

Office of the Governor

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Whitman Amends Assembly Bill Granting Tuition Credit to Volunteer Fire Fighters and Rescue Squads Members

Gov. Christie Whitman today conditionally vetoed a bill requiring county colleges and vocational-technical schools to provide tuition credits for all volunteer fire fighters and emergency personnel and their families.

A-1517, sponsored by Assembly Members Joseph Malone (R-Burlington/Monmouth/Ocean) and Melvin Cottrell (R-Burlington/Monmouth/Ocean) and Senators Robert W. Singer (R-Burlington/Monmouth/Ocean) and Joseph Palaia (R-Monmouth), requires county colleges, vocational schools and technical institutes to allow active members, their spouses, and dependent children to enroll tuition free on a space-available basis.

In amending the law, Gov. Whitman reduced the tuition credit from \$1,000 per year to \$600 per year. She said the proposed credit amount would have placed too great a burden on the schools.

"I commend the sponsors of this legislation for recognizing the important contribution members of volunteer fire companies and volunteer first aid and rescue squads make to their communities and throughout the State," the Governor wrote in her veto message. "In the face of an ever increasing shortage of such volunteers, the bill will assist in retaining as well as recruiting additional volunteers."