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Gov. Christie Whitman today signed legislation which makes it illegal for a business to sell over-the-counter medicine and baby food past their expiration dates. The bill covers all businesses, including retail dealers and flea market vendors.

The bill, S-842, repeals S-1573, which was signed by the Governor on January 8, 1998. The purpose of S-1573 was to prevent the sale of stolen merchandise and the sale of over-the-counter drugs. S-1573 placed an outright ban on the sale of infant formula, over-the-counter drugs and cosmetics by flea market or itinerant vendors.

S-842 strikes all references to types of businesses. Instead, it prohibits any business from selling medicine and baby food past their expiration dates. The bill also requires vendors to identify the source of the goods they are selling within five days after a request is made for the information.

S-842 was sponsored by Senators Joseph M. Kyrillos, Jr. (R-Middlesex/Monmouth) and Raymond J. Zane (D- Salem/Cumberland/Gloucester) and Assembly Members Joseph Azzolina (R-Middlesex/Monmouth) and Louis A. Romano (D-Hudson).

The Governor also signed AJR-31, which designates March 31 of each year as "Thomas Mundy Peterson Day" in recognition of the first vote cast by an African-American in the United States after the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. The Fifteenth Amendment provides that the right to vote shall not be impaired. Thomas Mundy Peterson (1824-1904) cast his vote in a municipal charter referendum in Perth Amboy on March 31, 1870.