

ASSEMBLY DEMOCRATS NEWS RELEASE



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-- MONDAY'S ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES --
CRACKING DOWN ON DRUNK DRIVERS,
HALTING UNWANTED CREDIT CARD SOLICITATIONS,
FLUORIDATING WATER AMONG ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE
HIGHLIGHTS

Committees to also discuss economic crisis, digital television switchover

(TRENTON) – Cracking down on repeat drunk drivers, protecting the mentally ill and senior citizens against unwanted credit card solicitations and taking a key step toward protecting New Jersey's dental health are among the top measures scheduled for consideration Monday by Assembly committees.

Legislation Assemblymen Nelson T. Albano and Matthew W. Milam (both D-Atlantic/Cape May/Cumberland) sponsored to toughen penalties on repeat drunk drivers will be considered by the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee.

The measure (A-3630) would eliminate the downgrading of driving while intoxicated offenses that occur more than 10 years after a previous conviction.

"The idea that a drunken driver can get off easier simply because it's been 10 years since their previous conviction is inexplicable," said Albano, whose son was killed in 2001 by a repeat drunk driver. "The passing of time doesn't make the behavior any more acceptable, nor does it pose any less of a risk to society. Repeat offenders must be dealt with harshly, not given a break."

"A drunk driving offense that occurs more than 10 years after the last one isn't any less serious," Milam said. "In fact, it's a major concern. Repeat offenders are a problem no matter when they get caught. The penalties shouldn't be less severe. They should be more."

The Assembly Consumer Affairs Committee will consider legislation (A-801) Assembly members Reed Gusciora (D-Mercer), Linda Greenstein (D-Middlesex/Mercer) and Albano sponsored to help protect the elderly and mentally ill from unwanted credit card solicitations.

(MORE)

The measure is modeled after the state's successful telemarketer 'do-not-call' law, which protects consumers against unwanted telephone solicitations.

"This is common sense legislation that can help protect families from seeing years of savings and good credit wiped away in an instant," Albano said.

Legislation (A-3709) sponsored by Assemblymen Herb Conaway Jr. and Louis D. Greenwald (D-Camden) to require the fluoridation of all public water supply systems in New Jersey will be considered by the Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee.

The "New Jersey Public Water Supply Fluoridation Act" would require all public water systems in the state be fluoridated within a year of the bill becoming effective.

"Water fluoridation is safe, effective and healthy," said Conaway, (D-Camden/Burlington), who is a practicing physician. "More than six decades of use, countless studies and the experience of millions of Americans tells us water fluoridation is effective in preventing cavities and is safe for children and adults."

The health panel also plans to hear from invited guests on access to mental health services.

Meanwhile, the Assembly Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee is expected to receive testimony from invited guests on the ongoing global economic crisis and the condition of financial institutions in New Jersey.

The Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee will hear testimony on the analog to digital television switchover. Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula (D-Somerset), the committee chairman, has invited Emmitt Carlton of the Federal Communications Commission to testify.

Other bills set for Monday consideration include legislation:

- (A-2465) Sponsored by Albano, Milam and Wayne DeAngelo (D-Mercer/Middlesex) to invalidate consumer contracts that require a waiver of the right to file a consumer complaint. It's slated for Assembly Consumer Affairs Committee consideration.
- (A3008) Sponsored by DeAngelo and John Burzichelli (D-Gloucester) to make it illegal to mail rebates to consumers unless they're marked in sealed envelopes and clearly identifiable. It's also slated for Assembly Consumer Affairs consideration.
- (A-912) sponsored by Frederick Scalera (D-Essex), Greenwald and John F. McKeon (D-Essex) to allow gross income tax deductions for contributions to the NJBEST college savings program. It's to be considered by the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

(MORE)

- (A-108) Sponsored by Valerie Vainieri Huttle (D-Bergen) and Pamela R. Lampitt (D-Camden) to regulate the disclosure of personal information collected from adolescents by a Web site or online service. It's slated for Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee consideration.
- (A-3062) sponsored by McKeon, Chivukula and Albert Coutinho (D-Essex) to define wind, solar and photovoltaic technologies as inherently beneficial use under land use law. It's slated for Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee review.
- (A-3711) sponsored by Majority Leader Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-Mercer) to make the Housing Assistance and Recovery program effective immediately. It's to be considered by the Assembly Housing and Local Government Committee.
- (A-3716) sponsored by Speaker Joseph J. Roberts Jr. (D-Camden), Joseph Vas (D-Middlesex) and Coutinho to expand eligibility under the state's Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit. It's to be considered by the Assembly Commerce and Economic Development Committee.

To view the committee agendas please visit:

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