ASSEMBLY, No. 393

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman EDWARD H. THOMSON
District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)
Assemblyman SEAN T. KEAN
District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes penalties for manufacture, purchase or possession of certain keys.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.

AN ACT concerning certain lock picking tools and supplementing Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. It shall be unlawful for a person to knowingly manufacture, purchase or possess an altered or modified key that is able to work in multiple locks by striking or applying other force to the key in order to cause a lock to open in a manner that is unintended by the lock's manufacturer.

b. An offense under subsection a. of this section shall be a fourth degree crime if the defendant was found in possession of a bump key while committing or attempting to commit burglary pursuant to N.J.S.2C:18-2; otherwise it is a disorderly persons offense.

c. This act shall not apply to a law enforcement officer acting in an official capacity or to a person licensed as a locksmith pursuant to section 7 of P.L.1997, c.305 (C.45:5A-27).

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill would make it unlawful for a person to knowingly manufacture, purchase or possess an altered or modified key, commonly known as a bump key. Bump keys are either manufactured or modified keys used to pick locks and are commonly used in burglaries. When tapped into a lock, a bump key can manipulate the pins inside the lock in such a manner that it unlocks a door with minimal force and trace of break-in, thus allowing a burglar entry into a home.

Under the provisions of the bill, it would be a fourth degree crime to possess a bump key while committing or attempting to commit a burglary. Otherwise, a person who constructs, purchases or possesses a bump key would be guilty of a disorderly person's offense. The penalty for a fourth degree crime is up to 18 months imprisonment, a fine of up to $10,000, or both. The penalty for a disorderly person's offense is up to 6 months imprisonment, a fine of up to $1,000, or both.