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Office of the Governor
NEWS RELEASE

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**Acting Governor Signs Bill Extending Sale of
Poppies for Veteran's Organizations**

Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco signed legislation Saturday that will extend the period of sale for poppies, sold by veteran's organizations to raise funds to benefit veterans. The bill signing was part of the Spring Conference of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW, Department of NJ. DiFrancesco also presented a proclamation to the National President of the organization recognizing the groups efforts.

"We in New Jersey government have taken many steps to honor our veterans," said DiFrancesco. "Sometimes that honor has come in financial support. Increasing the property tax deduction for veterans. Excluding military pensions from the state income tax. And exempting groups like the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary from the sales tax. Sometimes our honor has come in the form of medical care, as when we funded the new veterans home in Menlo Park. Of course, sometimes we have honored veterans by helping to remember. Contributing to the national World War II Memorial. And bringing home and improving the USS New Jersey. Now it's time to do more."

"Right now as you know, poppy sales in New Jersey are restricted to a 10 day period up to and including Memorial Day," said Acting Governor DiFrancesco. "I want to change that. I want to give you more time to sell- not only because it will increase your opportunity for fundraising but also because it will increase public recognition of our veterans and the patriots like you who support them."

"I want to recognize the remarkable volunteer efforts of everyone in the Ladies Auxiliary," said DiFrancesco. "I applaud your work in supporting veterans of foreign wars across America but especially the veterans of our state. We know all they have done for our nation. They risked their lives. They served with honor. They made us proud."

S-638, sponsored by Senators Matheussen (R-Camden/Gloucester) and Allen (R-Burlington/Camden) and Assemblymen Geist (R-Camden/Gloucester) and Asselta (R-Atlantic/Cape May/Cumberland), extends the period of restricted sale of poppies to raise funds to benefit veterans. Previously sales of poppies were restricted from 10 days immediately before Memorial Day, ending on Memorial Day. This bill will change the day the sale of poppies can begin to May 1st of each year. Last year, \$1.3 million was raised from the sale of poppies according to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The poppy is the State souvenir of deceased veterans of all armed conflicts in which the Armed Forces of the United States have participated.

Saturday's event is an annual event held by the Ladies Auxiliary VFW, Department of NJ. During the event the National President of the organization meets with NJ members. The over 200 attendees at the event include members of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW, Department of NJ, the National President, the VFW State Commander Manuel Almeida and other invited guests.

The Ladies Auxiliary VFW, Department of NJ was founded in 1925. It was formed as the NJ chapter of the National Ladies Auxiliary VFW to provide support to veterans of foreign wars, their families, and the community. The organization has more than 15,000 members across NJ, and hosts food and clothing drives, hospital parties for veterans, assists veterans in getting to the polls, and hosts an outdoor concert at the Menlo Park Veterans Home.