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NEWS RELEASE

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Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco Signs Bill Permitting Victims to Give Videotaped Statements at Parole Hearings

Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco today signed legislation at the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office that will allow victims of serious crimes to give videotaped statements for airing at parole hearings.

"This new law will provide victims and families with an additional tool by which to demonstrate to the Parole Board Panel the impact that a crime has had on them personally or on the victim's family," said Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco. "As we all know, there are some emotions, thoughts and ideas that are best conveyed through the spoken medium, and now victims and their families will truly be able to have their voices heard."

Under previous law, victims of first and second degree crimes and family members of murder victims were able to give a statement to the Parole Board regarding how the crime has impacted their lives. While the law did not specifically permit videotaped statements, the Parole Board has allowed such actions in the past.

Meanwhile the bill does not impact on the rights of defendants, who can still dispute the victim's statement at the hearing.

The legislation, A-2144, was sponsored by Assembly Members James W. Holzapfel (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and Marion Crecco (R-Essex/Passaic).