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## **Wiping away grocery carts' health hazards**

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**By HUGH R. MORLEY**  
**STAFF WRITER**

Think supermarket shopping carts are harmless? Think again.

An Assembly bill (A-4109) introduced last month would require supermarkets to provide shoppers with sanitary wipes to clean off their carts.

Studies show that cart handles harbor "more germs than public restroom door knobs," according to an explanation of the legislation put out by the Office of Legislative Services. It said the studies also found the carts are "contaminated with bodily fluids such as blood, saliva, mucus and even urine and fecal matter."

Sponsor Assemblywoman Linda Stender, D-Fanwood, said she was prompted to act by the winter season "when people are so worried about the spread of disease and colds and flu."

Providing wipes for customers to clean off the carts "would be another way to reduce exposure to germs that are going to cause sickness and disease," she said. "That's something people don't think about. People go into a supermarket and they [the carts] are supposed to be clean."

John Holub, president of the New Jersey Retail Merchants Association, said that although the group has taken no position as yet, it has concerns about the legislation. He said he hopes to meet with Stender and discuss the bill soon.

"We are concerned about any kind of mandates, and particularly on this issue," he said. "There are a lot of retailers already voluntarily doing this. They have heard from consumers that shop at their stores."

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- Sen. John H. Adler wants to break up the uniformity of New Jersey bank boards.

A bill (S-2428) introduced by Adler, D-Camden, would allow state-chartered banks to stagger the terms of their boards. Current New Jersey law requires them to reelect the board every year, and so have simultaneous terms, the legislation says.

"It's not consistent with general banking practice and with general corporate practice," Adler said, noting that federal bank boards are staggered.

"It seems to give greater continuity of planning, because members of the board aren't looking at long-term planning," Adler said.

The Senate backed the bill, 36-0, on March 15, and it awaits an Assembly vote.

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- Business leaders praised Governor Corzine's signing of the property tax rebate bill Tuesday.

And then they demanded more.

"It's a good first step," said Jim Leonard, a lobbyist for the Trenton-based New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce. He said the governor should now work on restructuring and merging municipalities, and providing communities with financial incentives to get it done.

The Paramus-based Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey called the measure "short-term relief" that was "no substitute for the long-lasting reform needed to sustain New Jersey's economy and high quality of life."

The association said the Legislature needs to continue focusing on the issue and look more at the state school-funding formula, consolidating local government services and making local government accountable.

E-mail: [morley@northjersey.com](mailto:morley@northjersey.com)

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