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RELEASE: July 15, 1999

## **NEWS RELEASE**

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed the following pieces of legislation:

SCS for S-778, sponsored by Senators Joseph F. Vitale (D- Middlesex) and William L. Gormley (R-Atlantic) and Assembly Members Arline M. Friscia (D-Middlesex) and Francis J. Blee (R- Atlantic), provides supplemental Victims of Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB) awards to catastrophically-injured crime victims. The legislation authorizes the VCCB to make additional payments to injured victims in excess of the \$25,000 limit that was authorized under previous law. The bill defines a catastrophically-injured crime victim as a person who has sustained a severe long term or life-long personal injury as the result of a crime. The bill would allow the VCCB to make additional payments for such items as rehabilitative medical services, home health assistance, prescription drugs, residence and vehicle modifications, wheelchairs, braces, walkers and other adaptive equipment.

The VCCB is a dedicated fund authorized to make monetary awards to crime victims and their families to compensate them for losses, such as income losses and certain medical expenses incurred as a result of the crimes committed against them.

S-1466, sponsored by Senators Joseph A. Palaia (R-Monmouth) and Edward T. O'Connor, Jr. (D-Hudson) and Assembly Members Robert G. Smith (R-Monmouth) and Steve Corodemus (R-Monmouth), establishes a method for the apportionment of costs among municipalities in certain school districts. The bill sets forth a method for the apportionment of costs in the Ocean Township School District, which comprises the municipalities of Ocean Township and Loch Arbour Village, an incorporated village. An incorporated village such as Loch Arbour legally is an independent municipality. State law specifies, however, that an incorporated village shall remain a part of the school district to which it belonged at the time of its incorporation, rather than become a separate school district. Thus, Loch Arbour has remained a part of the Ocean Township School District.

While state law establishes apportionment formulas for regional school districts, it does not establish formulas for districts that include an incorporated village. The Department of Education has therefore treated the Ocean Township district as a regional district for apportionment purposes. Regional district apportionment is based upon equalized property values, which has led to inequities. The bill provides that beginning in the 1999- 2000 school year, Loch Arbour's financial contribution to the school district shall equal the greater of \$300,000 or its enrollment multiplied by 110 percent of the district's previous year's budget per pupil. Loch Arbour's contribution would also include an amount to cover the cost of out-of-district placements of special education students that are not covered by state aid.

