

ASSEMBLY, No. 4780

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 8, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblywoman YVONNE LOPEZ

District 19 (Middlesex)

Assemblywoman GABRIELA M. MOSQUERA

District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Zwicker

SYNOPSIS

Requires DOC to install security cameras at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women and review and retain footage.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/5/2021)

1 **AN ACT** concerning security cameras at Edna Mahan Correctional
2 Facility for Women and supplementing Title 30 of the Revised
3 Statutes.

4

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

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8 1. The Commissioner of Corrections shall establish and
9 implement a plan for the strategic placement of a sufficient number
10 of security cameras in the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for
11 Women to protect inmates from sexual abuse. The plan shall
12 provide for:

13 a. installation of security cameras throughout the facility
14 including, but not limited to, identified blind-spots, housing unit
15 hallways and entryways, common spaces, and exterior locations;

16 b. systematic oversight and review of the footage obtained
17 from these security cameras; and

18 c. retaining all footage from the security cameras for not less
19 than 90 days and maintaining capacity to indefinitely retain footage
20 when necessary.

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22 2. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month
23 next following enactment.

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STATEMENT

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28 This bill requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to
29 establish and implement a plan for installing video cameras in the
30 Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women. The plan is to
31 provide for the strategic placement of a sufficient number of
32 security cameras to protect inmates in the facility from sexual
33 abuse.

34 The bill specifically requires installation of security cameras
35 throughout the facility, including in identified blind-spots, housing
36 unit hallways and entryways, common spaces, and exterior
37 locations. The plan also is to provide for the systematic oversight
38 and review of security camera footage. Finally, the plan is to
39 require that all security camera footage be retained for at least 90
40 days for there to be capacity to indefinitely retain certain footage.

41 Due to limited cameras in Edna Mahan prior to 2018, abuse of
42 inmates by facility staff occurred in unmonitored areas where there
43 were camera “blind spots.” The DOC began installing additional
44 cameras in 2016, but camera coverage remains deficient and the
45 cameras that were installed were basic commercial models with
46 limited capabilities. The DOC currently is in the final stages of
47 formulating a three-phase installation plan for a new camera
48 system, but no specific completion date has been given. Further,

1 there does not appear to be a plan for staff monitoring of the new
2 cameras.

3 This bill is in response to the April 2020 report published by the
4 Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice
5 and the United States Attorney’s Office District of New Jersey
6 entitled “Investigation of the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for
7 Women (Union Township, New Jersey).” The report concluded
8 that there is reasonable cause to believe conditions at Edna Mahan
9 violate the Eighth Amendment of the United States Constitution due
10 to facility staff sexually abusing inmates. The report further
11 concludes that the sexual abuse is pursuant to a pattern or practice
12 of resistance to the full enjoyment of these Eighth Amendment
13 rights.