

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[Second Reprint]

SENATE, No. 761

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 23, 2023

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 761 (2R).

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.

As reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 761 (2R) is identical to Assembly Bill No. 2369 (1R) which was also reported by the committee on this date.

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 or communication disorder. The magnitude of these cost increases will depend on implementation decisions made by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, which the OLS is unable to anticipate.

The OLS is unable to predict the type of changes to the driver's license and non-driver identification card that will be implemented by the commission or the cost associated with those changes; however, programming and design changes can generally be completed with the assistance of the Office of Information Technology, and the change orders are expected to be comparable to other change orders that the commission has issued to its vendors in the past for license alterations.

The Attorney General and the Department of Human Services 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 or communication disorder. The bill does not specify how the written guidelines are to be distributed. Electronic distribution would save on printing and mailing costs.