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11th Legislative District

Press Release

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Kean, Rible, and Angelini Look to Toughen Penalties for Lewdness

Bill Addresses Lewdness Acts Which Frequently Occur in Public Restrooms

Assemblyman Dave Rible unveiled legislation aimed at curbing lewdness and indecent sexual acts committed in public restrooms.

At a press conference held at the Monmouth Service Area on the Garden State Parkway located in Wall, Rible was joined by members of law enforcement and local officials. Rible expressed his concern about the growing number of cases in our area involving lewdness and sexual assault in a public restroom and plans to continue to advocate to protect public safety.

Rible has sponsored the bill along with Assemblyman Jon Bramnick and Assemblyman Gordon Johnson that would toughen the penalties for acts of lewdness. Senator Sean Kean plans to introduce the Senate version of this bill.

“Families with young children who are traveling through our state should not fear that they will be subjected to these acts of lewdness,” said Rible. “I have introduced legislation that will help protect children and make parents feel more comfortable about the safety of their children.”

Under current law, these offenses are punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, six months of imprisonment, or both. Under the measure, A-2865, lewdness committed in a public restroom would be upgraded to a fourth degree crime punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000, 18 months of imprisonment, or both. The offenders would also have a criminal record under Rible’s legislation.

“This bill is evidence that Assemblyman Rible has worked diligently to protect our state,” said Bramnick.

The legislation aims to protect children in particular from being violated by such acts as the penalties are more severe when a child who is less than 13 years of age is involved. Rible said toughening penalties when the lewd act involves a child under 13 will help to protect children who can be especially vulnerable to these offenders in restrooms and therefore need further protection from those who would prey on them there.

Rible said that this is the first step in his child safety initiative and he hopes that the state will consider the possibility of placing cameras in rest stop areas that do not currently have them.

The Wall Township Police Department reported that 14 lewdness cases occurred in 2007 all resulted in a guilty plea or conviction. In the first five months of 2008, there have been 34



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investigations of lewdness acts to date—all of which resulted in arrests. Most recently, a 43 year old man pleaded guilty to sexual assault involving a 12 year old boy who was traveling with family members and stopped at the rest stop located in Wall off the Garden State Parkway.

“It greatly concerns me that these acts are being perpetrated on children right in our own backyard,” said Kean. “We need to give law enforcement the ability to target the repeat offenders that prey upon children traveling our state’s highways.”

Rible said the increased penalties called for in the bill are intended to deter offenders from committing lewd acts in public restrooms at rest stops along highways, including the Garden State Parkway and the New Jersey Turnpike, as well as other public venues such as public parks, beaches, and shopping malls.

“As a former police officer, I feel that this bill is important in not only assisting the law enforcement in apprehending perpetrators but also in preventing them from repeating lewd acts,” said Rible. “It sends a clear message that these acts will not be tolerated and will result in severe consequences.”

Also joining Rible was his 11th District colleague Assemblywoman Mary Pat Angelini.