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Governor Christie Takes Action On Pending Legislation

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Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today took action on legislation, including a bill aimed at helping inmates who were victims of domestic violence and a second bill designed to help non-violent drug offenders reclaim their lives by streamlining the process for expungement of their criminal records.

The Governor suggested minor changes to strengthen Senate Bill No. 995, which seeks to help domestic violence victims who have been convicted of crimes against their abusers by establishing a community reentry program to assist victim-offenders assimilate into society upon release from custody and prevent further victimization.

Governor Christie conditionally vetoed the bill, proposing that the program be established solely in the Department of Corrections.

"The goal of this bill is commendable and I sincerely support its objective," Governor Christie said. "Domestic violence is tragic, and victims deserve support and counseling. However, the bill conflates the statutory and regulatory responsibilities of the Department of Corrections and the State Parole Board, combining the agencies' separate residential program functions. Accordingly, I suggest minor amendments, in accordance with the intent of the legislation to establish this program within the Department of Corrections, consistent with its existing reintegration programming and tailored to the specific needs of this limited inmate population."

The bill as written also called for an automatic early release program for this specific subset of inmates upon successful completion of the reentry program, an element of the bill that Governor Christie does not support.

"I cannot support the creation of early release programs because they would begin to chisel away at the long-standing function of the State Parole Board," Governor Christie said. "For decades, the State Parole Board has faithfully fulfilled its charge to carefully review and consider the underlying facts and circumstances of each applicant for parole. While I continue to encourage the Legislature to explore reforms that will create efficiencies in State government, I remain grounded in my belief that the review of parole applications is best accomplished through the reasoned, compassionate, experienced and individualized judgment of the State Parole Board and not through an automatic process based upon one factor."

Governor Christie similarly took action to strengthen the Assembly Committee Substitute for Assembly Bills Nos. 206, 471, 1663, 2879, 3060 and 3108, and urged quick approval from the Legislature.

The bill proposes to allow those who have successfully completed the Drug Court program to expunge the related criminal charges, and it further aims to make the expungement process more efficient.

Seeking to balance the needs of non-violent ex-offenders with public safety, Governor Christie conditionally vetoed the bill, retaining the current waiting period for expungements for indictable offenses, currently 10 years, or five years if a court determines that expungement is in the public's interest.

"While I support breaking down barriers to employment and education for non-violent ex-offenders, I cannot endorse a bill that compromises public safety," Governor Christie said. "As written, this bill would cut in half the presumptive waiting period to expunge indictable offenses, often felonies, from ten years to five years, and eliminate an important safeguard which allows a judge to consider whether granting an expungement is in the public's interest. The current public interest exception to the presumptive waiting period is an effective and efficient way to help ex-offenders combat the collateral consequences of their offense, while also ensuring that public safety is not compromised."

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Governor Christie further suggested retaining the five-year waiting period for disorderly persons offenses, while adopting the bill's provision to lower this waiting period to three years, if a court determines that expungement is in the public interest.

The Governor also took the following action on other pending legislation:

BILL SIGNINGS:

S-475/A-3223 (Madden, Sweeney/Mosquera, Webber, Moriarty, Mukherji, Garcia, Munoz, Lampitt) - Requires certain information regarding Down syndrome be provided to certain parents and families

S-650 (Doherty, Beach/DiMaio, Andrzejczak, Peterson, DeAngelo) - Designates State Route 173 between Clinton and Phillipsburg as "173rd Airborne Brigade Highway"

S-835/A-1972 (Bateman/Garcia, Danielson) - Enhances penalties for false incrimination and making fictitious reports

S-939/A-2913 (Bateman, A.R. Bucco/Caride, Dancer, A.M. Bucco) - Designates Black Swallowtail butterfly as State Butterfly

S-1940/A-2893 (Oroho, Van Drew/Burzichelli, Space) - Exempts board of education and local government payments to entities under BPU jurisdiction from certain certification requirements

S-2145/A-631 (Van Drew, Madden/Moriarty, Burzichelli, Tucker, DeAngelo, Danielson, Mukherji) - Authorizes hiring preference for veterans in non-civil service jurisdictions

S-2301/A-3522 (Greenstein, Stack/Stender, Mukherji, Lagana, Diegnan) - Regulates pharmacy benefits managers and requires certain disclosures concerning multiple source generic drug pricing

S-2432/A-4720 (Madden/Moriarty, Mosquera) - Requires notification of member or retiree of State-administered retirement system under certain circumstances when member or retiree requests change in beneficiary for group life insurance

S-2453/A-3805 (Weinberg, Allen/Burzichelli, Singleton) - Requires earlier mandatory polling hours for school elections; requires discretionary additional polling hours be consistent with current primary and general elections

S-2523/A-3917 (Gill, Greenstein, Benson/DeAngelo, Johnson) - Permits municipalities and municipal parking authorities to create Senior Citizen Priority Parking Program

SCS for S-2586, 2587, A-3217, and 3218 (Stack, Cunningham, Mukherji, Pintor Marin, Garcia) - Requires certain sanitary and protective procedures for used mattresses

SCS for S-2668/A-4270 (Beach, Madden/Lampitt, Vainieri Huttie, Benson, Spencer, Wimberly, Mosquera) - Establishes "MVP Emergency Alert System" for missing persons with mental, intellectual, or developmental disabilities

SS for S-2770/AS for A-3956 (Sweeney, Addiego/Lampitt, Greenwald, Vainieri Huttie, Benson, Mazzeo) - Authorizes establishment of Achieving a Better Life Experience accounts for persons with certain disabilities

S-2940/A-4531 (Singer, Sweeney/Spencer, Benson, Casagrande, Muoio) - Creates new criminal offenses concerning endangering another person; repeals N.J.S.2C:12-2 and N.J.S.2C:24-7

S-2961/A-4188 (Codey, Vitale/Garcia, Lagana, Taliaferro, Vainieri Huttie, Danielsens, Holley, Benson, Jimenez) - Clarifies that Alzheimer's disease and related disorders may be listed as secondary cause of death on death certificate when appropriate

S-2978/A-4194 (Van Drew, Oroho/Burzichelli, Spencer, Rumana, Webber, Benson) - Authorizes mobile electronic waste destruction units to operate without DEP permit

S-3004/A-4685 (Cunningham, Van Drew/Andrzejczak, Johnson, Muoio, Wimberly) - Permits municipality with UEZ to participate in Downtown Business Improvements Zone Loan Fund

S-3076/A-4621 (Weinberg, Bateman/Johnson, Caride) - Increases maximum legal fee to represent victims from \$1,000 to \$3,000

S-3110/A-4617 (Scutari/Johnson, Webber) - Permits certain health clubs to offer swimming lessons and otherwise remain exempt from first aid personnel and lifeguarding requirements

S-3117/A-4781 (Gordon, Bateman, Sweeney, T. Kean/Vainieri Huttie, Eustace, Gusciora, Lampitt, Angelini, Moriarty) - Prohibits Division of Developmental Disabilities from compelling transfers of individuals with developmental disabilities from out-of-State to in-State facilities unless certain exceptions apply

S-3220/A-4790 (Sweeney, O'Toole, Vitale/Greenwald, Conaway, Vainieri Huttie, Handlin, Garcia) - Establishes a process to integrate certain health data and other data from publicly supported programs for population health research

S-3232/A-4834 (Sarlo, Oroho/Lagana, Burzichelli, Schaer, DeAngelo, Phoebus) - Allows businesses due to receive grant under Business Employment Incentive Program to receive tax credit instead of grant

S-3270/A-4705 (Gill, Bateman/Schaer, Coughlin, Lagana, S. Kean, Ciattarelli) - "Certificates of Insurance Act;" governs use of certificates of insurance; provides DOBI with enforcement authority

SJR-81/AJR-122 (Barnes/Vainieri Huttie, Schaer, Lampitt) - Condemns Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement against Israel

A-308/S-2203 (Russo, Rumana/O'Toole, Smith) - Prohibits escrow agent evaluation services from charging escrow agents fees

A-1098/S-671 (Vainieri Huttie, Eustace, Diegnan, Giblin/Pou, Sarlo, Weinberg) - Requires DHS and DMVA to conduct or contract for follow-up studies of former residents transitioning to community from their facilities

A-1355/S-2963 (Stender, Lampitt, Holley, Moriarty/T. Kean, Vitale) - Requires DOH to provide information about crib safety on its Internet website

A-1783/S-2020 (McKeon, Rible, Sumter, Moriarty/Vitale, Cunningham) - "Art Therapist Licensing Act"

A-2023/S-2675 (Greenwald, Benson/Cruz-Perez) - Revises definition of "responsible charge" as it pertains to licensed professional engineers and licensed architects

A-2229 (Wisniewski, Diegnan) - Concerns contracts for asphalt work under the "Local Public Contracts Law"

A-2301/S-1481 (Andrzejczak/Van Drew) - Designates certain interchanges of Garden State Parkway in honor of Melvin M. Loftus and Christopher Meyer

A-3052/S-1090 (Mazzeo, Pinkin, Mukheriji, Wimberly/A.R. Bucco, Whelan) - Concerns property taxes due and owing on real property damaged or destroyed during, or as the result of, a natural disaster when a state of emergency is declared by the Governor

A-3246/S-3069 (Dancer, Burzichelli, Vainieri Huttie/Oroho, Sarlo) - Requires timeframe of standardbred mare residing in New Jersey breeding farm be inclusive of foaling instead of between foal's conception and birth

A-3293/S-2146 (Mazzeo, Andrzejczak, Pinkin, Webber, Simon, Mukherji/Van Drew, Doherty) - Allows military personnel and veterans to present certain identifying documents in lieu of municipal beach tags to gain admission to certain beaches

A-3331/S-3111 (Benson, Rodriquez-Gregg, Coughlin/Gill, Beach) - Requires health benefits coverage for synchronization of prescribed medications under certain circumstances

A-3390/S-2309 (Coughlin, Pinkin, Webber, Diegnan/Vitale) - Permits transmittal of certain land use documents via email

A-3395/S-2294 (Wisniewski/Sacco) - Allows insurer to obtain certificates of ownership or salvage certificates of title for motor vehicles under certain circumstances

A-3499/S-2256 (Andrzejczak, Mazzeo, Johnson, Pinkin, DeAngelo/Van Drew) - Requires DMVA to encourage and facilitate returning service members' registration with VA

A-3507/S-2677 (Eustace, Webber, Munoz, Schepisi, Rumana/Gordon, Sarlo) - Amends law concerning county and municipal stream cleaning activities

A-3749/S-2568 (Lampitt, Mazzeo, Andrzejczak, Mukheriji, Pinkin/Beach, Allen) - Establishes program to provide assistance to qualified veterans in in-patient and out-patient treatment programs to travel to medical counseling in State

A-3849/SCS for S-2466 (DeAngelo, Eustace, Mazzeo, Pintor Marin, Benson/Turner, Singer) - Requires BPU to provide links to pricing information to customers from electric and gas public utilities, and third-party electric power and gas suppliers

A-3950/S-2832 (Prieto, Jimenez, Quijano/Greenstein, Turner) - Permits correctional facilities to utilize body imaging scanning equipment

A-4079/S-2819 (Eustace, Andrzejczak, Taliaferro, Benson, Dancer/Van Drew, Beach) - Directs Department of Agriculture to publish on its website "New Jersey Gleaning Week" and "Farmers Against Hunger Day" page

A-4094/S-2884 (Conaway, Singleton, Wimberly, Lampitt, Benson/Whelan, Madden) - Permits administration of epinephrine auto-injector device by persons who complete approved educational program

A-4438/S-3202 (Mukherji, Burzichelli/Scutari, Madden) - Raises maximum workers' compensation fees for evaluating physicians

A-4518/S-3010 (Schaer, Eustace, Benson, Pintor Marin/Sarlo) - Modifies and clarifies provisions of certain economic incentive programs

AJR-57/SJR-42 (Space/Oroho) - Designates April of each year as "Sarcoidosis Awareness Month"

AJR-93/SJR-73 (Eustace, Andrzejczak, Taliaferro, Benson/Van Drew, Beach) - Designates third week of September as "New Jersey Gleaning Week"

AJR-94/SJR-74 (Eustace, Andrzejczak, Taliaferro, Benson/Van Drew, Beach) - Designates Wednesday of third week of September as "Farmers Against Hunger Day"

AJR-100/SJR-70 (Andrzejczak, Tucker, DeAngelo, Mazzeo/Van Drew, Whelan) - Designates first week in August of each year as "Coast Guard Week" and honors Cape May as U.S. Coast Guard's enlisted accession point and recruit training center

BILLS VETOED:

S-264/A-1347 (Greenstein, Cunningham/Stender, Egan, O'Donnell, Wimberly) – **ABSOLUTE** - "Thomas P. Canzanella Twenty First Century First Responders Protection Act"; concerns workers compensation for public safety workers

S-374/A-3403 (Scutari, Beck/Rible, DeAngelo, Mukherji) - **ABSOLUTE** - Concerns attorney fees for workers' compensation awards

SCS for S-779, 1952/ACS for A-2474 (Weinberg, Sarlo, Lesniak/Johnson, Garcia, Vainieri Huttie, Lagana, Mukherji, Moriarty) - **ABSOLUTE** - "Garden State Film and Digital Media Jobs Act" expands existing film and digital media production tax credit programs

S-995/A-1677 (Weinberg, Allen/Johnson, Vainieri Huttie, Lampitt, Mosquera) – **CONDITIONAL** - Establishes in DOC, supervised community reintegration program for certain victims of domestic abuse

S-1346/A-3837 (Rice/Coughlin, Garcia, Rodriguez-Gregg, Pintor Marin, Jasey) - **CONDITIONAL** - Concerns the recording of mortgages

S-2260/A-688 (Scutari, Cardinale/Schaer) - **CONDITIONAL** - Modifies certain fees charged by, and requirements imposed on, check casher licensees

S-2524/A-4067 (Gill, Allen/Lagana, Singleton, Moriarty) - **CONDITIONAL** - The "Municipal Volunteer Property Tax Reduction Act"; permits certain municipal property owners to perform volunteer services in return for property tax vouchers

S-2577/ACS for A-4139 (Stack, Schaer/Mazzeo, Andrzejczak, Mukherji, Quijano) - **CONDITIONAL** - Establishes temporary mortgage relief programs for certain owners of real property impacted by "Superstorm Sandy"

S-2867/A-4248 (Ruiz, Pou/Jasey, Sumter, Vainieri Huttie, Green, Holley, Wimberly) - **ABSOLUTE** - Permits municipal land banking in conjunction with online property database development

S-3024/A-4463 (Scutari/Giblin, Diegnan, Jimenez, Caputo, Vainieri Huttie) – **CONDITIONAL** - Revises laws concerning real estate licensees

S-3282/A-4850 (Rice, Cunningham/Wimberly, Mainor, Johnson) - **CONDITIONAL** - Expands Police Training Commission membership to include representative from Northern New Jersey and South Jersey Chapters of National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives

ACS for A-206, 471, 1663, 2879, 3060, and 3108/S-2663 (Green, Spencer, Gusciora, Johnson, McKeon, Giblin, Wimberly, Mainor, Quijano/Turner, Lesniak, Pou) - **CONDITIONAL** - Shortens waiting periods for expungement of criminal and other records and information; makes various changes to other expungement procedures and requirements

A-3257/S-2125 (Andrzejczak, Mazzeo, Burzichelli/Van Drew) - **CONDITIONAL** - Provides that determination by county agriculture development board or State Agriculture Development Committee as to what qualifies as farm-based recreational activity in pinelands protection area is binding on Pinelands Commission

A-4103/S-2840 (Mazzeo, Andrzejczak, Giblin/Allen, Whelan) - **ABSOLUTE** - Creates workforce training program for former casino workers

A-4233/S-2435 (Jasey, McKeon, Vainieri Huttie, Mukherji, Lampitt/Codey, Vitale) - **ABSOLUTE** - Provides Medicaid coverage for advance care planning

A-4275/S2831 (Prieto, Eustace, Lagana, Greewald, Quijano, Danielsen, Mukherji/Sweeney, Turner, Sarlo) – **CONDITIONAL** - "New Jersey Secure Choice Savings Program Act"; establishes retirement savings program for certain workers

A-4326/S-2942 (Schaer, Lagana, Eustace, Prieto/Gordon, Barnes) - **ABSOLUTE** - Reforms annual State revenue estimating and reporting, and executive State budget presentation and revenue certification processes

A-4386/S-3042 (Coughlin, Pinkin/Vitale, Singer) - **CONDITIONAL** - Permits candidates for school board to circulate petitions jointly and be bracketed together on ballot; permits short nonpolitical designation of principles on petitions and ballots; provides for study of impact of changes

A-4638/S-3118 (Vainieri Huttie, Singleton, Holley, Mosquera, Tucker, Benson/Sweeney, Madden) - **ABSOLUTE** - Requires DCPD to implement policies and procedures to ensure caseworker safety; "Leah's Law"

A-4703/S-3172 (Spencer, Tucker, Pintor Marin, Egan, Muoio, Gusciora/Rice, Smith) - **ABSOLUTE** - Increases tax credit cap by \$165 million for certain qualified residential projects under Economic Redevelopment and Growth Grant program and restricts increase to certain projects

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Press Contact:

Brian Murray
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000