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BILL ELIMINATING ALIMONY, INHERITANCE RIGHTS FOR MURDERERS, ABUSERS ADVANCES

(TRENTON) – The Assembly Judiciary Committee today released legislation Assembly members Sandra Love, Paul D. Moriarty and Valerie Vainieri Huttle sponsored to block alimony payments to convicted killers and eliminate inheritance rights for parents who abandon, abuse or neglect a child.

Under the bill (A-2681), alimony would be denied to any person convicted of a crime that led to the death of another person – even if the crime was committed outside New Jersey and after the divorce or dissolution of a marriage or civil union.

The legislation was prompted by the case of Chris Calbi, a 14-year-old-boy from Old Tappan, Bergen County, who died after sustaining a lethal kick to the neck from his mother during a domestic argument. Following his son's tragic death, Calbi's father found that there was no legal precedent to preclude his having to make alimony payments to his estranged wife upon her parole.

“This legislation really serves a simple and singular purpose: to keep money out of the hands of those who would go so far as to beat and kill their own family and then expect to receive an alimony payment from a former spouse,” said Love (D-Gloucester.). “Convicted killers should not be able to profit from their misdeeds.”

The bill also seeks to revise current law to prevent parents who abused their kids from receiving any inheritance settlement from the estates of the deceased children. It was prompted by the horrific case of Faheem Williams, the 7-year-old Newark youngster whose mummified corpse was found in an apartment basement by police in 2003 after his mother had abandoned the three of them to live with her cousin. Although the cousin pled guilty to manslaughter in Faheem's death, Faheem's mother had to be separately barred from seeking the \$1 million dollars that the state paid to her son's estate.

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Under current law, the intestate share of a decedent child's estate is equally distributed between the surviving parents, regardless of whether that child's parents abused the child prior to his death.

"Any parent found to have abused their child should immediately forfeit their right to their child's estate," said Moriarty (D- Gloucester). "No parent who puts their innocent child's life in danger should get one penny."

"We need to take proactive steps to ensure that when a child is the victim of a tragic crime or the subject of abuse their estates are not looted by family members whose very neglect led to their deaths," said Vainieri Huttel (D-Bergen).

The measure was released 6-0. It now goes to the Assembly Speaker who decides if and when to post it for a floor vote.

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