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## New Jersey Township Passes Law Holding Parents Accountable for Children's Misconduct

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A New Jersey community has approved a new law that allows parents to be fined or jailed if their children repeatedly break the law. The measure is aimed at curbing juvenile misconduct after a series of public disturbances in the area.

The Township of Gloucester's *Minors and Parents Responsibility Ordinance*, passed by the Township Council on July 28, sets out penalties for parents or guardians who fail to prevent their children from engaging in unlawful behavior. The law covers 28 offenses, ranging from serious felonies to lesser violations such as loitering, violating curfew, or chronic truancy.

According to a news release from the Gloucester Township Police Department, the ordinance was prompted in part by a major disturbance at last year's Gloucester Township Day and Drone Show. During that event, a large fight involving teenagers broke out, resulting in 11 arrests, nine of which were minors. Three police officers were injured in the incident. Reports from *NJ.com* noted that the event was canceled this year after social media activity suggested similar disruptions might occur again.

Under the ordinance, if a child is found guilty of offenses in juvenile court on multiple occasions, their parent or legal guardian could face up to 90 days in jail and/or a fine of as much as \$2,000. The policy also applies to repeated lesser infractions, not just violent or serious crimes.

Before any formal citation is issued, parents will receive a warning, Gloucester Township Police Chief David Harkins said in comments reported by *NJ.com*. Harkins added that the ordinance is modeled after similar laws in other municipalities but noted Gloucester is among the larger towns to enact such a measure. "Our ordinance was actually sampled from other towns," he said. "We're not necessarily the first, but we're probably the first bigger town to adopt it."

The law's 28 listed offenses include acts such as theft, vandalism, harassment, assault, and disorderly conduct, along with more minor issues like curfew violations. Township officials say the measure is designed to encourage parents to take a more active role in addressing problematic behavior before it escalates.

Supporters of the ordinance argue it will help deter both juvenile crime and repeated public disturbances by placing shared responsibility on families. Critics in other jurisdictions with similar laws have questioned whether such measures unfairly penalize parents for actions beyond their control.

Fox News Digital has reached out to the Gloucester Township Police Department for further comment on how enforcement will be carried out. The ordinance is now in effect and applies to all residents of the township.