

ASSEMBLY, No. 3886

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 23, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Authorizes counties to establish diversionary program for juveniles to attend New Jersey Youth Challenge Academy.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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24 c. The county prosecutor shall be notified if a juvenile is
25 diverted pursuant to this section.

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The New Jersey Youth Challenge Academy operates under the auspices of the federal “National Guard Youth Challenge Program” (NGYCP). The purpose of the NGYCP is to assist high school dropouts who have not earned a high school diploma in leading successful, productive lives. The NGYCP endeavors to improve the life skills and employment potential of participants by providing

1 military-based training and supervised work experience. The
2 NGYCP assists the participants in obtaining a high school diploma
3 or its equivalent, developing leadership skills, promoting fellowship
4 and community service, developing life coping skills and job skills,
5 and improving physical fitness and health and hygiene. The
6 NGYCP is administered by the federal Secretary of Defense, who
7 may enter into an agreement with the Governor of a state to
8 implement a state youth challenge program, such as the New Jersey
9 Youth Challenge Academy. The federal government funds 75
10 percent of the operating costs of New Jersey Youth Challenge
11 Academy; the State funds the remaining 25 percent.

12 Federal law specifies that dropouts from secondary school are to
13 be eligible to participate in the program. To be eligible for a
14 NGYCP, the juvenile is required to be: (1) 16 to 18 years of age at
15 time of entry into the program; (2) a school dropout from secondary
16 school; (3) a citizen or legal resident of the United States; and (4)
17 unemployed or under-employed. Further, the juvenile currently
18 may not be on parole or probation for other than a juvenile status
19 offense, may not be awaiting sentencing, and may not be under
20 indictment, accused, or convicted of a felony. The program is
21 available only to those eligible juveniles who voluntarily apply; an
22 eligible juvenile cannot be required to participate and a parent is not
23 authorized to enroll a juvenile.

24 This bill provides first time juvenile offenders charged with low
25 level offenses an opportunity to have those charges dismissed if
26 they successfully complete the New Jersey Youth Challenge
27 Academy program.