

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

Office of the Governor
NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
Laura Otterbourg
609-777-2600

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Governor Signs Bill Providing for Cost of Defense for State Police

Governor Christie Whitman today signed legislation that provides legal representation for members of the State Police in actions and legal proceedings arising out of their duties.

"Our State Police force is one of the finest, most professional and most effective organizations in the country," said Gov. Whitman. "It's so important that our troopers, who have dedicated themselves to keeping all of us secure in New Jersey, have every protection that the local police forces have. My approval of this bill gives that safety net to them."

The Governor had conditionally vetoed the bill so that it offers the same protections already held by municipal police officers.

Specifically, the bill provides for the legal defense of State troopers and officers and authorizes the reinstatement and recovery of wages in certain cases. The bill puts troopers on an equal footing with municipal officers with regard to their right to be reimbursed for the costs of a defense, reinstatement and back pay.

The bill clarifies that it's not meant to limit a benefit already available to members of the State Police. Under current law, for instance, the Attorney General can provide for the defense of troopers in actions and legal proceedings where the Attorney General has determined that such representation would be in the public interest.

The bill, A-829, was sponsored by Assembly Members Anthony Impreveduto (D-Bergen/Hudson) and Neil M. Cohen (D-Union) and Senators Louis F. Kosco (R-Bergen) and Ronald L. Rice (D-Essex).