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*Office of the Governor*  
**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Governor Christie Whitman today signed the following legislation:**

**A-2465**, sponsored by Assemblymen Christopher Bateman (R-Morris/Somerset), Neil M. Cohen (D-Union), John S. Wisniewski (D-Middlesex), David C. Russo (R-Bergen/Passaic), and Senators Anthony R. Bucco (R-Morris), and James S. Cafiero (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland), creates a new traffic violation for which no motor vehicle penalty points are assessed for a first or second offense.

The bill makes it unlawful for any person "to drive or operate a motor vehicle in an unsafe manner likely to endanger a person or property." A person convicted of a first offense under the bill would be subject to a fine of not less than \$50.00 or more than \$150.00. The fine for a second offense would be not less than \$100.00 or more than \$250.00. A person convicted of a third or subsequent offense would be subject to a fine of not less than \$200.00 or more than \$500.00 and may be assessed motor vehicle penalty points, if the offense occurs within five years of the prior offense.

Finally, this bill supplements recently enacted legislation concerning the duties and responsibilities of municipal prosecutors to clarify that a prosecutor may at any time move before the municipal court to accept a plea to a lesser or other offense that was originally charged. The bill also provides that the municipal prosecutor may make a motion to amend the original charge.

The bill is a response to an April 24, 2000 directive by the Administrative Office of the Courts clarifying that municipal prosecutors may not accept plea agreements that downgrade traffic offenses unless a factual basis can be shown to support the lesser offense.

**A-2414**, sponsored by Assemblyman Alan M. Augustine (R-Middlesex/Morris/Somerset/Union) and Senator John O. Bennett (R-Monmouth), revises the law concerning the award of State contracts to multiple bidders. The law currently contains three exceptions to the general rule that a contract award must be made to one vendor. This bill adds two new exceptions to provide for additional flexibility in appropriate circumstances.

The first new exception allows the award of a contract to multiple vendors when necessary to provide for standardization of equipment, interchangeability, of parts or continuation of services.

The second new exception allows the Director of Purchase and Property to award a contract to more than one bidder to meet the collective safety, environmental or technological needs of participants in the State's Cooperative Purchasing Program. The bill also provides that when determining whether multiple awards are appropriate, the Division of Purchase and Property may consider whether the anticipated use of a contract by members of the cooperative purchase program justifies such an award. This will allow the Division of Purchase and Property to factor in, for example, the needs of local public entities when deciding to award to more than one vendor for reasons of supplying necessary quantities or to provide for local deliveries.

Lastly, the bill provides that any multiple award will be made only to the number of contractors necessary to serve the needs of using agencies and cooperative purchasers for the service, item or group of items that is the subject of the award.