

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1543

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

DATED: OCTOBER 5, 2026

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Requires redaction of certain personal identifying information on vehicle accident reports.
- Type of Impact:** Annual State and local government expenditure increase; annual State revenue increase.
- Agencies Affected:** State and local agencies; Judiciary.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Annual Fiscal Impact	
State Expenditure Increase	Indeterminate
State Revenue Increase	Indeterminate
Local Government Expenditure Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that requiring State and local government agencies to redact certain personal identifying information from vehicle accident reports before those reports are released to the public and limiting the release of unredacted reports to individuals who meet the bill’s definition of an authorized requestor would result in annual State and local government expenditure increases should State and local government agencies fail to comply with these requirements and incur civil penalties.
- State and local government agencies would also experience recurring expenditure increases for staffing, training, equipment, and technology costs in connection with the bill’s requirement that custodians of government records at government agencies maintain a log of unredacted vehicle accident disclosure reports.
- In addition, the Government Records Council in the Department of Community Affairs and the Office of the Attorney General in the Department of Law and Public Safety would experience annual expenditure increases to the extent that investigating suspected violations of the bill’s provisions increases the workload or staffing needs of these agencies.

- This bill imposes civil penalties on authorized requestors who are found to have knowingly and willfully disclosed confidential information in unredacted reports without consent. The OLS lacks sufficient information to quantify any revenue increases as it is not possible to estimate the number of civil actions likely to be initiated under the bill.
- The OLS finds that the Judiciary would incur an indeterminate increase in annual operating expenditures as additional resources will likely have to be allocated for increases in civil caseload. The OLS anticipates collections from court fees to grow in tandem with the caseload. The State may also receive additional revenues from civil penalties.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires State and local government agencies to redact certain personal identifying information from vehicle accident reports before those reports are released to the public under the Open Public Records Act. It also limits the release of unredacted reports to individuals who meet the bill's definition of an authorized requestor.

The bill requires custodians of records at government agencies to maintain a log of unredacted vehicle accident disclosure reports and requires those reports to be made available to the Government Records Council in the Department of Community Affairs or the Office of the Attorney General upon request in connection with an investigation.

To deter unauthorized public disclosure, the bill imposes civil penalties on authorized requestors who are found to have knowingly and willfully disclosed confidential information in unredacted reports without consent. The civil penalties escalate from \$250 for a first offense to \$500 for a second offense and \$1,000 for each subsequent offense.

Current law also imposes civil penalties on the employer of a public official, officer, employee, or records custodian who knowingly and willfully violates the Open Public Records Act or who denies reasonable access to records. The civil penalties range from \$1,000 for a first violation to \$2,500 for a second violation within 10 years of the initial violation and \$5,000 for a third violation within 10 years of the initial violation. The statute grants the Superior Court jurisdiction over the collection and enforcement of these civil penalties.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS finds that requiring State and local government agencies to redact certain personal identifying information from vehicle accident reports before those reports are released to the public and limiting the release of unredacted reports to individuals who meet the bill's definition of an authorized requestor would result in annual State and local government expenditure increases should State and local government agencies fail to comply with these requirements and incur civil penalties.

State and local government agencies may also experience recurring expenditure increases for staffing, training, equipment, and technology costs in connection with the bill's requirement that custodians of government records at government agencies maintain a log of unredacted vehicle accident disclosure reports.

In addition, the Government Records Council in the Department of Community Affairs and the Office of the Attorney General in the Department of Law and Public Safety would experience recurring expenditure increases to the extent that investigating suspected violations of the bill's provisions increases the workload or staffing needs of these agencies.

This bill imposes civil penalties on authorized requestors who are found to have knowingly and willfully disclosed confidential information in unredacted reports without consent. The OLS lacks sufficient information to quantify the annual revenue increase as it is not possible to estimate the number of civil actions likely to be initiated under the provisions of the bill. The OLS finds that the Judiciary would also incur an indeterminate increase in annual operating expenditures, as additional resources will likely have to be allocated to any increase in civil caseload. The OLS anticipates collections from court fees to grow in tandem with the caseload. The State may receive additional revenues from civil penalties as well, although the State's ability to collect such fines has historically been limited.

Section: State Government

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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.).