

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4632

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 24, 2021

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably on Assembly Bill No. 4632 (1R).

This bill requires the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (commission) to provide the written driver's license knowledge examination on a secure Internet website during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health emergency and state of emergency and for 30 days after the termination of the COVID-19 public health emergency and state of emergency.

The bill requires the commission to allow an applicant for a special learner's permit or examination permit to complete the written driver's license knowledge examination through a secure Internet website operated by the commission.

An applicant who is 18 years of age or older and the parent or guardian of an applicant who is under 18 years of age are required to certify that the applicant did not utilize any reference materials, including but not limited to the New Jersey Driver's Manual, or receive assistance from another individual while completing the online written driver's license knowledge examination. A parent or guardian of an applicant who is under 18 years of age is also required to certify that the parent or guardian was present but did not provide assistance while the applicant completed the online examination.

The provisions of the bill are to expire on the 31st day following the rescission by the Governor of Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and any subsequent executive orders extending the public health emergency; or, in the absence of a rescission by the Governor, on the 31st day following the termination in any other manner of the declared state of emergency and public health emergency.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that the commission will incur indeterminate increased costs initially to develop a secure online testing platform on the commission's website, and then ongoing costs for the duration of the pandemic to administer tests online.

It is not clear whether the provision of online knowledge tests will allow the commission to reduce its allocation of staff resources at physical agencies to administer in-person knowledge tests. Such a reduction could offset any ongoing staff costs to administer the online exams.

The cost of developing an online exam that can be hosted on the commission's website is not clear, due to a lack of information about the commission's internal capacity to develop an online testing system on its website, or the types of security or anti-cheating measures that the commission will determine are necessary for the exam. Such measures could increase the complexity and cost of developing the online test.