

ASSEMBLY HOUSING COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4458

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 14, 2026

The Assembly Housing Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4458.

As amended and reported, this bill requires the Commissioner of Community Affairs (commissioner) to establish the Public Housing Hotline Pilot Program in the Bureau of Housing Inspection (bureau) to enable certain public housing occupants to lodge complaints concerning living conditions. The pilot program is to maintain a toll-free telephone hotline available 24 hours a day, seven days per week, through which occupants of certain public housing, as determined under the federal "United States Housing Act of 1937" (42 U.S.C. s.1437 et seq.), may lodge complaints concerning any health, safety, or general well-being issues related to the living conditions associated with the public housing facility.

The hotline is to be available to occupants of pilot public housing, defined in the bill to consist of public housing administered by pilot housing authorities. The bill requires the commissioner to select three housing authorities as the pilot housing authorities, one from each of the northern, central, and southern regions of the State.

The hotline is required, at a minimum, to:

- include among its staff of live operators persons who speak English and Spanish;
- offer a multilingual, interactive voice technology response as an alternative option; and
- protect caller anonymity.

Under the bill, the hotline is required to receive calls related to the living conditions associated with pilot public housing and is authorized to respond to each call with general or individualized information regarding the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures relevant to the complaints.

The bill also requires the bureau to establish and maintain a centralized database compiling the substantiated complaints lodged from the hotline for the development of a comparative profile of the applicable public housing facilities, and to post the profile for public inspection on the bureau's Internet website in an easily accessible location.

The database is required to contain information including, but not limited to:

- the total number of substantiated complaints lodged, including the total number of substantiated complaints lodged per public housing facility;
- categories concerning the nature of the substantiated complaints of the living conditions;
- whether the Commissioner of Community Affairs or local agency have discovered a violation of P.L.1967, c.76 (C.55:13A-1 et seq.) or any other law affecting the habitability or living conditions of the public facility;
- the specific corrective actions that were taken, and number of reinspections necessary, if any, to address the substantiated complaints or violations; and
- the average response time from the time of the substantiated complaint being lodged on the hotline to the time the condition was addressed and, as applicable, abated.

To ensure the integrity of both the telephone hotline and the database, and to encourage pilot public housing occupants to use the hotline, the commissioner is required to adopt rules and regulations to provide for: the confidentiality of the names of the occupants calling the hotline and any individual named or otherwise identified during a call; and the posting, in each pilot public housing facility, of the hotline number and the database Internet website in one or more easily accessible, publicly conspicuous locations. The bureau is authorized to employ different technologies and processes in operation of both the hotline and the database to ensure efficiency and integrity.

The bill requires the pilot program to operate for three years following the establishment of the hotline. Within 90 days following the conclusion of each administrative year for the pilot program, the commissioner is to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature on the results of the pilot program. The report is to include a discussion of the volume and subjects of complaints received, and the role of the pilot program in facilitating resolutions to complaints. The final report is to include the opinion of the commissioner on the advisability of continuing, expanding, or modifying the pilot program.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- Change program to a pilot program to address only three housing authorities, to be selected by the commissioner from each of the northern, central, and southern regions of the State, and to expire following three years;
- Require the pilot housing authority for the southern region to be a housing authority for which the federal Department of

Housing and Urban Development has intervened to take possession of the authority's programs, projects, and assets within the five years preceding the bill's enactment;

- Within 90 days following the conclusion of each administrative year for the pilot program, require the commissioner to issue a report on the results of the pilot program, and in the final report, include recommendation on the advisability of continuing, expanding, or modifying the pilot program;
- Add a definitions section and renumber subsequent sections.