

June 13, 2013

**SENATE BILL NO. 2399
(First Reprint)**

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 2399 (First Reprint) without my approval.

New Jersey law has long prohibited the issuance of a marriage or civil union license sooner than seventy-two hours after application. This bill would eliminate that sensible waiting period, and provide for the immediate issuance of both licenses. It has been suggested that removing this brief waiting period may increase the number of "destination weddings" in New Jersey. Such events, however, are planned well in advance of the current statutory requirement. Instead, this bill will only facilitate spontaneous ceremonies and hasty marriages. I am not persuaded that our laws should be changed on that basis.

Entering into a marriage or a civil union is among the most important and life-altering decisions in a couple's life. The choice requires careful deliberation and thoughtful consideration. Sadly, we are all too familiar with the numerous public examples of unwise unions portrayed daily on reality television series and in the tabloid press. These marriages, hastily solemnized and then ended with equal rush, are a reminder that our State's most sacred public trust should not be trivialized. I cannot support legislation that might carelessly lead to more thoughtless marriages.

In addition, I am concerned about the potential impact the immediate issuance of a marriage or civil union license may have on the functionality of municipal offices. This bill would essentially demand that local officials prioritize immediate

marriage licenses with on-demand service, likely impacting the usual work flow of busy municipal staff and necessitating additional employees. That result makes little sense in our era of smaller government and smarter use of taxpayer dollars.

In all, while our current waiting period for the issuance of a license cannot ensure that every marriage and civil union has been fully considered, it does protect against entering into these life-long commitments on a mere whim. Because I respect the seriousness of every union, I herewith return Senate Bill No. 2399 (First Reprint) without my approval.

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

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Attest:

/s/ Charles B. McKenna

Chief Counsel to the Governor