

Office of the Governor

NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION ADDING CARJACKING TO LIST OF FELONY-MURDER CRIMES

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed legislation which adds carjacking to the list of crimes in which a person can be charged with felony-murder for causing the death of someone other than a participant in the crime.

The new law adds carjacking to the list of felony - murder crimes. The list already includes robbery, sexual assault, arson, burglary, kidnapping or criminal escape. Previously, a killing during the course of a carjacking could only be prosecuted as a knowing or purposeful murder or as a manslaughter.

The bill was introduced as a response to a carjacking case which began in Barnegat Township. The driver struck and killed a bicycle rider while driving the carjacked automobile.

Felony-murder is punishable by a prison term of between 30 years and life, with a 30-year period of parole ineligibility.

The bill, S-831, was sponsored by Senators Andrew R. Ciesla (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and John O. Bennett (R-Monmouth) and Assembly Members James W. Holzapfel (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and David W. Wolfe (R-Monmouth/Ocean).