to assist in the inmate's defense.

The bill upgrades the offenses of stalking and harassment where these offenses are committed by a person serving a term of imprisonment or on parole or probation for an indictable offense. The bill upgrades stalking from a crime of the fourth degree to a crime of the third degree. It also upgrades harassment from a disorderly persons offense to a crime of the fourth degree.

A third-degree crime is punishable by a maximum of five years in prison and a fine of up to \$7,500. A fourth-degree crime is punishable by a maximum of 18 months in prison and a fine of up to \$7,500. A disorderly persons offense is punishable by a maximum of six months in prison.

The bill was sponsored by Assembly Members Paul Kramer (R-Mercer/Middlesex), Charles Zisa (D-Bergen), Barbara Wright (R-Mercer/Middlesex) and Wilfredo Caraballo (D-Essex) and Senator Peter A. Inverso (R-Mercer/Middlesex).

S-232, which requires that state and federal flags be flown at half-staff for law enforcement officers, firefighters and EMT personnel who die in the line of duty. The legislation was sponsored by Senators James Cafiero (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland) and Louis Kosco (R-Bergen) and Assembly Members Nick Asselta (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland) and Ken Zisa (D-Bergen).