

ASSEMBLY, No. 538

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman ANGELICA M. JIMENEZ

District 32 (Bergen and Hudson)

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Permits counties to provide videoconferencing in involuntary commitment hearings.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** permitting videoconferencing in certain proceedings and
2 supplementing Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

3

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

6

7 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as “Involuntary
8 Commitments Videoconferencing Act.”

9

10 2. a. The Legislature finds and declares that videoconferencing,
11 an interactive technology which sends video and voice signals over
12 telephone lines permitting two or more persons in different places
13 to communicate with each other using video monitors and cameras,
14 is technology which can be used to provide live two-way audio and
15 video transmission between a court and a person located at a remote
16 site.

17 b. The technology offers witnesses, litigants, attorneys and
18 courts in other jurisdictions as well as other involved parties a
19 means of participating in court proceedings or pre-trial conferences
20 without physically being in the courtroom or judges’ chambers.

21 c. The Legislature further declares that with this new hardware
22 and improved data transmission lines, courts across the country,
23 both federal and state, including New Jersey, now use
24 videoconferencing in criminal matters.

25 d. The Legislature further declares that videoconferencing has
26 even greater potential for use in the involuntary commitment
27 hearings. In involuntary commitment hearings, judges, court clerks,
28 and armed sheriff’s officers must travel to the psychiatric hospitals
29 where the hearings are held. Through utilizing videoconferencing,
30 hearings could be held with saving time and expenses while
31 ensuring that the patient’s rights are fully protected.

32

33 3. Counties shall be permitted to provide videoconferencing in
34 involuntary commitment hearings for the use and the operation of
35 the courts in their county courthouses and municipal courts.

36

37 4. In counties that elect to maintain and operate
38 videoconferencing for involuntary commitment hearings, the county
39 government shall bear the cost of purchasing, installing and
40 maintaining the videoconferencing units.

41

42 5. The Supreme Court of New Jersey may adopt court rules
43 appropriate or necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

44

45 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

1 STATEMENT

2

3 This bill permits counties to provide videoconferencing in
4 involuntary commitment hearings for the use and the operation of
5 the courts in their county courthouses and municipal courts. In the
6 counties that elect to maintain and operate videoconferencing for
7 involuntary commitment hearings, the county government will be
8 responsible for the cost of purchasing, installing and maintaining
9 the videoconferencing units.

10 The Supreme Court of New Jersey may adopt court rules
11 appropriate or necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act. This
12 act shall take effect immediately.