SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1459

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 12, 2022

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1459.

This bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services or the commissioner's designee to develop, approve, select, or designate a training program that is designed to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression in the delivery of services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and intersex (LGBTQI) senior citizens in the State. The bill requires that the training program be developed no later than nine months following the bill's enactment. The bill provides that the commissioner may consult, contract, or enter into an agreement with any entity designated by the commissioner to comply with the provisions of the bill.

The training program is to be designed to increase awareness among, and provide cultural competency to, service providers and their employees about the issues encountered by LGBTQI seniors, in order to both ensure equal access to services for senior citizens and improve the delivery of those services to senior citizens and caregivers in the State.

The bill provides that each person who is licensed or certified to provide services or supports to senior citizens, and who contracts with, provides services through programs administered by, or receives funding from, the Department of Human Services (DHS), any of its divisions, or any area agency on aging is required to complete the training program within one year after the program is made available or within one month after commencing the delivery of services or supports to senior citizens in the State, whichever is later. Each service provider who is required to undergo training would also be required to ensure that each staff member employed thereby completes the anti-discrimination training program, either within one year after the program is made available or within one month after the staff member commences employment with the provider, whichever is later. A staff member or administrator of a long-term care facility may be exempt from the requirements of the bill, if that person has received training or is required to receive training within one year after the person's date of hire, pursuant to section 6 of P.L.2021, c.33

(C.26:2H-12.106), and if the requirements of such training are substantially equivalent to the requirements of the training program developed by the commissioner pursuant to this bill.

The bill authorizes the training program to be made available online, by webinar, or by other means. The DHS is required to establish a protocol to ensure that service providers comply with the bill's provisions.

The bill would take effect immediately upon enactment.