

Office of the Governor
NEWS RELEASE

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
Wendi Patella
609-777-2600

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Gov. Christie Whitman today signed the following legislation:

A-156, sponsored by Assembly Members Christopher "Kip" Bateman (R-Morris/Somerset) and Joseph V. Doria, Jr. (D-Hudson), classifies voluntary compliance reviews (self-audits) as privileged information which will not be available to third parties and which will be inadmissible in court proceedings. The bill intends to encourage depository institutions to initiate voluntary self-audits to identify and correct problems in their operations and procedures. The bill permits a court to order disclosure of the voluntary self-audits in an administrative civil action or criminal action.

A-1514, sponsored by Assembly Members Joseph R. Malone, 3d (R-Burlington/Monmouth/ Ocean) and Francis J. Blee (R-Atlantic), provides that future voluntary contributions to public-spirited causes allowable through state income tax forms will be accomplished by identifying a charitable cause in a generic check off box on the tax form. It requires that information relating to new charitable causes appear separate from the income tax forms as part of the general instruction booklet. The legislation does not affect charitable causes that currently have contribution check off boxes and information notices printed on the income tax forms.

A-843, sponsored by Assembly Members Anthony Impreveduto (D-Bergen/Hudson) and John Kelly (R-Bergen/Essex/Passaic) and Senators Jack Sinagra (R-Middlesex) and John A. Lynch (D-Middlesex/Somerset/Union), establishes a certification process for massage, bodywork, and somatic therapists. The legislation creates a Massage, Bodywork and Somatic Therapy Examining Committee, under the New Jersey Board of Nursing, to handle certifications. The certification is voluntary, but those who are not certified by the committee will be unable to use the title of "massage, bodywork and somatic therapist," or "registered massage, bodywork and somatic therapist," or "certified massage, bodywork and somatic therapist," or the abbreviations, "MBT," "RMBT," "CMBT," "COBT," or "CMT."

A-1134, sponsored by Assemblyman E. Scott Garrett (R-Sussex/Hunderdon/Morris), authorizes investment pools of property and casualty insurers and establishes criteria for these pools. The bill establishes requirements an investment pool must follow for an insurer to be allowed to invest in the pool and it specifies requirements for the managers of investment pools. More specifically, the bill requires a pooling agreement for each investment

pool to be in writing. In addition, an investment pool must be a business entity, and it subjects investment activities of the pool and transactions between pools and participants to be reported on the annual registration statement required by law. The bill also provides that the investment pools only invest in short term, high quality obligations, government money market funds, class one money market mutual funds or securities, and repurchase and reverse repurchase transactions. The bill is based upon a model formulated by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

S-88, sponsored by Senators Joseph A. Palaia (R-Monmouth) and Shirley K. Turner (D-Mercer) and Assembly Members Peter J. Biondi (R-Morris/Somerset), Christopher "Kip" Bateman (R-Morris/Somerset) and Nellie Pou (D-Passaic), authorizes the establishment of a pilot program for carbon monoxide sensor devices to be placed in multi-dwelling units, hotels and boarding homes. The Governor had recommended the pilot program when she conditionally vetoed an earlier version of the law on Sept. 17. The bill also requires the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to conduct an 18-month study of the technology for sensors as applied to multiple dwelling units, hotels and boarding homes, which Governor Whitman had recommended in her conditional veto. Following the DCA study, the legislation requires DCA to submit to the Governor and Legislature a report regarding whether to expand this program to all residential dwellings. The Commissioner of DCA will have the authority to expand the pilot program, if warranted, without additional legislation.

S-891, sponsored by Senators Robert J. Martin (R-Essex/Morris/Passaic) and C. Louis Bassano (R-Essex/Union) and Assembly Members Sam Thompson (R-Middlesex/Monmouth) and Barbara Wright (R-Mercer/Middlesex), is part of a package of four bills that were recommended by the Governor's Task Force for the Review of the Treatment of the Criminally Insane. The bill is intended to ensure that mentally ill inmates receive mental health services while incarcerated. The bill requires courts to order treatment in jails or prisons for mentally ill defendants who are found competent to stand trial, but are in need of mental health services and do not require treatment in a psychiatric facility. These defendants are pre-trial detainees and as such, are housed in county facilities. The bill also requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide mental health services to State-sentenced inmates who are mentally ill, but do not require institutional psychiatric treatment. Governor Whitman previously conditionally-vetoed an earlier version of the bill because it required the DOC to provide or arrange for mental health services in county facilities, duplicating services already provided by the counties. The bill requires the counties to provide or arrange for such mental health services when the defendant is housed in a county correctional facility. The bill also requires the DOC to reimburse the counties for the reasonable cost of the treatment, as recommended by the Governor in her conditional veto.

S-1119, sponsored by Senator Walter J. Kavanaugh (R-Morris) and Assembly Member Joel M. Weingarten (R-Essex/Union), allows charitable and civic

organizations that are licensed to conduct bingo games or raffles to hire approved personnel to run the bingo game or raffle. Currently, only members of the charitable organization may conduct the bingo or raffle. The hired personnel must be licensed by the Legalized Games of Chance Control Commission, which is required to promulgate regulations regarding the qualifications and compensation of hired employees.

S-613, sponsored by Senator Shirley K. Turner (D-Mercer) and Assembly Member Reed Gusciora (D-Mercer) redefines state policy regarding children in foster care. The bill requires that the health and safety of a child be the State's paramount concern in cases where a child is placed outside the home due to circumstances that endanger a child's life, and where a decision must be made on whether or not it is in the child's best interest to preserve the family unit.