ASSEMBLY, No. 1080

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT
District 29 (Essex)
Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY
District 7 (Burlington)
Assemblyman LOUIS D. GREENWALD
District 6 (Burlington and Camden)
Assemblyman ANTHONY S. VERRELLI
District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson

SYNOPSIS

Authorizes use of county inmate welfare funds for certain reentry services.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.

AN ACT concerning inmate welfare funds and supplementing chapter 4 of Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

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

1. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection k. of section 18 of P.L.1971, c.384 (C.30:4-1.1), a county correctional facility may expend inmate welfare funds to provide or coordinate reentry services for incarcerated inmates. These services may include, but not be limited to, paying salaries of employees of the facility whose duties include coordinating access to federal, State, or any other available benefits or services that will assist inmates in successfully reintegrating into the community upon release.

2. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month next following enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill authorizes county correctional facilities to use inmate welfare funds to provide or coordinate reentry services for inmates incarcerated in the facility.

The sources of income of inmate welfare funds are sales at the prison commissary, interest on welfare fund savings, gifts from individuals, corporations and charitable foundations, and income from inmate trust fund investments. The funds are maintained by local boards of trustees. State regulations require the funds to be used for amenities for the use, benefit, and general welfare of the inmate population as a whole. These amenities include, but are not limited to: recreation and sports equipment; television services; awards for academic, vocational, and sporting achievements; library books, movies, magazines, and other subscriptions; annual licensing fees for a film blanket license visit; recreation, holiday, and inmate incentive program decorations and food; stipends for referees and guest speakers; and equipment to enhance the law library that is not otherwise required for legal access.

This bill expands the use of these inmate welfare funds to include reentry services for county inmates to assist them in successfully transitioning into the community after they are released from incarceration. The bill specifically authorizes the use of these funds to pay salaries of employees in the facility whose duties include assisting inmates in accessing available federal, State, or other benefits or services, such as Medicaid, welfare, housing, and substance abuse treatment.