

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 761

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 31, 2022

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 761 (1R).

As amended and reported, this bill requires the Chief Administrator (chief administrator) of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission 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 the Commissioner of Human Services and the Attorney General, in consultation with the Superintendent of the State Police and at least one organization that advocates on behalf of persons diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder or communication disorder, to jointly develop guidance to assist law enforcement officers in effectively communicating with a person diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder or communication disorder. The Attorney General is required to ensure that a copy of the guidance, and any other related materials, is distributed to each police department in the State.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments add the Attorney General as one of the individuals developing guidance to assist law enforcement under the bill. The amendments provide that the Commissioner of Human Services and the Attorney General will jointly develop the guidance. The amendments provide that the Attorney General, rather than the Commissioner of Human Services, is to ensure that a copy of the written guidance, and any other related materials, is distributed to each police department in the State.

FISCAL IMPACT:

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.