

ASSEMBLY LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4685

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 8, 2021

The Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4685.

As amended and reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 4685 requires reentry assistance to be provided to certain inmates who have served the maximum term of incarceration.

Under current law, inmates incarcerated in a State correctional facility who do not participate in their own rehabilitation while incarcerated, or who have been denied release under the regular parole process, effectively serve the maximum sentence of imprisonment. These inmates, commonly referred to as “max-outs,” subsequently are released directly into the community without supervision or transitional services. Twice as many defendants max-out as are released on parole. Inmates who max-out are not entitled to services that are available to parolees, such as access to residential community release programs, known as halfway houses; drug treatment programs; residential programs; community resource centers; emergency housing placement; and other basic support services.

The provisions of the amended bill require reentry assistance to be provided to an inmate serving a maximum sentence, upon request of the inmate. The reentry assistance is to be provided by a non-profit inmate reentry service provider contracted by the Department of Community Affairs.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Corrections is required to advise an inmate who is scheduled to be released following the maximum term of imprisonment of the assistance to which the inmate is entitled under the bill at least six months prior to the inmate’s release date. The commissioner also is required to provide the inmate with information concerning non-profit inmate reentry organizations contracted to provide reentry assistance, and provide contact information necessary to access available resources. The commissioner also is required to allow a non-profit service provider to communicate with an inmate who requests reentry services under the bill prior to the inmate’s release date in order assess the needs of the inmate.

As amended and reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 4685 is identical to Senate Bill No. 415 which also was amended and reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

(1) require reentry assistance to be provided by a non-profit inmate reentry service provider contracted by the Department of Community Affairs; as introduced, the State Parole Board was required to provide reentry assistance to an eligible inmate;

(2) require the commissioner to:

- advise an eligible inmate that he or she is entitled to receive reentry assistance under the bill at least six months prior to the inmate's release date;
- provide the inmate with information concerning non-profit inmate reentry organizations contracted to provide the reentry assistance provided under the bill;
- provide eligible inmates with contact information necessary to access available resources; and
- allow a non-profit service provider to communicate with an inmate who requests the reentry services provided under the bill prior to the inmate's release date in order assess the needs of the inmate; and

(3) remove the provisions of the bill that require the State Parole Board to include in its annual report information concerning the number of defendants who request post-release services, a summary of the assistance received, and the recidivism rates of those that receive services.