

ASSEMBLY CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND FOOD SECURITY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO ASSEMBLY, No. 4124

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 17, 2026

The Assembly Children, Families and Food Security Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4124.

As amended by the committee, this bill provides for an approved agency, which is an agency approved by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to place children for adoption in New Jersey, to facilitate the voluntary temporary placement of a person in crisis in the home of a volunteer, who is to provide a temporary home during the time that the person is in crisis.

As amended, “crisis” is defined in the bill as a temporary situation which includes, but is not limited to, homelessness, hospitalization, substance abuse or mental health issues, domestic violence, or unemployment. An approved agency is to enter into a contract with DCF prior to facilitating the placements.

These agencies are also to: provide oversight of a placement by visiting the placement home weekly; provide assistance to help guide the person in crisis in restoring a stable life; and locate a different voluntary temporary placement if, as determined by the approved agency, a change is necessary.

As amended, a temporary placement facilitated for a person in crisis under the age of 18 is to be made in conjunction with a court filing by the DCF pursuant to Title 9 or Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

A home study to determine the suitability of the home is to be conducted prior to a prospective volunteer providing the temporary home. As part of the home study, the approved agency is to consider background checks from the State's child abuse registry and obtain State and federal criminal history record checks for each prospective volunteer and person 18 years of age or older residing in the prospective volunteer's home. As amended, the costs of the checks are to be paid by the DCF.

The bill also provides that the approved agency is to forward each home study and the agency's determination of the suitability of the home to DCF, prior to placement of a person in crisis in the home of a

prospective volunteer. The approved agency is to maintain a record of each home study, background check, and its determination of the suitability of the home.

The bill also amends the law governing confidentiality of information in the State's child abuse registry to permit disclosure of the information to a physician assistant and an advanced practice nurse, and, as amended, to a prospective volunteer seeking to provide a temporary home to a person in crisis if the information is necessary in connection with the provision of care, treatment, assessment, evaluation, or supervision to the person in crisis or the volunteer and the provision of information is in the best interests of the person in crisis.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments expand the law governing the confidentiality of information in the State's child abuse registry to permit disclosure of the information to a volunteer seeking to provide a temporary home to a person in crisis when the information is needed in connection with the provision of care, treatment, assessment, evaluation, or supervision to such person or the volunteer, and the provision of information is in the best interests of the person in crisis.

The committee amendments remove the language in the bill that would have expanded the law governing the confidentiality of information in the State's child abuse registry to permit disclosure of the information to a volunteer and each adult residing in the home of the prospective volunteer seeking to provide a temporary home to a person in crisis.

The committee amendments clarify that the definition of "crisis" means a temporary situation which includes, but is not limited to, homelessness, hospitalization, substance abuse or mental health issues, domestic violence, or unemployment but does not include situations which would leave a pregnant woman under 21 years of age with no safe home to reside in during pregnancy or leave a child or infant with no parent or guardian available to care for the child or infant, as originally provided in the bill.

The committee amendments clarify that definition of "person in crisis" means a parent under 21 years of age with an infant, or a pregnant woman under 21 years of age who is in crisis but does not include an infant or child, as originally provided by the law.

The committee amendments replace the terms "a parent of an infant or child or a pregnant woman," "parent of the infant or child or the pregnant woman," and "parent of the infant or child or the pregnant woman under 21 years of age" with the term "person in crisis."

The committee amendments require that a temporary placement facilitated for a person in crisis under the age of 18 is to be made in

conjunction with a court filing by the DCF pursuant to Title 9 or Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

The committee amendments also amend the law governing the confidentiality of information in the State's child abuse registry to require that the DCF release the information to an approved agency when conducting a home study pursuant to the bill for the purpose of providing information on child abuse or neglect allegations involving a prospective volunteer, and each adult residing in the prospective volunteer's home, when the information is necessary to make a decision concerning the suitability of the prospective volunteer to provide a temporary home during the time that a person is in crisis.

The committee amendments clarify that as part of the home study, an approved agency is to request that the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (the division), upon receipt of the written permission of a prospective volunteer's, or any adult residing in prospective volunteer's home, conduct a child abuse record information check of the division's child abuse registry, as promptly as possible, to determine if an incident of child abuse or neglect has been substantiated against the prospective volunteer and each adult residing in the prospective volunteer's home.

The committee amendments remove language requiring a volunteer and each adult residing in the prospective volunteer's home to obtain and provide the original results of a child abuse record information check to the approved agency, and requires the division to forward such results to the approved agency.

The committee amendments require that the DCF pay for the cost of the criminal history record background checks required in the bill, instead of requiring a prospective volunteer or each adult residing in the prospective volunteer's home to assume such costs, as originally provided in the bill, and remove the requirement that an approved agency forward payment for the background checks to the commissioner.

The committee amendments make various technical changes involving grammar and punctuation.

The committee amendments provide technical changes to the synopsis and title to reflect the changes made by committee amendment.