

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 2369

STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: MARCH 18, 2022

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Requires MVC to provide, upon request, notation on driver’s license or identification card of diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or communication disorder.
- Type of Impact:** Annual State cost increases.
- Agencies Affected:** New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission; Office of Information Technology; Department of Law and Public Safety; Department of Human Services.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that the bill will result in indeterminate initial development costs and ongoing administrative expenditures to the State for the development and production of the driver’s license and non-driver identification card and for the distribution to law enforcement agencies statewide of recommended guidance for effectively communicating with a person with an autism spectrum disorder. The magnitude of any State cost increase will depend on implementation decisions made by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC), which the OLS is unable to anticipate.
- It is not known what type of changes to the driver’s license and non-driver identification card will be made or the cost to make those changes; however, programming and design changes of this type can largely be completed with the assistance of the Office of Information Technology (OIT), and the change orders are expected to be comparable to other change orders that the MVC has issued to its vendors in the past for license alterations.
- The bill also directs the Department of Human Services and the Department of Law and Public Safety to develop and distribute written guidance in how to communicate effectively with persons diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder to each police department in the State. The Department of Human Services and Department of Law and Public Safety will be required to

dedicate staff time and resources of an unknown quantity to the development of the written guidance.

## **BILL DESCRIPTION**

This bill requires the MVC to allow the holder of a driver's license or non-driver identification card to indicate that the person has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder or communication disorder, upon request of the person, or the person's parent, guardian, or caregiver, and upon submission of any required documentation. The chief administrator is to indicate the diagnosis by notating the information on the person's driver's license or non-driver identification card under the column designated for restrictions.

The bill also requires that the Chief Administrator of the MVC, in consultation with the Commissioner of Human Services, establish the documentation required to be produced by a person who has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, or by the parent, guardian, or caregiver of the person, in order to receive a special driver's license or non-driver identification card.

The bill requires the Department of Human Services to provide written guidance to assist law enforcement officers in effectively communicating with a person who has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. The written guidance is to be distributed to each police department in the State.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

### ***EXECUTIVE BRANCH***

None received.

### ***OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES***

The OLS finds that the bill will result in indeterminate initial development costs and ongoing administrative expenditures to the State for the development and production of the driver's licenses and non-driver identification cards and for the distribution to law enforcement agencies statewide of recommended guidance for effectively communicating with a person with an autism spectrum disorder. The chief administrator will be responsible for determining how a licensee may indicate that a person is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, so long as the qualified licenses and cards bear a digital imprint indicating the person's status. Possible mechanisms to achieve this could include the inclusion of a notation or endorsement on the license or the redesign of the license.

When legislation was enacted allowing for persons who are insulin-dependent diabetics to request a designation on their licenses, the MVC achieved this by coding for a new number to be printed on qualified licenses under the "restrictions" area that already exists on New Jersey driver's licenses. Employing a similar strategy to comply with the stipulations of this bill would be more cost-effective than redesigning the license. The MVC has existing staff capable of such work but the changes will consume MVC staff hours and resources. Once the manner of designation is decided, it will be necessary to work with the current driver's license vendor to redesign the software that produces driver's licenses to incorporate those changes. The MVC periodically makes change orders of this type, but the OLS does not have access to the cost or nature of these

change orders, so it is not possible to derive an estimate from a comparable change order. The manner of designation selected by the chief administrator will have an impact on the degree of the increase in State costs. Any related programming necessary to make changes to existing license printing formats can be conducted by OIT but would likely require an eventual change order be filed with the driver's license vendor. Such a change order would be similar in scope to other orders that the MVC has made.

The Department of Human Services and Department of Law and Public Safety will also be required to dedicate an unknown quantity of staff time and resources to developing and distributing written guidance to assist law enforcement officers in their interactions with persons diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. The bill does not specify how the written guidelines are to be distributed. Electronic distribution would save on printing and mailing costs.

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This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).