

ASSEMBLY, No. 1018

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

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SYNOPSIS

Directs New Jersey State Rehabilitation Council to conduct study to identify trends and gaps in employment of individuals with disabilities.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning trends and gaps in employment of individuals
2 with disabilities in New Jersey.

3

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

6

7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. Employment plays an important role in the lives of working
9 age New Jerseyans. Work is not just a source of income, but for
10 many residents of the State it is part of who they are as individuals.
11 For individuals with disabilities, employment is also an avenue for
12 engaging in meaningful social relationships, for expressing skills,
13 and a critical component of community integration.

14 b. For most of the nation's history, individuals with disabilities
15 have faced a wide array of barriers that have made it difficult for
16 them to both compete for and gain access to competitive, integrated
17 employment.

18 c. National studies demonstrate that individuals with
19 disabilities want to work; however, their participation in the labor
20 force is marginal. Less than 40 percent of individuals with
21 disabilities are employed in New Jersey, compared to an
22 employment rate of about 80 percent for the general population.

23 d. Individuals with disabilities are among the neediest
24 populations in New Jersey. Many have demonstrated the capacity
25 to do competitive work when given the opportunity.

26 e. The employment gap of individuals with disabilities
27 compared to individuals without disabilities and the increasing need
28 among these individuals warrant further study that includes taking a
29 broad view of vocational training and support programs across the
30 State to determine possible solutions to close the employment gap.

31

32 2. a. There is established, in the New Jersey State
33 Rehabilitation Council, a task force to identify: (1) all vocational
34 training, support programs, and employment incentives, as well as
35 vocational training in special education programs across the State
36 for individuals with disabilities; and (2) trends and gaps in
37 employment of individuals with disabilities. The task force shall
38 make recommendations on agency structure, funding, public-private
39 partnerships, priority programs, and gaps in services for individuals
40 with disabilities.

41 b. The task force shall include one representative of each of the
42 following agencies: the Department of Labor and Workforce
43 Development, the Department of Education, the Department of
44 Human Services, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education,
45 and the Chief Diversity Officer in the Department of the Treasury,
46 and eight members appointed by the Governor with the advice and
47 consent of the Senate as follows: two members representing
48 businesses or organizations which participate in apprenticeship

1 programs; two members representing labor organizations which
2 participate in apprenticeship programs; two members representing
3 community-based or other advocacy organizations which address
4 issues of discrimination; and two members of the public
5 representing individuals with disabilities. The appointments shall
6 expire upon the submission of a report to the Governor and
7 Legislature pursuant to subsection e. of this section.

8 c. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable, but not
9 more than 90 days after the date of enactment of this act. The task
10 force may meet and hold hearings at such places and times as it
11 shall designate.

12 d. The members of the task force shall serve without
13 compensation, but may be reimbursed for travel and other necessary
14 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, within the
15 limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the task
16 force for its purposes.

17 e. Within one year of the effective date of this act, the task
18 force shall submit a report of its study to the Governor, and to the
19 Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1).
20 The report shall include, but need not be limited to, accountability
21 measures in the form of program evaluation of the study to collect
22 employment data to determine the rates at which individuals with
23 disabilities: (1) remain employed; (2) advance in the employment
24 latter; and (3) report employment satisfaction.

25
26 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire on the
27 30th day after the task force submits its written report pursuant to
28 subsection e. of section 2 of this act.

31 STATEMENT

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33 This bill would establish a temporary task force in the New
34 Jersey State Rehabilitation Council to identify (1) all vocational
35 training, support programs, and employment incentives, as well as
36 vocational training in special education programs across the State
37 for individuals with disabilities; and (2) trends and gaps in
38 employment of individuals with disabilities, and to make
39 recommendations on agency structure, funding, public-private
40 partnerships, priority programs, and gaps in services for individuals
41 with disabilities.

42 The task force would consist of an expert from each of the
43 following agencies: the Department of Labor and Workforce
44 Development, the Department of Education, the Department of
45 Human Services, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education,
46 and the Chief Diversity Officer in the Department of the Treasury;
47 and would also consist of eight members appointed by the
48 Governor: two members representing businesses or organization

1 which participate in apprenticeship programs, two members
2 representing labor organizations which participate in apprenticeship
3 programs, two members representing community-based or other
4 advocacy organizations which address issues of discrimination, and
5 two members of the public representing individuals with
6 disabilities.

7 Members would serve without compensation, but may be
8 reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in the
9 performance of their duties. Under the bill, within one year of the
10 effective date, the task force must submit a report of its study to the
11 Governor, and to the Legislature.