

**SENATE RESOLUTION No. 109**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 11, 1997

By Senator KOSCO

- 1   **A SENATE RESOLUTION** establishing "Safe Driver Awareness Weeks."  
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- 3   **WHEREAS**, Driver fatigue contributes significantly to traffic accidents that  
4       result in death and serious injury to New Jersey motorists and pedestrians;  
5       and
- 6   **WHEREAS**, The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration  
7       reports that driver fatigue is responsible for over 100,000 crashes  
8       nationally per year which kill 1,500 people and injure 71,000 people and  
9       is the cause of at least 138 motor vehicle fatalities annually in New Jersey;  
10      and
- 11   **WHEREAS**, Drivers must perform a series of coordinated tasks using their  
12      hands, feet, eyes, ears and body movements to drive safely and defensively  
13      and effective performance of such tasks may be affected by fatigue; and
- 14   **WHEREAS**, Driver fatigue and impairment is often caused by excessive driving  
15      and the forgoing of necessary sleep in order to meet unreasonable  
16      deadlines and schedules; and
- 17   **WHEREAS**, Driver fatigue and impairment may often be caused or worsened  
18      by the use of substances other than alcohol, which may include herbal  
19      remedies, "designer drugs" and sedating medications--both prescription  
20      and over-the-counter; and
- 21   **WHEREAS**, Citizens Against Drug Impaired Drivers reports that of the  
22      approximately 43,000 annual motor vehicle fatalities in the United States,  
23      10,000 to 15,000 fatalities involve the use of substances other than alcohol;  
24      and
- 25   **WHEREAS**, The law enforcement community of New Jersey is united in its  
26      opposition to drivers' use of any substance to the extent that it might impair  
27      driving performance; and
- 28   **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety has been  
29      vigilant in its efforts to keep the motoring public informed of the dangers of  
30      driving impaired as a result of excessive fatigue or the use of sedating  
31      substances other than alcohol, and should be commended for its efforts;  
32      and
- 33   **WHEREAS**, The division is actively involved in training and certifying law  
34      enforcement officers designated as drug recognition experts, who will  
35      evaluate drivers suspected of impaired driving due to the use of substances

1 other than alcohol and remove such drivers from the roads; and  
2 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey law presently provides specific penalties for persons  
3 who drive under the influence of alcohol and narcotic, hallucinogenic or  
4 habit-producing drugs, but does not, unlike many other states, provide  
5 specific penalties for those who drive impaired or fatigued due to the  
6 improper use of other non-alcoholic substances or provide for the removal  
7 of these persons from the road; and

8 **WHEREAS**, It is fitting and proper, in the interest of public safety, to  
9 periodically call to the special attention of the drivers of New Jersey the  
10 dangers of driving while fatigued, sedated or otherwise impaired and the  
11 potential for various substances, other than alcohol, which, when consumed  
12 prior to driving a motor vehicle, to impair the driver's ability to safely  
13 maneuver that vehicle; now, therefore,

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15 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:*

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17 The weeks immediately preceding the driving holidays of Memorial Day,  
18 Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and New Year's Day are  
19 hereby declared "Safe Driver Awareness Weeks" in the State of New Jersey.  
20 The Senate urges that all necessary actions be taken by the appropriate State  
21 agencies to publicize these special weeks and, within the limitations of their  
22 existing resources, to inform and educate the public throughout the year on the  
23 dangers of driving while fatigued or under the influence of any substance,  
24 whether alcoholic or nonalcoholic.

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#### STATEMENT

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29 The Senate, through this Senate Resolution, declares that the weeks  
30 immediately preceding the "driving" holidays of Memorial Day, Independence  
31 Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and New Year's Day be designated as "Safe  
32 Driver Awareness Weeks in New Jersey."

33 The reason for establishing these special weeks, as stated in the resolution,  
34 is to heighten public awareness of the dangers posed by driver fatigue and by  
35 impaired driver response brought about by the use of non-alcoholic  
36 substances--particularly prescription and nonprescription drugs and other  
37 remedies. While the perils of driving under the influence of alcohol are well  
38 publicized, the resolution notes that an alarming number of crashes, injuries  
39 and fatalities are attributable to fatigue and impairment caused by the use of  
40 non-alcoholic substances, including prescription and nonprescription drugs.  
41 The resolution further observes that safe driving demands total alertness and  
42 driver attention to the road.

43 The resolution recognizes and commends the efforts of the Division of

1 Highway Traffic Safety in the Department of Law and Public Safety to  
2 increase public awareness of the danger of impaired driving and to encourage  
3 the training of law enforcement officers as drug recognition experts.

4 The resolution urges all appropriate State agencies to publicize "Safe Driver  
5 Awareness Week" and, within the limitations of existing resources, to take all  
6 actions necessary throughout the year to inform and educate the public on the  
7 dangers of driving while fatigued or while impaired by any substance, whether  
8 alcoholic or non-alcoholic.

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13 Establishes "Safe Driver Awareness Weeks."