

Office of the Governor
NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE: August 14, 1998

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

A-2188, sponsored by Assembly Members Carol J. Murphy (R-Essex/Morris/Passaic) and Charlotte Vandervalk (R-Bergen) and Senator Jack Sinagra (R-Middlesex), allows dispensing of Schedule I I drugs for long-term care facility and hospice residents with prescriptions sent by facsimile machine. The bill provides that the requirement in current law -- that a prescription for any narcotic drug be transmitted to pharmacists in writing signed by the prescriber -- shall not apply to prescriptions for Schedule I I drugs written for long-term care facility residents and hospice patients if those prescriptions are transmitted in compliance with federal Drug Enforcement Administration regulations. The bill is intended to ensure that seniors and hospice patients receive pain medications in a timely manner.

S-251/377/725/779 makes workers' compensation fraud a crime of the fourth degree. The bill makes it a crime of the fourth degree for a person to purposely or knowingly make a false or misleading statement concerning any fact material to a claim for benefits, or for evading the full payment of workers' compensation benefits or premiums, or coercing or encouraging any individual to make a false or misleading statement for obtaining benefits or evading the full payment of the benefits or premiums. Crimes of the fourth degree are punishable by a maximum of 18 months in prison or a fine of \$10,000 or both.

The bill was sponsored Senators Anthony R. Bucco (R-Morris), Senator Gerald E. Cardinale (R-Bergen), Senator Andrew R. Ciesla (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and Senator James S. Cafiero (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland) and Assembly Members Kenneth C. LeFevre (R-Atlantic), James W. Holzapfel (R-Monmouth/Ocean), E. Scott Garrett (R-Sussex/Hunterdon/Morris) and Guy R. Gregg (R-Sussex/Hunterdon/Morris).

S-710, sponsored by Senator Andrew R. Ciesla (R-Monmouth/Ocean), which requires the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), to recognize the behind-the-wheel experience of secondary school driving instructors for the purpose of issuing a license to operate a commercial drivers' school. Under previous regulations, the DMV required an applicant for a drivers' school license, or an employee of the applicant, to have 500 hours' experience providing behind-the-wheel instruction in a commercial driving school. The previous DMV regulations did not recognize the behind-the-wheel instructional experience of secondary school driving instructors as satisfying the requirement.

S-642, sponsored by Senators Peter A. Inverso (R-Mercer/Middlesex) and John O. Bennett (R-Monmouth), designates the Sunday after Labor Day as "Grandparents'

Day" in New Jersey. Currently, under state law, the first full week of October is designated "Grandparents' Week." Pursuant to a federal proclamation adopted in 1978, Grandparents' Day is celebrated nationally on the second Sunday in September. The bill makes New Jersey's designation consistent with other states to allow for better coordination in honoring grandparents.

A-1995, sponsored by Assembly Members David C. Russo (R-Bergen/Passaic) and Wilfredo Caraballo (D-Essex) and Senator William L. Gormley (R-Atlantic), places the duty of investigating the financial status of persons requesting public defenders with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) on a permanent basis. The function was legislatively transferred from the Office of the Public Defender to the AOC for a five-year trial period in 1988. The trial period was renewed in 1993, but expired earlier this year.