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Office of the Governor
NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Signs Important Legislation for New Jersey's Muslim Community

Governor Christie Whitman today signed legislation at the United Islamic Center in Paterson to prevent consumer fraud in the preparation, distribution and sale of food represented as halal.

"We are concerned with the food we eat," said Gov. Whitman. "We want that food to meet high standards for purity and freshness. We also rely on government to ensure that those who prepare our food meet those standards. Of course, there are even higher standards to meet. Those are the laws that we follow as part of our religious faith."

The Al Quran instructs Muslims to eat "that which Allah hath bestowed...as food lawful and good," continued the Governor. "Today, we are taking a big step in ensuring that all food represented to be halal meet the standard of 'lawful and good'".

The bill, **S-460**, which was sponsored by Senator John A. Girgenti (D-Passaic) and Assemblyman Alfred E. Steele (D-Passaic) requires any dealer who prepares, distributes, or sells food designated halal, to post that fact conspicuously on the premises at which the food is sold.

The Governor explained in her remarks that the halal posting will be required by the Director of the Division of Community Affairs, who will specify the type and size of the sign that a dealer must display for all to see. A "dealer" means any establishment that advertises or presents itself as selling, preparing, or maintaining food as halal. That includes every food establishment, from a restaurant, butcher shop, or supermarket to a manufacturer, slaughterhouse, or wholesaler. Also included are summer camps, nursing homes, caterers, bakeries, and delicatessens. The bill, which mirrors the Kosher Food Consumer Protection Act, gives the Division authority to enforce halal food requirements under the consumer fraud law.

"I have said many times across this great state that we are truly many faces, but one family. We come from so many different backgrounds and cultures. We speak so many languages, carry on so many traditions, and celebrate so many faiths," said Gov. Whitman.

"Signing this legislation bolsters my belief that addressing the needs of one part of our family shows respect and strengthens us all. Every member and every community in our one family is important to making our New Jersey the best place in which to live, work, and raise a family," added the Governor.