

ASSEMBLY, No. 2820

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 20, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY
District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Requires municipalities to accept complaints and provide certain municipal announcements by electronic means.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



AN ACT concerning municipal communications and supplementing Title 40 of the Revised Statutes.

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

1. a. Each municipality shall maintain on its Internet website, if one exists, a webpage containing an electronic form that an individual may use to electronically transmit complaints relating to the municipality to the clerk or designee of the municipality, provided that funding is made available to the municipality for the purposes of implementing this subsection.

b. The Department of Community Affairs shall maintain on its Internet website a webpage containing the electronic form required pursuant to subsection a. of this section for each municipality that does not have an Internet website. The department shall forward a completed form to the clerk or designee of the applicable municipality.

2. Each municipality shall maintain an electronic system that allows an individual to register to receive municipal announcements through e-mail, text messages, social media, or other electronic means, provided that funding is made available to the municipality for the purposes of implementing this section.

For the purposes of this section, “municipal announcement” means information relating to a municipality including, but not limited to: adequate notice of any municipal public body meetings in accordance with the “Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act,” P.L.1975, c.231 (C.10:4-6 et seq.); the minutes of any such meeting when made available; municipal budgets upon approval; declared emergencies; urgent public health and safety matters; and road closures and other significant traffic changes.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill would require municipalities to have electronic systems in place to receive complaints and to provide certain municipal announcements. The complaint system required by the bill would allow an individual to fill out and transmit a complaint form on the Internet website of the municipality. The notification system would allow an individual to sign up to receive electronic announcements of certain municipal information through e-mail, text messages, social media, or other electronic means. While many municipalities already have such systems in place, many do not. This bill would require all municipalities to have these systems in order to ensure

1 that all residents of the State receive the benefits of these
2 transparency measures.

3 In light of the unfunded mandate provisions of the State
4 Constitution, under which a State law may be declared
5 unconstitutional if it does not authorize resources other than the
6 property tax to offset the additional direct expenditures required for
7 its implementation, this bill would only require the implementation
8 of these electronic systems if funding is made available for those
9 purposes through State appropriations, grants, or otherwise.