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GREENSTEIN/HUTTLE/RAMOS BILL REQUIRING VICTIMS OF CRIMINALLY INSANE TO BE TOLD OF RELEASE OK'D

(TRENTON) – The Assembly Judiciary Committee today released legislation Assembly members Linda R. Greenstein, Valerie Vainieri Huttle and Ruben J. Ramos, Jr. sponsored to require victims of the criminally insane to be notified when their tormentor is released.

“There is no circumstance under which a crime victim or their family should find out second-hand or by happenstance that the person responsible is back on the street,” said Greenstein (D- Mercer/Middlesex), the panel’s chairwoman. “We need to make it crystal clear that victims’ rights are paramount.”

“Victims of crime deserve to feel safe in their own homes and we must do everything in our power to protect them,” said Vainieri Huttle (D-Bergen). “Something as simple as notification can give a crime victim the peace of mind that comes with knowing that the police are watching, too.”

The victim-notification measure (A-3349) also would apply when a person deemed criminally insane escapes or is transferred from a mental health facility or is allowed unsupervised community visits.

Under current law, victims of crime are notified if the person convicted of the crime is released from custody. The measure would expand that right to cases where the person who commits the crime is acquitted by reason of insanity or is found unfit to proceed.

“Crime victims deserve to be notified of an offender’s release regardless of whether that offender is criminally insane or not,” said Ramos (D-Hudson). “We must take all necessary steps to ensure that a victim’s rights are upheld.”

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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