SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR

**SENATE, Nos. 540 and 897 and ASSEMBLY, No. 920**

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 2, 1996

The Senate Education Committee reports favorably a Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bills Nos.540 and 897 and Assembly No. 920.

This committee substitute permits a board of education to adopt a dress code policy to require that students wear a school uniform if the policy is requested by the principal, staff and parents of an individual school and if the board determines that the policy will enhance the school's learning environment. Any policy adopted which requires the wearing of a uniform must include a provision to assist economically disadvantaged students. Prior to the adoption of the policy, the board must hold a public hearing, and the board may not implement the policy with less than three months notice to the parents or guardians of the students. Any specific uniform selected would be determined by the principal, staff, and parents of the individual school.

Under the substitute, the school board may provide a method whereby parents may choose not to comply with the school uniform policy. If the board provides such a method, a student would not be penalized academically or otherwise discriminated against nor denied admittance to school if the student's parents choose not to comply with the policy.

The substitute also provides that a board of education may adopt a dress code policy to prohibit students from wearing, while on school property, any type of clothing, apparel or accessory which indicates that the student has membership in, or affiliation with, any gang associated with criminal activities. The local law enforcement agency is required to advise the board, upon its request, of gangs which are associated with criminal activities.