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Governor Christie Puts Forward Changes To Strengthen DUI Law To Better Protect New Jersey Residents From Drunk Driving

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Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie put forward changes to strengthen DUI penalties and better protect New Jerseyans from drunk driving. The Governor’s changes to the bill, if adopted by the legislature, will require both mandatory license suspensions for first time offenders and the broadened use of ignition interlock devices.

The Governor’s approach embraces license suspension as an effective deterrent, while recognizing the use of ignition interlock devices as an important protection against repeat offenses. Governor Christie’s recommendations include strengthening New Jersey’s DUI laws with stiffer penalties for DUI offenses, by increasing utilization of ignition interlock devices for all offenses and continuing mandatory license suspensions.

“The Legislature and I strongly agree that the citizens of this State should be protected from the devastation caused by drunk drivers and I support new approaches that can supplement our efforts,” said Governor Christie. “However, given our success preventing drunk driving and deterring repeat offenders, I am skeptical of changes that will potentially soften our strong and proven methods of protecting our residents from the scourge of drunk driving. The need to punish those who recklessly and senselessly abuse their driving privileges demands policies that continue to include suspension of those driving privileges, even for first time offenders.”

As originally proposed, the bill sought to remove the significant mandatory license-suspension periods traditionally imposed for first -time offenders; instead requiring broadened use of mandatory interlock devices. The Governor’s recommendations provide a sensible way to fortify the State’s commitment to protect all New Jerseyans from drunk driving.

Primary sponsors of A-1368 include Assembly members Linda Stender (Middlesex, Somerset, Union), Ralph R. Caputo (Essex), Joseph A. Lagana (Bergen, Passaic), Daniel R. Benson (Mercer, Middlesex), Nicholas P. Scutari (Middlesex, Somerset, Union), and Jim Whelan (Atlantic).

A copy of the Governor’s conditional veto message is attached to the release.

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