

THIRD DISTRICT'S MONTHLY UPDATE FROM TRENTON *SEN. SWEENEY, ASM. BURZICHELLI, ASM. TALIAFERRO*

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Sweeney, Burzichelli, and Taliaferro Honor the Sacrifice of Ensign Elliott and Trooper Cullen



Senate President Sweeney, Deputy Speaker Burzichelli and Assemblyman Taliaferro joined with the family of Ensign John Elliott on July 21 to dedicate a memorial to the former Navy officer who was killed by a drunk driver. The date marked the 17th anniversary of his death.

They also announced the designation of a section of roadway as the "John R. Elliott HERO Campaign Way" in his honor. The legislators sponsored the recently-enacted law for the roadway designation of the portion of U.S. Highway Route 40, in Upper Pittsgrove Township.

"John Elliott distinguished himself as a Human Education Resource Officer, or HERO, at the Naval Academy," said Senate President Sweeney. "HEROs are elected by their peers to counsel and mentor other members of their company and John was selected as the outstanding HERO in his

graduating class. This dedication will honor his service to the country and memorialize his legacy. He was a true hero whose memory will live on."

A graduate of the Naval Academy from Egg Harbor Township, Ensign Elliott, who was 22 years old, was struck and killed by a drunken driver on his way home for his mother's birthday in July 2000. The driver had been arrested on DUI charges and released only to get back in the car drunk, killing himself and Elliott.

Additional legislation sponsored by Sweeney, Burzichelli, and Taliaferro would honor State Trooper Sean E. Cullen, who was killed while investigating a motor vehicle accident in March of 2016. Senate bill 3244 and Assembly bill 4854, which would designate a portion of Interstate Highway Route 295 in West Deptford Township as the "State Trooper Sean E. Cullen Memorial Highway," passed both houses in June and was signed by the Governor on August 7.

"Both of these individuals served their communities and both passed in tragic circumstances," said Deputy Speaker Burzichelli. "In the 17 years since his tragic death the memories of John Elliott have remained as strong as ever and his legacy has grown. His loss has helped others by preventing senseless fatalities and the examples he set inspire us all."

"We are proud to call attention to these two individuals, whose losses shook our communities," said Assemblyman Taliaferro. "Trooper Cullen's death reminded us all of the risks our police face on a daily basis, and has led us to examine ways to better protect their lives. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with the families of both men, and to be part of their legacies."

Sweeney Bill to Protect NJ's Drinking Water and Upgrade Water Systems Becomes Law



Legislation sponsored by Senate President Sweeney that would help ensure the safety and reliability of the state's drinking water for New Jersey's families was signed into law by the Governor on July 21. The law, S2834, entitled the "Water Quality Accountability Act," will better protect the state's drinking water and water supplies as well as boost infrastructure investments.

The Senate President said the law will help to modernize the state's drinking water systems, noting that much of the infrastructure was built in the 19th century and is now leak-prone, susceptible to water-quality problems, and expensive to maintain.

"As we've seen far too many times, the safety and integrity of the nation's drinking water and the systems that provide it are in jeopardy, and this is something we simply cannot allow to happen in New Jersey," noted Senate President Sweeney. "This law will help to improve the reliability and safety of the state's drinking water through early detection of water quality issues, transparent reporting, and by making needed infrastructure investments. This is about establishing statewide standards for all water systems that are consistent with the industry's best practices. It will also help address the water investment needs that have been neglected for decades so that we can better protect the water that is used and consumed by New Jersey's children and families."

The key provisions of the bill would require:

- Field testing of valves and hydrants in accordance with industry best practices, such as those implemented by the Board of Public Utilities for water purveyors it regulates.
- Implementation of a cybersecurity program, such as the BPU's already established New Jersey Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Cell.
- Establishment of an action plan for Notices of Violation received by public water systems.
- Development of an asset management plan including water main renewal that meets the minimum criteria of a 150-year replacement cycle, as well as production facilities.
- Written certification from the responsible corporate officer of the public water system (if privately held), or the executive director (if an authority) or the mayor or chief executive officer of the municipality (if municipally owned) of each water purveyor annually to confirm the adherence to the requirements of this law.

Sweeney/Burzichelli/Taliaferro Bill Addressing "Non-Operating" School Districts Becomes Law



Legislation sponsored by Senate President Sweeney, Deputy Speaker Burzichelli, and Assemblyman Taliaferro to address "non-operating" school districts created when two or more districts merge was signed into law by the Governor on July 7.

Assembly bill 4352 and Senate bill 2843 provide for the elimination of these newly formed non-operating school districts and establish procedures for eliminating deficits that existed prior to a merger. The measure further authorizes renting of school buildings for 10 years.

"This legislation provides clarification in a very key area," said Senate President Sweeney. "By establishing clear guidelines for how these districts are to be handled after a merger and how any deficits are addressed, as well as giving clear provisions for the use of buildings, we provide necessary assistance to the districts while protecting the taxpayers."

"It was important to get this done, as it addresses a major concern for these districts," added Deputy Speaker Burzichelli. "They did their part in completing the mergers. It was just up to us to change the law so funding can flow properly and taxpayers are not burdened."

"This is a bipartisan solution to a statewide problem," said Assemblyman Taliaferro. "It is an excellent example of what the Legislature accomplishes when we work together, and the results will benefit many residents across multiple districts."

Bill to Create "Nourishing Young Minds Fund" to Support Child Nutrition Program Signed into Law

Legislation sponsored by Senate President Sweeney and Assemblyman Taliaferro which would create a non-lapsing revolving fund in the Department of Agriculture - to be known as the "Nourishing Young Minds Initiative Fund"- that would allocate federal and state funds to increase participation in the "Breakfast After the Bell" program that provides meals to school children was signed into law on July 21.

"The Breakfast After the Bell program has been successful, but we need to do more to increase participation and to reach our students. There is no excuse for childhood hunger in America," said Senator Sweeney. "This law will provide additional funding for this program, which provides nutritious meals to students before they begin their school day."

"A recent report from the Advocates for the Children of New Jersey found that New Jersey ranked 23rd out of the states for participation in the school breakfast program, with only 12 percent of secondary schools serving Breakfast After the Bell compared to one-third of elementary schools," said Assemblyman Taliaferro. "This law will help address that shortfall."

Money in the "Nourishing Young Minds Initiative Fund" would be used by the Department of Agriculture to provide support and funding to child food and nutrition programs in the state, including: outreach and programmatic support by the Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, or community-based organizations; grants to fund one-time startup or expansion costs of "Breakfast After the Bell" programs; and grants to fund one-time startup or expansion costs of summer nutrition programs.

