

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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

S-176, sponsored by Senators John Bennett (R-Monmouth) and Diane Allen (R-Burlington/Camden) and Assembly Members Francis Bodine (R-Atlantic/Burlington/Camden) and Joel Weingarten (R-Essex/Union), requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide notice of certain inmate custody status reviews to prosecutors and victims. The bill will enable a victim of a crime, or the victim's relatives to have a voice in the decision making of the DOC regarding a proposed change in the incarceration of inmates convicted of certain serious or violent crimes. The bill will enable the prosecutor or Attorney General and the victim or deceased victim's relatives to submit comments regarding the proposal to the DOC within ten working days of the notification of the proposed changes.

A-1198, sponsored by Assembly Members Leonard Lance (R-Warren/Hunterdon/Mercer) and Francis Blee (R-Atlantic) and Senator Peter A. Inverso (R-Mercer/Middlesex), appropriates \$994,500 from the Jobs, Education and Competitiveness Bond Fund to the Commission on Higher Education for construction projects at various independent colleges.

The bill appropriates:

- \$450,000 to Centenary College for expansion of the Equestrian Center;
- \$350,250 to Centenary College for the construction of a Business and Technology Center;
- 50,250 to Felician College;
- \$64,000 to Saint Peter's College; and
- \$80,000 to Seton Hall University

S-758 appropriates \$8,926,336 to the Department of Corrections from the Public Purpose Buildings and Community-Based Facilities Construction Bond Act of 1989. The funds will be used for the construction of a new 200-bed dormitory unit and support building at the Jones Farm facility, the adjusted final contract cost for additional beds constructed at Northern State Prison, and for security upgrades at Northern and Riverfront State Prisons.

The legislation was sponsored by Senators Shirley K. Turner (D-Mercer) and Wynona M. Lipman (D-Essex/Union) and Assembly Members Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-Mercer) and Reed Gusciora (D-Mercer).