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NEWS RELEASE

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DiFrancesco Signs Legislation Exempting Victims From Paying for the Crimes of Their Abusers

Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco signed legislation today to ensure that crime victims are not required to pay for the cost of institutionalizing or imprisoning their abuser.

"No crime victim should be required to pay for the support of a victimizer as the result of a crime. It is not right. It is not just. It is not acceptable," said the acting Governor in signing A-3356.

The legislation, A-3356, exempts crime victims from paying the maintenance, support, rehabilitation, or other costs arising from the imprisonment or commitment of a victimizer as a result of a crime. The bill also revises a 1918 law to exempt children of financial liability for maintenance of a parent in a state or county psychiatric facility, developmental center, or residential functional service.

"Sometimes you wish a piece of legislation could do more. You wish it could take away pain, stop sadness, and transform anger. No legislation can do that, of course. But some legislation can right a wrong. It can at least make sure that a victim doesn't have to suffer additional pain. That is what this bill does," said the acting Governor.

A-3356, was prompted by a Sussex County case in which Michael and Chrissy McMickle, due to a loophole in current law, were required to pay for the costs of their father's commitment, which was the result of his sexual and physical abuse of them as children.

"I am grateful to the McMickles for having the courage to come forward to challenge this law. This law has brought up a lot of pain for this family. And while this legislation cannot take that pain away, it can right a wrong and help the McMickle children -- or any victims in a similar situation -- to get on with their lives without the horrible reminder, said DiFrancesco.

A-3356 was sponsored by Senators Bob Littell (R-Sussex/Hunterdon/ Morris) and Pete Inverso (R-Mercer/Middlesex) and Assembly members Rose Heck (R-Bergen) and Sam Thompson (R-Middlesex/Monmouth).