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## **Codey Signs Bill Cracking Down on Internet Predators**

### *Thanks to Wood-Ridge Mother, New Law Makes Internet Luring a Crime*

(WOOD-RIDGE) – Acting Governor Richard J. Codey today signed Assembly bill A2864, making it illegal to lure someone over the Internet into committing a crime.

“The Internet has revolutionized the world and brought so many benefits to so many people,” said Codey. “But it can have a darker side. And unfortunately our laws don’t always keep up with technology or the criminal mind.

“This bill changes that and sends a strong message to Internet predators – ‘you will be punished.’”

The bill was crafted after Wood-Ridge resident Patricia (Trish) Barteck, a mother of three, was menaced by a stranger who had intended to sexually assault her. The stranger had been enticed into coming to her home by a message he thought she had posted on the Internet. In actuality, the message was posted by a man posing as her in a chat room.

New Jersey laws did not address this specific offense. State law outlawed child luring, but was silent on adult luring, forcing prosecutors to use old statutes to charge the perpetrator.

“We must work to protect all of our citizens from people that use the Internet as a weapon,” said bill sponsor Sen. Paul A. Sarlo (D-Bergen, Essex, Passaic). “Currently, it is a second degree crime to lure or entice a child for the purpose of committing a criminal offense, but there is nothing to protect our adult citizens. This initiative makes it possible to prosecute those who lure adults.”

The bill’s other sponsors are Assemblyman Frederick Scalera (D-Bergen, Essex, Passaic), Assemblywoman Linda R. Greenstein (D-Mercer, Middlesex), Assemblyman Joseph Vas (D-Middlesex), and Sen. John H. Adler (D-Camden).

“While the Internet provides a vast array of information and opportunities for enrichment, it also exposes people to a new world of online dangers,” said Scalera. “Law enforcement needs every possible tool in their arsenal to combat the depraved individuals who would place innocent victims in harm’s way by posting personal information in chat rooms or other publicly-accessible venues.”

Barteck invited Codey to sign the bill at her home as way of showing she is not a victim,

but an advocate.

“Part of why I’m doing this, is to reclaim my life,” Bartech said. “But just as importantly people need to be aware that when in the wrong hands, the Internet is a weapon. I’m hopeful this is the beginning, not only for the state of New Jersey, but for the United States, in realizing how dangerous the Internet can be.”