

ASSEMBLY, No. 2192

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JOHN F. MCKEON

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO

District 20 (Union)

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Assemblyman ERIC HOUGHTALING

District 11 (Monmouth)

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District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Murphy and Assemblyman Webber

SYNOPSIS

Bars public entities and public employees from entering into confidential settlements of “whistleblower” claims; provides that such settlements constitute public records.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning certain settlements and supplementing chapter
2 19 of Title 34 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. a. As used in this act:

8 “Public entity” means the State, and any county, municipality,
9 district, public authority, public agency, and any other political
10 subdivision or public body in the State.

11 “Public employee” means an employee of a public entity.

12 b. (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection,
13 no public entity or public employee may enter into any agreement
14 to settle a claim or action to which the public entity, or a public
15 employee in his capacity as a public employee, is a party where the
16 public employee asserts the protections of the “Conscientious
17 Employee Protection Act,” P.L.1986, c.105 (C.34:19-1 et seq.), if

18 (a) such agreement provides that the terms or conditions of the
19 settlement are confidential; or

20 (b) the purpose or effect of such agreement is to conceal
21 information relating to any claim or action concerning the public
22 interest.

23 (2) A public entity or public employee may enter into an
24 agreement that provides that the terms or conditions of settlement of
25 such a claim or action are confidential if the settlement involves a
26 matter of national security.

27

28 2. Any agreement to settle a claim or action in which a public
29 entity, or a public employee in his capacity as a public employee, is
30 a party and where the public employee asserts the protections of the
31 “Conscientious Employee Protection Act,” P.L.1986, c.105
32 (C.34:19-1 et seq.), as set forth in paragraph (1) of subsection b. of
33 section 1 of P.L. , c. (C.)(pending before the Legislature
34 as this bill), shall be considered a public record within the meaning
35 of P.L.1963, c.73 (C.47:1A-1 et seq.) and P.L.2001, c.404
36 (C.47:1A-5 et al.) except for matters involving national security.

37

38 3. Nothing in this act shall be deemed to affect the requirement
39 set out in P.L.1989, c.336 (C.2A:82-46), or in any other law or Rule
40 of Court, that in prosecutions for aggravated sexual assault, sexual
41 assault, aggravated criminal sexual contact, criminal sexual contact,
42 endangering the welfare of children under N.J.S.2C:24-4, or in any
43 action alleging an abused or neglected child under P.L.1974, c.119
44 (C.9:6-8.21 et seq.), the name, address, and identity of a victim who
45 was under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged commission of an
46 offense shall not appear on the indictment, complaint, or any other
47 public record.

1 specifically provides that the provisions of the bill are not intended to
2 affect this requirement.

3 The bill would also require the Attorney General to make such
4 agreements publicly available online. The bill would require that a list
5 of the settlement agreements be in a searchable format in a prominent
6 location on the department's website. The information would include:
7 (1) the date the parties entered into the agreement; (2) the names of the
8 parties; (3) a description of the claims; (4) the total amount each party
9 is obligated to pay; and (5) the total amount of compensation for any
10 outside legal counsel.

11 In addition, the bill provides that any other agreement to settle a
12 claim or action where a public entity is a party would be considered a
13 public record within the meaning of P.L.1963, c.73 (C.47:1A-1 et seq.)
14 and P.L.2001, c.404 (C.47:1A-5 et al.), except for matters involving
15 national security.