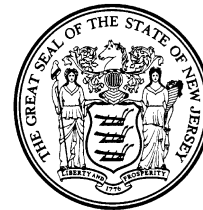


News From NJ Senate Democrats



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SMITH CHARITABLE REGISTRATION BILL APPROVED IN ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE

TRENTON - A bill sponsored by Senator Bob Smith which would crack down on unscrupulous and misleading charitable solicitations was unanimously approved by the Assembly Regulated Professions and Independent Authorities Committee yesterday.

"As New Jersey, and the nation, embark on quite possibly the biggest charitable drive in history to provide much-needed tsunami relief in South Asia, the possibility of unscrupulous individuals taking advantage of the good will of New Jerseyans is at an all-time high," said Senator Smith. "While a vast majority of charitable groups act with the best of intentions, we have to be ever-vigilant that humanitarian causes aren't open to exploitation by callous profiteers who would use human suffering as an opportunity to cash in."

The bill, S-204, would make various changes to New Jersey's "Charitable Registration and Investigation Act," to increase consumer protections for New Jerseyans donating to charities. Among the changes, the new bill would broaden the scope of the law to include subcontractors and independent contractors; require annual disclosure of organizational information, such as the charity's address, custodian of financial records and any limitations on fundraising in other jurisdictions; make penalties for violations of the Charitable Registration and Investigation Act consistent with the State's Consumer Fraud Act.

"These additional regulations will allow credible charities to operate without the specter of doubt cast by unscrupulous ones," said Senator Smith. "Over time, unscrupulous individuals posing as charitable groups erode the faith that donations collected will go towards good causes, and honest charities are hurt by that shifting public perception. By weeding out the dishonest folks, who pose as charities for personal gain, we are empowering the real charitable organizations to continue their missions untainted by public mistrust."

The bill now heads to the full Assembly for consideration. It was approved by the Senate last March.

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