

# The Star-Ledger

## **N.J. bill would bar bicycle licenses following viral video of cops seizing bikes from teens**

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A New Jersey lawmaker has introduced a bill to ban bicycle licenses statewide, weeks after video of Perth Amboy police confiscating bikes from a group of primarily Black and Latino teenagers sparked a backlash online.

The bill (A5729) would also override any town that currently requires residents to register their bikes.

The proposal was introduced Monday by Perth Amboy resident and Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez, D-Middlesex, and needs to pass the full Legislature before it can head to the governor's desk.

Bike rules vary from town to town, and at least Union and Fair Lawn also require some form of license.

The Perth Amboy incident occurred amid a national conversation about when and where officers should step in.

Videos posted earlier this year showed teenagers riding BMX-style bicycles on streets where they sometimes weaved onto the wrong side of the road and rode against traffic. They were eventually stopped by cops.

“You guys are supposed to have licenses,” one officer can be heard saying. A Perth Amboy municipal ordinance requires bicycle tags.

One teen was briefly detained and four confiscated bikes appeared to be returned, but the local prosecutor's office still opened an investigation and critics said police were unnecessarily heavy handed during parts of the interaction. One expert said the encounter served as an unfortunate reminder that Black cyclists bear the brunt of traffic enforcement.

A decade ago, kids riding bicycles haphazardly prompted a different lawmaker to propose the opposite approach: Require all bikes to have visible license plates.

That bill received pushback from cyclists who said the change would both discourage cycling and be difficult to enforce, and it never made it out of committee.

The new proposal is currently before the Assembly Judiciary Committee. A Lopez spokesman declined comment.

*NJ Advance Media staff writers Rodrigo Torrejon, S.P. Sullivan, Kevin Shea and Katie Kausch contributed to this report.*