

For Release: Immediate
Thursday, January 03, 2008

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SMITH BILL TO ESTABLISH SICK LEAVE BANKS FOR SCHOOLS SIGNED **INTO LAW**

TRENTON – A bill sponsored by Senator Bob Smith which will permit the creation of sick leave banks for school employees was signed into law today by Governor Corzine.

“New Jersey has consistently stood up for working men and women by adopting labor protections and other workplace safety measures,” said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset. “This new law is part of our State’s rich, pro-labor legacy, and will allow school workers to bank sick time in the event of a catastrophic illness or injury. This law provides the needed safety net for those school employees who worry about the financial securities of their families, should they become unable to work.”

The new law, S-548, will allow for the establishment of sick leave banks for employees of a board of education. With a sick leave bank in place, employees could draw needed days of sick leave in addition to any days to which they would otherwise be entitled. Under the law, a sick leave bank could only be created with the approval of the board of education and a majority or union representative, and it will be prohibited from requiring employees to participate.

“This is a purely voluntary program, and would only be considered if all parties are in agreement,” said Senator Smith. “I think this law provides a chance for school boards to act as role models for other employers in the Garden State, and offer this added layer of financial protection to their employees. With a sick leave bank in place, school employees will be able to rest a little easier, knowing that their loved ones will be protected in the event of long-term illness or injury.”

The bill was approved by both the Senate and the Assembly last month.