

9:17B-1

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST

NJSA: 9:17B-1 (Drinking age - increases to 21)

LAWS OF: 1982

CHAPTER: 215

Bill No.: S885

Sponsor(s): Graves

Date Introduced: Jan. 19, 1982

Committee: Assembly: \_\_\_\_\_

Senate: Law, Public Safety and Defense

Amended during passage Yes // Amendments during passage denoted by asterisks. Substituted for A691 (OCR, Assembly statement & sponsor's statement attached)

Date of Passage: Assembly: Dec. 13, 1982

Senate: June 10, 1982

Date of Approval: Dec. 28, 1982

Following statements are attached if available:

Sponsor statement: Yes // (Below) Attached: Senate amendments, adopted 6-3-82 with 2 differing statements)

Committee statement: Assembly /// No

Senate Yes //

Fiscal Note: /// No

Veto Message: /// No

Message on Signing: Yes //

Following were printed:

Reports: Yes //

Hearings: /// No

(over)

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**Sponsor's statement:**

The purpose of this bill is to raise the age at which a person can buy or consume alcoholic beverages from 19 to 20. Upon enactment of a law in the State of New York raising New York's drinking age from 18 to 21 years, this bill would raise New Jersey's drinking age to 21.

974.90 New Jersey. Dept. of Law and Public Safety.  
L767 Raising the drinking age: report of a special  
1982 committee to study and report on the drinking age  
question. January 18, 1982. Trenton, 1982.

974.90 New Jersey. Div. of Motor Vehicles.  
L767 At issue, the minimum legal drinking age in  
1981a New Jersey. August 17, 1981. Trenton, 1981.

See newspaper clipping files "N.J. - Liquor Laws - 1982" in New Jersey Reference Department

CHAPTER 215 LAWS OF N. J. 1982  
APPROVED 12-28-82

[SECOND OFFICIAL COPY REPRINT]

SENATE, No. 885

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED JANUARY 19, 1982

By Senator GRAVES

Referred to Committee on Law, Public Safety and Defense

AN ACT to amend **\*\*[\*and supplement\*]\*\*** "An act concerning the powers, obligations and legal capacity of certain minors in certain cases, and supplementing Title 9 of the Revised Statutes," approved July 5, 1972 (P. L. 1972, c. 81).

1 BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
2 *of New Jersey:*

1 \*1. Section 1 of P. L. 1972, c. 81 (C. 9:17B-1) is amended to  
2 read as follows:

3 1. The Legislature finds and declares and by this act intends,  
4 pending the revision and amendment of the many statutory pro-  
5 visions involved, to:

6 a. Extend to persons 18 years of age and older the basic civil  
7 and contractual rights and obligations heretofore applicable only to  
8 persons 21 years of age or older, including the right to contract,  
9 sue, be sued and defend civil actions, apply for and be appointed  
10 to public employment, apply for and be granted a license or au-  
11 thority to engage in a business or profession subject to State regu-  
12 lation, serve on juries, marry, adopt children, attend and partici-  
13 pate in horse race meetings and parimutuel betting and other  
14 legalized games and gaming, sell alcoholic beverages, act as an  
15 incorporator, registered agent or director of a corporation, consent  
16 to medical and surgical treatment, execute a will, and to inherit,  
17 purchase, mortgage or otherwise encumber and convey real and  
18 personal property.

19 b. Extend to persons **[19]** **\*\*[20]\*\*** **\*\*21\*\*** years of age and  
20 older\***[** heretofore applicable only to persons\* **[18]** \***[19]** years

**EXPLANATION**—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter printed in italics *thus* is new matter.

Matter enclosed in asterisks or stars has been adopted as follows:

\*—Senate committee amendments adopted May 24, 1982.

\*\*—Senate amendments adopted June 3, 1982.

21 of age and older,]\* the right to purchase and consume alcoholic  
 22 beverages\*[, except that any one attaining the age of [18] 19  
 23 years prior to the effective date of this act shall be able to  
 24 purchase and consume alcoholic beverages. *Upon the effective*  
 25 *date of a law in the State of New York extending to persons*  
 26 *21 years of age and older the right to purchase and consume*  
 27 *alcoholic beverages, the right to purchase and consume alcoholic*  
 27A *beverages in this State shall be extended to persons 21 years*  
 28 *of age and older, except that anyone attaining the age of 20*  
 29 *years prior to the effective date of the law in the State of New York*  
 30 *extending to persons 21 years of age and older the right to purchase*  
 31 *and consume alcoholic beverages shall be able to purchase and con-*  
 32 *sume alcoholic beverages]\* \*on January 1, 1983 \*\*[and extend to*  
 33 *persons 21 years of age and older the right to purchase and*  
 34 *consume alcoholic beverages on January 1, 1984]\*\*, provided that*  
 35 *anyone attaining the age to purchase and consume alcoholic*  
 36 *beverages legally prior to January 1, \*\*[1984]\*\* \*\*1983\*\*, shall*  
 37 *retain that right\*. Nothing in this act shall preclude any licensee*  
 38 *under R. S. 33:1-1 et seq. from making purchases in the regular*  
 38A *course of his licensed activities.*

39 c. Abolish the right of a person between the ages of 18 and  
 40 21 years to disaffirm and be relieved of contractual obligations by  
 41 reason of age.

1 \*\*[\*2. (New section) Any person less than 21 years of age who  
 2 has attained the right to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages  
 3 legally prior to January 1, 1984, and who is convicted of a violation  
 4 of subsection (a) of R. S. 39:4-50, shall, notwithstanding the pen-  
 5 alties prescribed therein, be subject, for a first offense, to a fine of  
 6 \$500.00 and to forfeiture of his right to operate a motor vehicle  
 7 over the highways of this State for a period of 2 years.]\*\*\*

1 \*[\*2.]\* \*\*[\*3.]\* \*\*2.\*\* This act shall take effect immediately.

SENATE, No. 885

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

INTRODUCED JANUARY 19, 1982

By Senator GRAVES

Referred to Committee on Law, Public Safety and Defense

AN ACT to amend "An Act concerning the powers, obligations and legal capacity of certain minors in certain cases, and supplementing Title 9 of the Revised Statutes," approved July 5, 1972 (P. L. 1972, c. 81).

1 BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
2 *of New Jersey:*

1-3 1. The Legislature finds and declares and by this act intends,  
4 pending the revision and amendment of the many statutory pro-  
5 visions involved, to:

6 a. Extend to persons 18 years of age and older the basic civil  
7 and contractual rights and obligations heretofore applicable only to  
8 persons 21 years of age or older, including the right to contract,  
9 sue, be sued and defend civil actions, apply for and be appointed  
10 to public employment, apply for and be granted a license or au-  
11 thority to engage in a business or profession subject to State regu-  
12 lation, serve on juries, marry, adopt children, attend and partici-  
13 pate in horse race meetings and parimutuel betting and other  
14 legalized games and gaming, sell alcoholic beverages, act as an  
15 incorporator, registered agent or director of a corporation, consent  
16 to medical and surgical treatment, execute a will, and to inherit,  
17 purchase, mortgage or otherwise encumber and convey real and  
18 personal property.

19 b. Extend to persons **[19]** 20 years of age and older, heretofore  
20 applicable only to persons **[18]** 19 years of age and older, the right  
21 to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages, except that any one  
22 attaining the age of **[18]** 19 years prior to the effective date of this  
23 act shall be able to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages. *Upon*  
24 *the effective date of a law in the State of New York extending to*  
25 *persons 21 years of age and older the right to purchase and consume*  
26 *alcoholic beverages, the right to purchase and consume alcoholic*

**EXPLANATION**—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

27 *beverages in this State shall be extended to persons 21 years of age*  
28 *and older, except that anyone attaining the age of 20 years prior*  
29 *to the effective date of the law in the State of New York extending*  
30 *to persons 21 years of age and older the right to purchase and*  
31 *consume alcoholic beverages shall be able to purchase and consume*  
32 *alcoholic beverages. Nothing in this act shall preclude any licensee*  
33 *under R. S. 33:1-1 et seq. from making purchases in the regular*  
34 *course of his licensed activities.*

35 c. Abolish the right of a person between the ages of 18 and  
36 21 years to disaffirm and be relieved of contractual obligations by  
37 reason of age.

1 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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#### STATEMENT

The purpose of this bill is to raise the age at which a person can buy or consume alcoholic beverages from 19 to 20. Upon enactment of a law in the State of New York raising New York's drinking age from 18 to 21 years, this bill would raise New Jersey's drinking age to 21.

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§ 885

[OFFICIAL COPY REPRINT]

SENATE, No. 885

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED JANUARY 19, 1982

By Senator GRAVES

Referred to Committee on Law, Public Safety and Defense

AN ACT to amend *and supplement* "An act concerning the powers, obligations and legal capacity of certain minors in certain cases, and supplementing Title 9 of the Revised Statutes," approved July 5, 1972 (P. L. 1972, c. 81).

1 BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
2 *of New Jersey:*

1 \*1. Section 1 of P. L. 1972, c. 81 (C. 9:17B-1) is amended to  
2 read as follows:

3 1. The Legislature finds and declares and by this act intends,  
4 pending the revision and amendment of the many statutory pro-  
5 visions involved, to:

6 a. Extend to persons 18 years of age and older the basic civil  
7 and contractual rights and obligations heretofore applicable only to  
8 persons 21 years of age or older, including the right to contract,  
9 sue, be sued and defend civil actions, apply for and be appointed  
10 to public employment, apply for and be granted a license or au-  
11 thority to engage in a business or profession subject to State regu-  
12 lation, serve on juries, marry, adopt children, attend and partici-  
13 pate in horse race meetings and parimutuel betting and other  
14 legalized games and gaming, sell alcoholic beverages, act as an  
15 incorporator, registered agent or director of a corporation, consent  
16 to medical and surgical treatment, execute a will, and to inherit,  
17 purchase, mortgage or otherwise encumber and convey real and  
18 personal property.

19 b. Extend to persons **[19]** 20 years of age and older\***[**, heretofore  
20 applicable only to persons**]**\* **[18]** \***[19 years of age and older,]**\* the

**EXPLANATION**—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill  
is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter printed in italics *thus* is new matter.

Matter enclosed in asterisks or stars has been adopted as follows:

\*—Senate committee amendments adopted May 24, 1982.

21 right to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages\***[**, except that  
 22 any one attaining the age of **[18]** 19 years prior to the effective date  
 23 of this act shall be able to purchase and consume alcoholic bever-  
 24 ages. *Upon the effective date of a law in the State of New York*  
 25 *extending to persons 21 years of age and older the right to purchase*  
 26 *and consume alcoholic beverages, the right to purchase and consume*  
 27 *alcoholic beverages in this State shall be extended to persons 21*  
 28 *years of age and older, except that anyone attaining the age of 20*  
 29 *years prior to the effective date of the law in the State of New York*  
 30 *extending to persons 21 years of age and older the right to purchase*  
 31 *and consume alcoholic beverages shall be able to purchase and con-*  
 32 *sume alcoholic beverages]\* \*on January 1, 1983 and extend to per-  
 33 sons 21 years of age and older the right to purchase and consume  
 34 alcoholic beverages on January 1, 1984, provided that anyone at-  
 35 taining the age to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages legally  
 36 prior to January 1, 1984, shall retain that right\*. Nothing in this  
 37 act shall preclude any licensee under R. S. 33:1-1 et seq. from mak-  
 38 ing purchases in the regular course of his licensed activities.*

39 c. Abolish the right of a person between the ages of 18 and  
 40 21 years to disaffirm and be relieved of contractual obligations by  
 41 reason of age.

1 \*2. (New section) Any person less than 21 years of age who has  
 2 attained the right to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages  
 3 legally prior to January 1, 1984, and who is convicted of a violation  
 4 of subsection (a) of R. S. 39:4-50, shall, notwithstanding the pen-  
 5 alties prescribed therein, be subject, for a first offense, to a fine of  
 6 \$500.00 and to forfeiture of his right to operate a motor vehicle  
 7 over the highways of this State for a period of 2 years.\*

1 \***[2.]**\* \*3.\* This act shall take effect immediately.



SENATE LAW, PUBLIC SAFETY AND DEFENSE  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**SENATE, No. 885**

with Senate committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: MAY 24, 1982

As introduced, this bill would raise the age at which a person can buy or consume alcoholic beverages from 19 to 20. Upon enactment of a law in the State of New York raising New York's drinking age from 18 to 21 years, this bill would raise New Jersey's drinking age to 21.

As amended, the bill would raise the age at which a person can buy or consume alcoholic beverages from 19 to 20 on January 1, 1983 and to 21 on January 1, 1984. Any person who had attained the age to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages legally prior to January 1, 1984 would retain that right.

The bill, as amended, would also establish harsher penalties for persons under 21 years old who had attained the right to drink prior to January 1, 1984, if they were convicted of drunk driving (R. S. 39:4-50). For a first offense of drunk driving, these persons would be subject to forfeiture of their right to operate a motor vehicle for 2 years and to a \$500.00 fine.

[SECOND OFFICIAL COPY REPRINT]

ASSEMBLY, No. 691

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 8, 1982

By Assemblymen HERMAN, PANKOK and Assemblywoman COSTA

Referred to Committee on Judiciary, Law, Public Safety  
and Defense

AN ACT to amend **\*\***["An act concerning the lawful age for selling, purchasing and consuming alcoholic beverages, amending P. L. 1972, c. 81," approved January 2, 1980 (P. L. 1979, c. 260.)]**\*\***  
*\*\*"An act concerning the powers, obligations and legal capacity of certain minors in certain cases, and supplementing Title 9 of the Revised Statutes," approved July 5, 1972 (P. L. 1972, c. 81)\*\*.*

1 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
2 of New Jersey:

1 1. Section 1 of P. L. 1972, c. 81 (C. 9:17B-1) is amended to read  
2 as follows:

3 1. The Legislature finds and declares and by this act intends,  
4 pending the revision and amendment of the many statutory pro-  
5 visions involved, to:

6 a. Extend to persons 18 years of age and older the basic civil  
7 and contractual rights and obligations, heretofore applicable only to  
8 persons 21 years of age or older, including the right to contract,  
9 sue, be sued and defend civil actions, apply for and be appointed  
10 to public employment, apply for and be granted a license or au-  
11 thority to engage in a business or profession subject to State regu-  
12 lation, serve on juries, marry, adopt children, attend and partici-  
13 pate in horse race meetings and parimutuel betting and other  
14 legalized games and gaming, sell alcoholic beverages, act as an  
15 incorporator, registered agent or director of a corporation, consent  
16 to medical and surgical treatment, execute a will, and to inherit,

**EXPLANATION**—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill  
is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter printed in italics *thus* is new matter.

Matter enclosed in asterisks or stars has been adopted as follows:

\*—Assembly committee amendments adopted May 20, 1982.

\*\*—Assembly amendments adopted June 14, 1982.

17 purchase; mortgage or otherwise encumber and convey real and  
18 personal property.

19 b. Extend to persons [19] \*~~21~~\* \*\*~~20~~\*\* \*\*21\*\* years of  
20 age and older[, heretofore applicable only to persons 18 years of  
21 age and older,] the right to purchase and consume alcoholic bev-  
22 erages[, except that any one attaining the age of 18 years prior  
23 to the effective date of this act shall be able to purchase and con-  
24 sume alcoholic beverages] \*on January 1, 1983\*\* [and extend to  
25 persons 21 years of age and older the right to purchase and con-  
26 sume alcoholic beverages on January 1, 1984]\*\*, provided that  
27 anyone attaining the age to purchase and consume alcoholic bever-  
28 ages legally prior to January 1 \*\*1984\*\* \*\*1983\*\*, shall retain  
29 that right\*. Nothing in this act shall preclude any licensee under  
30 R. S. 33:1-1 et seq. from making purchases in the regular course of  
31 his licensed activities

32 c. Abolish the right of any person between the ages of 18 and 21  
33 years to disaffirm and be relieved of contractual obligations by  
34 reason of age.

1 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

---

ASSEMBLY, No. 691

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 8, 1982

By Assemblymen HERMAN, PANKOK and Assemblywoman COSTA

Referred to Committee on Judiciary, Law, Public Safety  
and Defense

AN ACT to amend "An act concerning the lawful age for selling,  
purchasing and consuming alcoholic beverages, amending P. L.  
1972, c. 81," approved January 2, 1980 (P. L. 1979, c. 260.).

1 BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
2 *of New Jersey:*

1 1. Section 1 of P. L. 1972, c. 81 (C. 9:17B-1) is amended to read  
2 as follows:

3 1. The Legislature finds and declares and by this act intends,  
4 pending the revision and amendment of the many statutory pro-  
5 visions involved, to:

6 a. Extend to persons 18 years of age and older the basic civil  
7 and contractual rights and obligations, heretofore applicable only to  
8 persons 21 years of age or older, including the right to contract,  
9 sue, be sued and defend civil actions, apply for and be appointed  
10 to public employment, apply for and be granted a license or au-  
11 thority to engage in a business or profession subject to State regu-  
12 lation, serve on juries, marry, adopt children, attend and partici-  
13 pate in horse race meetings and parimutuel betting and other  
14 legalized games and gaming, sell alcoholic beverages, act as an  
15 incorporator, registered agent or director of a corporation, consent  
16 to medical and surgical treatment, execute a will, and to inherit,  
17 purchase, mortgage or otherwise encumber and convey real and  
18 personal property.

19 b. Extend to persons **[19]** 21 years of age and older **[,**heretofore  
20 applicable only to persons 18 years of age and older,**]** the right to

**EXPLANATION—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill  
is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

**Matter printed in italics thus is new matter.**

21 purchase and consume alcoholic beverages[, except that any one  
22 attaining the age of 18 years prior to the effective date of this act  
23 shall be able to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages].  
24 Nothing in this act shall preclude any licensee under R. S. 33:1-1  
25 et seq. from making purchases in the regular course of his licensed  
26 activities.

27 c. Abolish the right of a person between the ages of 18 and 21  
28 years to disaffirm and be relieved of contractual obligations by  
29 reason of age.

1 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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#### STATEMENT

The purpose of this bill is to restore the lawful age for purchas-  
ing and consuming alcoholic beverages to persons 21.

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**ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY, LAW, PUBLIC SAFETY AND  
DEFENSE COMMITTEE**

STATEMENT TO

**ASSEMBLY, No. 691**

with Assembly committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: MAY 20, 1982

This bill, as amended, would raise the legal age to 20 for purchasing and consuming alcoholic beverages on January 1, 1983 and to 21 on January 1, 1984.

[OFFICIAL COPY REPRINT]

ASSEMBLY, No. 691

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 8, 1982

By Assemblymen HERMAN, PANKOK and Assemblywoman COSTA

Referred to Committee on Judiciary, Law, Public Safety  
and Defense

AN ACT to amend "An act concerning the lawful age for selling,  
purchasing and consuming alcoholic beverages, amending P. L.  
1972, c. 81," approved January 2, 1980 (P. L. 1979, c. 260.).

1 BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
2 *of New Jersey:*

1 1. Section 1 of P. L. 1972, c. 81 (C. 9:17B-1) is amended to read  
2 as follows:

3 1. The Legislature finds and declares and by this act intends,  
4 pending the revision and amendment of the many statutory pro-  
5 visions involved, to:

6 a. Extend to persons 18 years of age and older the basic civil  
7 and contractual rights and obligations, heretofore applicable only to  
8 persons 21 years of age or older, including the right to contract,  
9 sue, be sued and defend civil actions, apply for and be appointed  
10 to public employment, apply for and be granted a license or au-  
11 thority to engage in a business or profession subject to State regu-  
12 lation, serve on juries, marry, adopt children, attend and partici-  
13 pate in horse race meetings and parimutuel betting and other  
14 legalized games and gaming, sell alcoholic beverages, act as an  
15 incorporator, registered agent or director of a corporation, consent  
16 to medical and surgical treatment, execute a will, and to inherit,  
17 purchase, mortgage or otherwise encumber and convey real and  
18 personal property.

19 b. Extend to persons **[19]** *\*[21]\** *\*20\** years of age and older<sup>[</sup>,  
20 heretofore applicable only to persons 18 years of age and older,]

**EXPLANATION**—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill  
is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter printed in italics *thus* is new matter.

Matter enclosed in asterisks or stars has been adopted as follows:

\*—Assembly committee amendments adopted May 20, 1982.

21 the right to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages], except that  
22 any one attaining the age of 18 years prior to the effective date of  
23 this act shall be able to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages]  
24 *\*on January 1, 1983 and extend to persons 21 years of age and older*  
25 *the right to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages on January*  
26 *1, 1984, provided that anyone attaining the age to purchase and*  
27 *consume alcoholic beverages legally prior to January 1, 1984, shall*  
28 *retain that right\**. Nothing in this act shall preclude any licensee  
29 under R. S. 33:1-1 et seq. from making purchases in the regular  
30 course of his licensed activities.

31 c. Abolish the right of any person between the ages of 18 and 21  
32 years to disaffirm and be relieved of contractual obligations by  
33 reason of age.

1 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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- 19 Omit "20" insert "21"
- 32-3 Omit "and extend to per-" on line 32, om 1 line
- 33 Omit 33 and
- 34 Omit "alcoholic beverages on January 1, 1984" on line 3
- 36 Omit "1984" insert "1983"
- 3 Omit "1984" insert "1983"

STATEMENT

This amendment increases the minimum eligible age for the purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages to 21 commencing January 1, 1983.

Printer's note: see first set of floor amendments proposed by Senator Graves

June 6-3 82

Graves

PL  
115

Amend:

Page	Sec.	Line
1	Title	1
2	2	1-7
2	3	1
STATEMENT		
<p>This amendment deletes section 2 from the bill. The section concerns additional penalties for person under 21 years of age who are convicted of operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.</p>		
1	1	19
1	1	32-34
2	1	36

Omit "and supplement"  
 Omit in their entirety  
 Omit "3" insert "2"

STATEMENT

This amendment deletes section 2 from the bill. The section concerns additional penalties for person under 21 years of age who are convicted of operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Omit "20" insert "21"  
 Omit "and to extend to per-" on line 32, omit line 33, and omit "alcoholic beverages on January 1 1984" on line 34  
 Omit "1984" insert "1983"

*Printer's note - these pencil notes merge into the 2nd set of floor amendments into the first if in your convenience.*

RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

CONTACT: CARL GOLDEN

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1982

Governor Thomas H. Kean today signed legislation to increase New Jersey's legal drinking age to 21 years and praised the new law as "an effective tool to reduce the tragic increase in alcohol related traffic accidents among teen-agers."

Kean signed the bill, S-885, during a ceremony in the Senate chamber.

The new law takes effect on Saturday, but includes a so-called grandfather clause which will permit anyone who reaches his or her 19th birthday prior to Saturday to continue to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages.

The Governor pointed out that statistical data compiled since the legal drinking age was established at 18 years in 1973 "has proven conclusively and dramatically that highway fatalities among the 18 to 21 year old age group have skyrocketed."

"The State Police as well as other law enforcement agencies have submitted documentation which argues both forcefully and eloquently for an increase in the drinking age," Kean said.

The Governor also praised various civic groups which organized and worked "very effectively in behalf of re-establishing the drinking age at 21 years."

"Members of these groups told stories of deep personal tragedies resulting from drunk driving, especially among teen-agers," Kean said. "These individuals will carry sorrowful memories for the rest of their lives. Hopefully, this new law will help to avoid similar memories from being repeated over and over."

# # # # #