

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
Wendi Patella
609-777-2600

RELEASE: March 4, 1999

Governor Whitman Amends Divorce Reform Law, Adds Irreconcilable Differences to State Law

Governor Christie Whitman today conditionally vetoed a bill reforming New Jersey's divorce laws, signing a bill that for the first time adds irreconcilable differences to the reasons for granting a divorce.

The Governor amended, however, the time period for obtaining a divorce based upon irreconcilable differences from six to nine months, citing the need to "balance the realities of failed relationships with the finality of divorce and the import of its implications." New Jersey has been among a small minority of states which does not permit a no-fault divorce without a long period of separation.

The Governor also recommends "mutual consent" as a new cause of action for divorce. A divorce may be granted after 90 days in cases in which each of the parties files an affidavit consenting to the divorce.

A-138, sponsored by Assembly Members Christopher "Kip" Bateman (R-Morris/Somerset) and Neil M. Cohen (D-Union) and Senators James S. Cafiero (R-Cape May/Atlantic/ Cumberland) and Wynona M. Lipman (D-Essex/Union), provides a mechanism to allow divorces to be more honest and amicable.

In her conditional veto message, Gov. Whitman said she agreed with the bill's sponsors that "the current law often forces couples to allege fault such as cruelty or adultery and to publicly detail the facts supporting such allegations in order to officially end a marriage that both parties may agree is over."

The Governor's veto message is attached.

