

ASSEMBLY AGING AND SENIOR SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 655

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 5, 2020

The Assembly Aging and Senior Services Committee reports favorably reports and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 655.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to annually disseminate, to appropriate parties, a notice on fraud and identity theft that is to be prepared by the Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety.

At a minimum, the notice prepared by the director is to provide information necessary to alert a senior citizen about the different ways in which the senior citizen may be contacted for, or lured into providing, information or funds for a fraudulent purpose, and the ways to prevent the loss of funds or identity theft. The director will be required to regularly review and update the notice to ensure that it contains the most current information on fraud and identity theft.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services, at a minimum, to distribute the notice to: 1) members of the public, upon request; and 2) each organization that is contracted by or receives State funding from the Department of Human Services (DHS) and that provides services to senior citizens 60 years of age or older, for dissemination thereby to senior citizens in the course of business. The bill further requires the commissioner to post a copy of the notice on the DHS website.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill: 1) to provide for the Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety to regularly review and update the notice prepared thereby to ensure that it contains the most current information on fraud and identity theft; 2) to require the Commissioner of Human Services to ensure that the notice prepared under the bill is disseminated on an annual basis; and 3) to modify the procedure by which the notice is to be disseminated by the Commissioner of Human Services.

As introduced, the bill would have required the Commissioner of Human Services to ensure the distribution of the notice by overseeing the operations of individual service provider organizations and ensuring that those organizations included the notice in any printed or electronic communications initiated thereby with a senior citizen. Such a requirement would have imposed a significant and impractical burden on the commissioner with respect to ensuring the proper dissemination of the notice. The amendments now simply require the Commissioner of Human Services to distribute the notice, at a minimum, to: 1) members of the public, upon request; and 2) each organization that is contracted by or receives State funding from the Department of Human Services (DHS) and that provides services to senior citizens 60 years of age or older, for dissemination thereby to senior citizens in the course of business. The amendments further require the commissioner to post a copy of the notice on the DHS website.

The committee also amended the bill to make minor technical changes to the title and body of the bill to correct punctuation, reduce redundancy, and enhance clarity with respect to the bill's purpose.