

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

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**DiFRANCESCO SIGNS BILL ADDING MURDERERS TO NO EARLY  
RELEASE ACT**

Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco today signed A-3201/S-2233 which closes a loophole in the No Early Release Act (NERA) that left murderers off the list of criminals subject to the law.

"The goal of the NERA is to crack down on violent criminals and send a strong message about crime. The interpretation by the courts to exclude murderers from this law is an affront to our efforts to give victims of violent crimes and the survivors of murder victims some comfort," said the acting Governor.

The NERA was passed in 1997 and requires violent convicts to serve at least 85 percent of their terms before becoming eligible for parole. The loophole in the law was discovered when a Superior Court judge tried to apply it to the case of Sam Manzie who plead guilty in 1999 to the strangling of Eddie Werner. When challenged by Manzie's attorneys, an appeals court found murder to be exempt from the NERA.

To eliminate any misinterpretation, A-3201/S-2233 specifically names murder as a crime covered by the NERA. Robbery, vehicular homicide and aggravated assault are among other violent crimes specifically named in A-3021/S-2233 as being subject to NERA

"By fast tracking the bill through the legislative process, and signing it today, we can assure families of murder victims that no more killers will be allowed to slip through the loophole," said the acting Governor.

Senators Louis Kosco (R-Bergen) and Diane Allen (R-Burlington) and Assembly members James Holzapfel (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and Tom Smith (R-Monmouth) sponsored the bill.

"New Jersey took another step forward today toward protecting its citizens and securing the rights of victims," said DiFrancesco.