ASSEMBLY, No. 3351

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman NANCY F. MUNOZ
District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)
Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY
District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Creates Task Force on Driver Distractions.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/5/2020)

AN ACT creating a task force on distracted driving.

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

1. The Legislature finds that the increased use of technological devices in today's fast-paced, multi-tasking society has created distractions for drivers in New Jersey, thereby compromising the safety of those using the roads and highways.

The Legislature further finds that the study and examination of the hazards of distracted driving, which may encompass communications technology and non-technological activities, is a valuable endeavor that would provide recommendations to aid in protecting users of this State's roads and highways.

The Legislature therefore declares that it is altogether fitting and proper, and within the public interest, to create a task force to study and make recommendations concerning driver distractions and their impact on the safety of those who travel this State's roads and highways.

2. a. There is created a task force to be known as the "Task Force on Driver Distractions" to study and make recommendations concerning the impact of driver distractions on road and highway safety.

b. The task force shall consist of 13 members as follows: the Commissioner of Transportation, ex officio, or a designee; the Commissioner of Education, ex officio, or a designee; the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, ex officio, or a designee; the Director of the Division of Highway Traffic Safety in the Department of Law and Public Safety, ex officio, or a designee; the Superintendent of State Police, ex officio, or a designee; a member of the County Prosecutors Association of New Jersey or a designee; a member of the New Jersey State Municipal Prosecutors Association or a designee; a member of the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police or a designee; a member of the Insurance Council of New Jersey or a designee; a member of the Driving School Association of New Jersey or a designee; and three public members, who shall have education or experience in highway traffic safety. The three public members shall be appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the General Assembly and one of whom shall be appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the President of the Senate.

c. The members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties to the extent that such funds are made available for that purpose.

3. a. The task force shall organize within 120 days after the

appointment of the three public members and shall select a chairperson. The task force shall meet at the call of the chairperson.

b. The Division of Highway Traffic Safety shall provide professional and clerical staff to the task force as may be necessary for the task force's purposes. The task force also shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State department, board, bureau, commission, or agency, as it may require and as may be available for its purposes, and to employ stenographic and clerical assistance and incur traveling and other miscellaneous expenses as may be necessary in order to perform its duties, within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the task force for its purposes.

c. Five members of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

4. a. The task force shall study and develop recommendations concerning the issue of driver distractions and highway safety including, but not limited to, recent communications technology and non-technological activities.

b. The task force shall develop recommendations for public and private strategies and recommendations for legislative or regulatory action, if deemed appropriate, to address these issues. The recommendations shall include suggestions for the development of a public information campaign to increase the public's awareness of the risks associated with driving distractions and to educate and inform motorists of methods to eliminate or minimize these risks. The task force shall also develop recommendations for improving highway and traffic safety by reducing motor vehicle accidents related to the use of communications technology in conjunction with the operation of a motor vehicle.

5. Pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the task force shall issue an interim report not more than 180 days after its organization. The task force shall submit a final report containing its findings and recommendations, including any recommendations for legislative or regulatory action that it deems appropriate, no later than one year after the task force's organizational meeting.

6. This act shall take effect immediately, and shall expire 30 days after the issuance of its final report.

STATEMENT

This bill creates a task force to be known as the "Task Force on Driver Distractions" to study and make recommendations concerning the impact of driver distractions on road and highway

safety. The task force is to consist of 13 members, including three public members with education or experience in highway traffic safety.

The task force is to organize within 120 days after the appointment of the three public members and select a chairperson. The Division of Highway Traffic Safety is to provide the necessary professional and clerical staff to the task force. Five members of the task force would constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

The task force's charge is to study and develop recommendations concerning the issue of driver distractions and highway safety including, but not limited to, electronic communication devices.

The bill requires the task force to develop recommendations for public and private strategies and for legislative or regulatory action, if deemed appropriate. The recommendations are to include suggestions for the development of a public information campaign to increase the awareness of the risks associated with driving distractions and to educate and inform motorists of methods to eliminate or minimize these risks. The task force also is required to develop recommendations for improving highway and traffic safety by reducing motor vehicle accidents related to the use of electronic communication technology in conjunction with the operation of a motor vehicle.

The task force is required to submit an interim report after six months, and a final report containing its findings and recommendations, including any recommendations for legislative or regulatory action, no later than one year after its organization. The task force is to expire 30 days after the issuance of the final report.