

SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1526

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 18, 2026

The Senate Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1526.

As reported by the committee, this bill increases the penalties for identity theft when the victim is a senior citizen or veteran.

Under current law, if the actor obtains a benefit or deprives another of a benefit in an amount less than \$500 and the offense involves the identity of one victim, the offense constitutes a crime of the fourth degree and a second or subsequent offense constitutes a crime of the third degree. Under this bill, if the victim is a senior citizen or veteran, a first offense constitutes a crime of the third degree and a second or subsequent offense constitutes a crime of the second degree.

In addition, current law provides that if an actor obtains a benefit or deprives another of a benefit in an amount of at least \$500, but less than \$75,000, or the offense involves the identity of at least two but less than five victims, the actor is guilty of a crime of the third degree. Under this bill, if any of the victims is a senior citizen or a veteran, the offense constitutes a crime of the second degree.

Further, under current law, if the actor obtains a benefit or deprives another of a benefit in the amount of \$75,000 or more, or the offense involves the identity of five or more victims, the actor is guilty of a crime of the second degree. Under this bill, if any of the victims is a senior citizen or a veteran, the offense constitutes a crime of the first degree.

In addition, current law provides that a person who knowingly distributes, manufactures, or possesses any item containing personal identifying information pertaining to another person, without that person's authorization, and with knowledge that the actor is facilitating a fraud or injury to be perpetrated by anyone is guilty of a crime of the fourth degree. Under this bill, in cases where the item containing personal identifying information was obtained through records owned or maintained by a continuing care retirement community, nursing home, retirement community, or veterans' facility, the offense constitutes a crime of the third degree.

Current law also provides that if the person distributes, manufactures, or possesses 20 or more items containing personal identifying information pertaining to another person, or five or more items containing personal identifying information to five or

more separate persons, without authorization, and with knowledge that the actor is facilitating a fraud or injury to be perpetrated by anyone the person is guilty of a crime of third degree. Under this bill, if the items containing personal identifying information were obtained through records owned or maintained by a continuing care retirement community, nursing home, retirement community, or veterans' facility, the offense constitutes a crime of the second degree.

Finally, current law provides that if a person distributes, manufactures, or possesses 50 or more items containing personal identifying information pertaining to another person, or 10 or more items containing personal identifying information pertaining to five or more separate persons, without authorization, and with knowledge that the actor is facilitating a fraud or injury to be perpetrated by anyone the person is guilty of a crime of the second degree. Under this bill, if the items containing personal identifying information were obtained through records owned or maintained by a continuing care retirement community, nursing home, retirement community, or veterans' facility, the offense constitutes a crime of the first degree.

A crime of the fourth degree is punishable by up to 18 months imprisonment, a fine of \$10,000, or both. A crime of the third degree is punishable by three to five years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$15,000, or both. A crime of the second degree is punishable by five to 10 years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$150,000, or both. A crime of the first degree is punishable by 10 to 20 years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$200,000, or both.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2026-2027 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.