

TRACED Act for Robocalls Passed by House of Reps.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The House on Friday overwhelmingly passed the TRACED Act, bipartisan, bicameral legislation that will protect Americans from illegal robocalls. Congressman Tom Malinowski (D-7th, Somerset) was a co-sponsor of the legislation, and it is expected to be signed into law by the President.

In 2018 an estimated 48 billion robocalls were placed nationwide, an increase of 17 billion calls from just the previous year. Many of those calls came from scammers, resulting in 22 million Americans losing a total of \$9.5 billion in 2016 alone.

The bill implements a nationwide caller authentication system so consumers can trust that the number they see on their caller ID is actually the person calling them. Consumers will also be able to block unlawful calls in a consistent and transparent way, at no additional charge. Finally, the bill makes sure that law enforcement and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have the tools, information, and incentives to pursue scammers that break the law.

“Robocalls are a constant and dangerous intrusion into our daily lives, especially for seniors targeted by scammers,” Congressman Malinowski said. “I am proud to have cosponsored a bipartisan bill to bring some relief, and I look forward to seeing the President sign it into law.”

Spinal Muscular Atrophy Bill OK'd By Senate Committee

TRENTON — Senate Republican Minority Leader Tom Kean's (R-21st, Westfield) legislation requiring all infants to be screened for spinal muscular atrophy has advanced in the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

Spinal muscular atrophy, or SMA, is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that is caused by abnormally functioning motor neurons that control voluntary movement, such as walking, talking, and swallowing.

“SMA is the number-one genetic cause of death in infants and toddlers in the United States,” said Mr. Kean. “It makes sense to test babies at birth for SMA, which will help infants access treatment as soon as possible, leading to better outcomes with potential life-saving results.”

Mr. Kean's bipartisan legislation, S-974, would require infants born in

New Jersey be tested for the genetic markers associated with SMA.

SMA leads to progressive muscle weakness and atrophy, particularly in the torso, upper legs, and upper arms. Individuals with the most common form of SMA typically have a lifespan of less than two years.

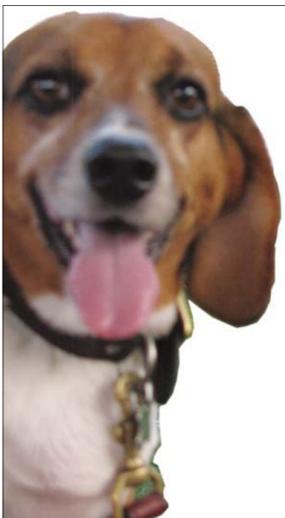
All babies born in New Jersey are required to be tested for 55 disorders within 48 hours of birth. One heel prick provides enough blood to test for all 55 disorders.

It is estimated that 165,889 New Jerseyans are carriers of the disease.

“Early testing leads to early treatment, which will improve the quality of life for those with SMA,” added Mr. Kean. “I hope we will find a cure for SMA soon, but until then, newborn screening is our best bet to combat this disease.”

Pets Need Care Too When Traveling By Car, Train Or Plane

As family and friends travel home for the holidays, it is important to remember the comfort and safety of the furry member of the family. Today, there are more pet-friendly travel options than ever before, and with the



right preparation, pet owners can happily bring pets along by car, plane, or train.

Expert veterinarians at BluePearl Specialty and Emergency Pet Hospital recommend following these tips to ensure a safe and low-stress trip.

If traveling by car...

Don't allow pets to roam in the car. Not only can pets injure themselves while loose the car, but they can be a distraction to the driver, and even become a projectile that hits human occupants in an accident. Keep pets in a crate or carrier and anchor it to the vehicle using a seat belt or other secure means. The carrier or crate must have enough room for your pet to stand and turn around.

Keep your pet in the back seat. Whether your pet is harnessed or kept in a carrier or crate, it is best to keep them in backseat because, like small children, they can be injured by front-seat airbags.

Don't allow pets to stick their heads out of the window. Dogs and cats should be kept inside the car. Pets who stick their heads out the window are exposed to dangerous debris that can cause injury, and in colder climates...

UNICO to Sponsor

Flea Market-Gift Fair

CLARK — Clark UNICO will sponsor a Holiday Flea Market and Gift Fair on Saturday, December 21, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It will take place at Arthur L. Johnson High School, located at 365 Westfield Avenue, off Raritan Road, in Clark. Admission is free.

Exhibitors will display an array of quality merchandise such as handbags, sports collectibles, jewelry for all ages, clothing, dollar items, gift items, gloves and scarves, toys, crafts, antiques and collectibles, plus garage/tag sale items, all at bargain prices.

JC Promotions, Inc., a fund-raising company that produces flea markets, street fairs and arts and crafts shows throughout New Jersey for more than 50 organizations, is coordinating this event.

JC is offering four free spaces to any school organization that would like to participate by having an exhibitor space to sell their items and/or promote their club. To reserve one of the four spaces being offered, contact JC. For information, call (201) 998-1144 or contact events@jcpromotions.info.

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mates, air can be forced into their lungs, causing illness. Also, never transport a pet in the back of an open pickup truck.

Plan rest stops ahead of time. Plan rest stops ahead of traveling to allow your pet to stretch, eliminate, and hydrate. Pets can easily become dehydrated on long road trips, so bring along a portable bowl and frequently stop to let your pet drink.

Equip your pet with identification. Make sure your pet has a collar, ID tag, and leash, and never let them leave the car without it. Consider microchipping your pet ahead of travel. That way, a simple scan can identify you as their owner if they become lost.

Never leave your pet alone in a car. Excessively cold or hot temperatures can pose serious health hazards for pets, including hypothermia or heat stroke. Be sure to keep your pet supervised at all times while traveling (even if that means taking turns with a friend or family member at a rest stop).

Stick to their normal diet. Changes in diet can cause GI distress in pets. Bring bottled water and your pet's food from home to avoid digestive upset.

Air Travel

There are certain dog and cat breeds that are particularly susceptible to the hazards that air travel can bring, such as bulldogs, pugs, Boston terriers, and Himalayan and Persian cats. These brachycephalic animals have short nasal passages and more narrow airways, which puts them at higher risk for breathing difficulty and heat stroke, especially in poorly ventilated or temperature controlled areas.

If traveling by plane...

Opt for cabin over cargo, if possible. Most airlines allow cats or small dogs in the cabin for an additional fee. There are limits to the number of animals permitted in the cabin, so make reservations well in advance.

Use direct flights. Transferring flights can be stressful for both you and your pet. This is especially true if your pet must travel in the cargo hold. If cargo is the case, and you will be traveling in summer or winter months, choose flights that will accommodate temperature extremes. For example, in summer months, early morning or late evening flights are best; in the winter, choose mid-afternoon flights.

Acclimate your pet to the carrier. Give your pet several weeks to become familiar with the travel carrier. Hard carriers usually come in two pieces, so try placing your pet's bedding in the bottom piece—with the top detached—to make your pet feel comfortable.

Attach a travel label to your carrier. Mix-ups can happen. Equip the carrier with an identification label that includes your name, permanent address, telephone number, final destination, and where you or a contact person can be reached as soon as the flight arrives.

Refrain from feeding before the flight. A full stomach might cause your pet to be uncomfortable during travel, so refrain from feeding them two to four hours before a flight. However, you should give your pet water right up to your travel time.

Letters to the Editor

Garwood Mayor Toddisco Calls for Volunteers For Board Positions

I am proud to continue the open application process for any Garwood resident to serve on our variety of boards, commissions, and committees. I began this initiative shortly after I was elected Mayor and I was thrilled by the many responses received last year. While the application has been available throughout 2019, I am now repeating the call to volunteerism as we prepare for 2020.

Our residents have such diverse backgrounds, skills, and talents. I hope many will consider volunteering their time to ensure Garwood is a vibrant place to live and work for many years to come.

The simple application can be found on the official borough website at www.garwood.org and paper copies are available at Borough Hall at 403 South Avenue. A description of each of the boards, commissions, and committees is also available on the borough website homepage under "Community Volunteer." Information is also available for anyone interested in volunteering for one of our emergency service organizations or Garwood non-profits.

Existing groups with open positions include the Planning/Zoning Board, Recreation, Board of Health, Library Board of Trustees, Celebrations Committee, Green Team, and Historical Committee. I am also

pleased to continue the first-ever Citizens' Advisory Panel, which was started in January to advise the Council on capital projects, like equipment and road work.

Please feel free to return a paper copy of the completed application to Borough Hall (office open Mon. to Fri. 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or police dispatcher 24/7) or to email me your completed form at SToddisco@garwood.org. This is considered a "rolling application" process as positions often open at different times throughout the year. However, in order to be considered for appointment at the re-organization meeting of the Mayor and Council on January 6, 2020, please submit your application by Friday, December 20.

I remain committed to working to ensure each committee is non-partisan and reflective of our community. I look forward to meeting with anyone interested in an appointed position. Also, I thank you in advance for your willingness to devote your time to better your community. Together, we will make sure Garwood remains a "small town with a big heart" and has a bright future ahead for all to enjoy.

Sara Toddisco
Mayor-Elect
Garwood



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Bill Would Allow Aid to Be Used for Summer Courses

TRENTON, N.J. — The Assembly Higher Education Committee cleared a bill (A-5335), sponsored by Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz (R-21, Summit), that will allow students to use their Tuition Assistance Grant and Educational Opportunity Fund awards during summer sessions to fulfill graduation requirements.

“Motivated students want to graduate sooner and often do that by taking summer courses to get ahead. We should be supporting their goals by letting them apply their financial aid to their summer courses, not just the fall and spring semesters,” said Mrs. Munoz.

One-third of all full-time undergraduates attending school in New Jersey receive support through TAG, according to the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. More than 13,000 students receive assistance through opportunity grants each

year, which cover college costs such as books, fees, and room and board that are not covered by TAG or the federal Pell grant programs. Under the bill, TAG and opportunity grants dispersed during the academic year would be reduced depending on how much they used during the summer.

“College affordability is a huge issue. When students complete their degrees early, they save money and can start their careers sooner,” Mrs. Munoz said.

New Jersey has the fourth most expensive in-state college tuition, and student debt more than doubled in the past decade — now standing at more than \$43 billion. The bill implements a recommendation of a state commission study on college affordability that released its final report in September 2016. It passed the Senate unanimously in February 2018.

Bramnick: Democrats Are Ignoring New Jersey's Highest Priorities

TRENTON, N.J. — Assembly Republican Minority Leader Jon Bramnick wants to know when Democrats will address the most important issues facing New Jersey. While polls have consistently shown for years that people are most concerned about high taxes, the majority has a different agenda.

“New Jerseyans cannot possibly believe the Democrats' agenda are New Jersey's highest priorities,” Mr. Bramnick said. “The Legislature didn't have a voting session in six months. And when we returned the Democrats posted bills giving criminals voting rights and financial aid, driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants, and make independent contracts jobless.”

Mr. Bramnick and Republicans have continually advocated for addressing the top concerns in New Jersey, such as lowering property

taxes, improving New Jersey's business environment, stopping high-density housing mandates, and making the state affordable for all.

“The question is whether Democrats in Trenton are addressing the most important issues,” Mr. Bramnick said. “I don't think they are, and the majority of New Jersey doesn't either.”

A Monmouth University poll found that most respondents name property taxes as the most important issue facing New Jersey, along with income taxes, taxes and the cost of living in general. An NJBIA-Rutgers poll had similar results, with approximately 80 percent of respondents saying they pay more in taxes than they get in return, and listing property taxes as the main problem. The same amount of people believe the government is not doing enough to solve that problem; their biggest concern.

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