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FOR RELEASE:

Nov. 13, 2008

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COMMITTEE CLEARS SCALERA/LAMPITT BILL REQUIRING SCHOOL SECURITY DRILLS

(TRENTON) – Legislation Assembly members Fred Scalera and Pamela Lampitt sponsored to require school security drills to improve emergency preparedness was released today by an Assembly committee.

State law requires most public schools to conduct two fire drills per month, but the bill (A-3002) aims to improve readiness at public and private schools by requiring one monthly fire drill and one monthly security drill.

A security drill would practice procedures that respond to emergencies such as a lockdown or an active shooter.

“Many schools haven’t practiced their security plans because there’s no law to require them to do so,” said Scalera, (D-Bergen, Essex, Passaic) chairman of the Assembly Homeland Security and State Preparedness Committee that released the bill. “That’s a problem. History has taught us that school security drills can be vitally important and lifesaving.”

The bill would direct the Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, in consultation with state education, fire safety, emergency management, state police and attorney general’s office officials to develop and disseminate curriculum to each school district and nonpublic school to help them prepare and conduct school security drills.

“The curriculum will educate school employees on proper procedures in a variety of emergency situations, such as bomb threats and active shooter situations,” said Lampitt (D-Camden). “No matter how much we hope the worst will never happen, we need to be prepared. This is information that could one day save lives.”

The bill was released by a 4-0-1 vote. The Assembly Speaker already has scheduled it for a Monday, Nov. 17 floor vote.